

# House of Commons Debates

SIXTH SESSION—SEVENTH PARLIAMENT

## SPEECH

OF

SIR CHARLES TUPPER, M.P.

ON THE

## WINNIPEG NEGOTIATIONS

OTTAWA, TUESDAY, 14<sup>TH</sup> APRIL, 1896

SIR CHARLES TUPPER. I have not taken up an undue portion of the time of the committee, as I think hon. members on both sides of the House will admit, and I propose to occupy a very short period at the present time; but it seems, under the circumstances, hardly respectful to the committee that I should not take some opportunity, anxious as I have been not to do anything that could possibly interrupt the proceedings on this Bill, to briefly refer to the statements made at great length and reiterated by hon. gentlemen opposite. It has been stated by hon. gentlemen opposite, throughout this debate, that the Government of this Dominion have treated the government of Manitoba as an enemy. Well, Sir, I am very glad at last that we have evidence to show how utterly unfounded that assertion is. The hon. gentleman who has just taken his seat, after paying me the very great compliment of extending on the pages of "Hansard" the Nova Scotia School Act, which I had the honour of introducing and passing through that legislature, and all other hon. gentlemen in this House seem entirely to forget the position we occupy. They seem to imagine that this Parliament is engaged in constructing a school law, that we have carte blanche to make it as perfect and complete a school law as possible. I submit that is an entire misapprehension. That is not the position at all. If it were, the action of many hon. members on both sides of

the House would be very different to the opinions they have expressed on this question in the position in which it stands, and, therefore, I wish briefly to draw the attention of the House to the fact that this very important conference which took place at Winnipeg on this question has, in my judgment, been of very great service in its consideration. The leader of the Opposition has taken the ground for a very long period that it was the duty of this Government to issue a commission to ascertain the facts, and he has spent a great deal of time and ability in endeavouring to convince the House and the country that it was impossible to deal with this question without first having a commission to ascertain the facts. That delusion has been swept to the winds.

Some hon. MEMBERS. Oh, oh.

SIR CHARLES TUPPER. Yes; I say that delusion has been completely swept to the winds by the conference at Winnipeg. I am, however, anticipating a little. The position the Government finds itself in is not one of constructing a law, but of carrying out a decision given by the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council. I cannot do better, in view of the position in which we stand on this question, than to draw the attention of the committee to what the constitution of the country is with regard to the position of the Manitoba and the Dominion Government. The Manitoba Act says: