

affairs—more especially in all matters pertaining to the untrammelled freedom of the electorate in the choice of their representatives; for this freedom is the bulwark of free institutions. I concede to the cleric exactly the same right as I concede to the lay. He is entitled to use the same weapons, advice and argument, as any other citizen. Hands off the spiritual sword every time, is, and always has been, my motto.

No Catholic can be silly enough to look for public favors because of his religion. In the race for political honors and public appointments, Catholics ask only a fair field and no favor. They ask to be judged as the citizens of a free country—each individual on his own merits and record. If they cannot furnish material equal at least to the best offering, then let them, by all means, stand aside. The country needs the services of her most gifted children. But they do protest, and will continue to protest, against being set aside, ignored, ostracised, because of the accidents of birth, bringing up, or choice of religion.

A further count in the indictment contains a strange interpretation and jug-handled criticism of the Premier's legislative and administrative record, particularly since the demise of the "Chieftain." It is hardly fair, it is far from generous, to saddle Sir John Thompson specially and exclusively, as if he were the sole culprit, with all the sins and shortcomings of the last government. He is responsible to exactly the same extent as the rest of his colleagues of the Abbott Administration. It is quite in order, and explicable on party lines, that Liberals should oppose and condemn the general policy of a Conservative Government. This may be termed their constitutional function. But it is, to say the least, hard to expect Sir John Thompson to follow in their footsteps. While a member of a government, he is in honor bound to carry out and defend to the best of

his ability the policy chalked out for him by his party; or, failing this, to take up his hat and walk out. There is no middle course. A public man cannot, or should not, "run with the hare and hunt with the hounds." A public man who values honor, fame, and justice, above his own selfish and mercenary ends, will not "practise duplicity to accomplish his ends." At the Council Board it is the privilege of a minister to oppose or seek a change of policy. There he may seek the repeal or amendment of a statute. But when once a policy is determined on, it is the solemn and sworn duty of every minister loyally to carry it out, or, if he cannot conscientiously do so, sever his connection. Many a good man and true, honestly believes that the latter alternative would be Sir John's best course, whether gauged by prudence or honesty. But the responsible agent for Sir John Thompson's acts—Sir John himself—evidently thinks differently; and, I doubt not, as honestly and sincerely believes that his course is the one best calculated to serve the public. In such matters, either side is liable to be mistaken. It is opinion against opinion; and what are you going to do about it? In a free country, every one is entitled, on speculative subjects, to his own opinion, however ridiculous it may seem to his neighbor.

As to Catholic support for the Premier because of his religion, Sir John Thompson is greener than he is credited with, if he expects anything of the kind. Catholics, like other citizens, support the political party whose principles accord best with individual predilections, regardless whom the leader for the time being may chance to be. Leaders are ephemeral; principles are eternal. But in an intelligent community, it could not fail to raise for Sir John Thompson the sympathy and support of his co-religionists, if it transpired that he was being deserted by any considerable number of the rank and file of his party be-