

they did their utmost, and that they did all that men could do to carry it out. I may say more, Sir. In addition to the conviction I had that it was right and proper, and that it was the absolute duty of the Government to maintain the law and the constitution as thus expounded, I did believe that it was a question of much more far-reaching importance than I now find it is. I had the conviction, I entertained the opinion, and I entertained it sincerely, that the Roman Catholics of Canada attached the most vital importance to the question of religious education for their children. I entertained the belief, and I entertained it sincerely, that it would be a cause of deep resentment on the part of the great body of the Roman Catholics of this country, if the Parliament of Canada refused to carry out the law and the constitution of the country as expounded by the highest tribunal of the Empire. Having these views, I attached, as I say, the utmost possible importance to this question, and I regarded it as a still more imperative duty on the part of the Government of the day to avoid anything that would leave the impression upon the minds of a great body of the population of Canada, that equal justice was not meted out to every man in Canada, by the Parliament of Canada, irrespective of race or creed. Under these circumstances, as I say, I find that I attached much greater importance to this question than the result of experience has shown to belong to it. I find that there has not been that deep importance attached to this question, by a very large portion of that denomination, that I had previously supposed. I make that admission frankly to the House, and I cannot but feel that it is not unlikely that it will be much more difficult in the future than it was in the past—and it was difficult enough as gentlemen in this House all know in the past—it will be much more difficult in future to induce gentlemen to sacrifice their own judgment to some extent, and the feelings of their constituents to some extent, to maintain a policy, which when subjected to the test of actual experience, is not found to have the importance attached to it that was previously supposed.

Now, Sir, I do not intend to say more upon that subject on the present occasion, but I will say this: that in the future as in the past the cardinal principle with the great party to which I have the honour to belong will be: equal justice to all without respect to race or creed. I am glad to know that the responsibility of this question—an important question, although not so gravely important as I had supposed—I am glad to know that the responsibility rests no longer upon my shoulders, but upon those of the hon. gentleman who is now the First Minister of the Crown. I can only say, that I trust and sincerely hope, that he will be most successful in obtaining such a settlement of this question as will do justice, and

give satisfaction to all parties. I can assure the hon. gentleman not only that he has my most cordial wishes for a happy, and early, and fair settlement of this important question, but that anything that I can contribute to that end will be at all times most cheerfully done. I say that, Sir, as to my views on the course that should be pursued, and, as to the course that was pursued my view remains unchanged. My desire to see equal justice dealt out regardless of race or creed remains as strong now as ever. While I have the honour of a seat in this House, or even after I should cease to be a member of this House, I have no hesitation in saying, that the same principle will always obtain with me, and I shall always be found true to that principle which lies at the very foundation of Canada's prosperity, progress and advancement. That principle is, that there should be the conviction established in the minds of all persons irrespective of race or creed, that there is but one law, and one measure of right and justice to be meted out to those whose interests are at any time imperilled.

I may say in regard to the very erratic speech of the mover of the Address (Mr. McInnes) that there was some little apology for the gentleman, and that is, that the First Minister had called upon him to make bricks without straw. As a matter of fact, to move an answer to an Address which contains nothing is rather calculated to tax the powers of even an experienced member of this House, not to speak of one who has had no previous experience. The Speech from the Throne is more remarkable for what it does not contain than for what it does contain. I cannot help wondering why this Parliament was called together at all. Why are we here? For what object are we here? It is not certainly for the statement that is put in the mouth of His Excellency the Governor General, who says:

The necessity of making provision for the public service has compelled me to summon you together at this somewhat inconvenient season. Why, Sir, in view of the fact that the first act of this Government has been what I regard as a gross violation of the law, that the first act of this Government, as exhibited by the papers laid on the Table of the House to-day is not only a gross violation of the law, but shows that Parliament is not required at all in this country. Their very first act, on coming to power, shows that hon. gentlemen opposite entertain very different views from those which they entertained and pressed upon this House when on this side of the House. They have now discovered a new law and a new gospel. Let me invite the attention of hon. gentlemen opposite for a moment to the question of providing for the public service, which it appears obliges His Excellency the Governor General, at very great inconvenience, to call this Parliament together. Why, Sir, the enormous sum of money pro-