

which was launched at him by the hon. member for Pictou.

Now, I really have taken up more time than the subject warranted in this preliminary statement. We are engaged here in a much more serious matter than in considering the question of the position which I have held or the position which my hon. friend from West York, or the position my hon. friend from Albert has held. Let me, if I can, draw the House back to a consideration of the important measure before us. I confess, Mr. Speaker, I cannot answer the speech of the hon. member who addressed us this afternoon. I have failed to find a consecutive argument in it from beginning to end. Denunciation there was, abuse there was; but I defy any hon. member of this House to say, having listened to that tirade for two hours, that it contained one solitary argument—although it contained many statements, which, I suppose, the hon. gentleman mistook for arguments. He attacked the hon. leader of the Opposition as a Catholic. He wound up his speech by saying that this was a question that was not either Catholic or Protestant, it was not to be treated as a question pertaining to the Catholic religion—and in that I agree with him—but the burden of his attack was that he (Mr. Laurier), a Catholic and a French Canadian, was opposed to a Remedial Bill which was proposed on behalf of his co-religionists and compatriots. These positions can hardly be reconciled, nor can they be treated as consistent.

What is our position here to-night? No person in the course of this debate has pretended to say that this Parliament is not clothed with jurisdiction to pass a Remedial Bill. I do not wish to be understood as saying that we have jurisdiction to pass the Bill which has been submitted to us—that is a vastly different thing. But that we have a right to pass a Remedial Bill in the terms of the remedial order and in fulfilment of the remedial order, no person who understands the subject will for a moment deny. But how comes it that we have that right? The subject of education is not one that belongs to this Parliament—not primarily, at all events. The subject of education has, very properly, been committed to the local legislatures, and that subject is one which is to be dealt with, and properly dealt with, by these provincial assemblies. That they do deal with it, under certain restrictions and certain limitations, is undoubted. That under certain circumstances and on certain events happening—which have happened in this case—this Parliament has power to intervene, is also unquestioned. But what we have to remember is that primarily the duty and responsibility with reference to the subject of education belongs to the local legislature of the province of Manitoba, and before we interfere we have to be satisfied that that duty and that responsibility has not been properly discharg-

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ed, has been wantonly disregarded. Otherwise, there is no fitting occasion for our interfering against the province itself. The hon. gentleman (Mr. Foster) who addressed us on Friday afternoon, and who, if he will permit me to say—I do not wish to make him blush—has made the only speech worthy of the occasion which has been made from his side of the House, certainly presented the case in a way which, if the facts and the circumstances stated by him can be relied upon, would lead to the conclusion which he asked the House to draw; but he will pardon me if I am unable to accept these facts, and he will excuse me if I point out how he erred. And I think that his own good sense and fair-mindedness would lead him to say that if he had known how far he had been led astray with regard to the facts and the history of the case, he would not have been found addressing the House in the language he used on Friday afternoon. He told us that separate schools had nothing to do with the case. The hon. gentleman, the youthful member who addressed us this afternoon told us that that was the only subject before us. He accepted my statement before the committee, I said that that was the primary question, that first we must consider whether or not we ought to adopt and impose a system of separate schools. The more astute leader brushed that aside and told us that it was a side issue. His opening remarks were to the effect: We have nothing to do with separate schools; that was settled long since; settled at confederation, settled when Manitoba entered the union; it is embedded in bed-rock of the constitution, and we have nothing to do with it. Now, after the character attributed to the speech of this afternoon, I cannot ask the House to accept the statement of the hon. member for Pictou as completely destroying the argument of the hon. Minister of Finance. It would be a simple matter for me to put one speech against the other, and point out how both cannot stand and ask the House to accept the latter. But I feel it would be trifling with the House, under all circumstances, if I did not give some reason for saying that, in that particular, at all events, the gentleman who last addressed us was right, and the hon. Minister of Finance was wrong. We are told, Sir, that the reason of this was that there were compacts—compacts at confederation, or rather a compact at confederation and a compact when the Manitoba constitution was passed. A compact at confederation—a compact, we are told, entered into on behalf of the Protestants of the province of Quebec, a compact without which confederation would have been impossible, a compact, to use his own language, which was the sine qua non of the scheme of confederation. Has the hon. gentleman dived no deeper than Mr. Ewart's little pamphlet in making these