

When we consider the fact that the amendment prepared by Sir A. Gait, and unanimously concurred in by his co-delegates made no distinction between Protestant and Catholic minorities, but extended the protection of the constitution to the minorities of both classes in precisely the same terms it is difficult on the first statement of the question, to conceive how a remedy that ought in justice to be extended to one class can with justice be withheld from the other.

Further consideration of the question, however, shows that it is not so easy after all of solution. There is no doubt that many of the most earnest and most aggressive opponents of federal intervention in favor of the Roman Catholics of Manitoba would justify—aye would demand prompt intervention on behalf of the Protestants of Quebec under like circumstances. I desire to be distinctly understood that I am not here referring to the protection of the Protestants of Quebec in the rights they enjoyed at the union. I am referring to the case, that is quite possible of the Quebec legislature passing a law taking away rights granted by that legislature itself since the union. I repeat that the most prominent opponents of federal intervention in the present issue would be the first to demand intervention under exactly the like circumstances for the protection of the Protestants of Quebec. And for their justification in taking these two apparently irreconcilable positions they give reasons which are not only satisfactory to themselves but are exceedingly plausible.

I have already hinted at the distinction they draw between the case of the one minority and that of the other. The system of the majority in Manitoba, as stated by the law that creates it, is a purely non-denominational one, and for the purpose of this discussion I will concede that it is so. The system of the majority in Quebec on the contrary is avowedly one of Roman Catholic schools. To compel the Roman Catholics of Manitoba to submit to a system that is in no sense denominational, is one thing. To force upon the Protestant minority of Quebec a purely Roman Catholic system to compel them to educate their children in and to pay their taxes to schools that are under the control of a Roman Catholic body is altogether another thing. So argue the opponents of intervention in Manitoba, who would justify remedial legislation in the province of Quebec. To them it seems plain that the abolition of separate

schools in Manitoba, where the minority can send their children to an undenominational school with the protection of a conscience clause cannot be regarded as a grievance comparable with the wrong inflicted on the Protestants of Quebec, if forced to submit to a system that would be practically under Catholic control. Looking at the question from a Protestant standpoint it seems impossible to deny that there is real distinction between the two cases in the extent at all events of the grievance. For myself I quite concede the distinction.

Does it follow, however that the constitution which was created for the protection of the Catholics, equally with Protestants, shall be made effective for the protection of the latter while it shall be a dead letter in safeguarding the rights of the former? To me it seems that the conditions affecting the Protestants of Quebec rendering their dependence upon the French Catholic legislature of the province so peculiarly irksome and alarming as to demand protection by the federal powers, are in themselves the very circumstances that demand the most faithful extension to Roman Catholics of the same protection.

What were the circumstances under which the Protestants of Quebec secured the insertion of the provision for appeal in the constitution? In the old parliament of Canada, though they were a provincial minority they had a Protestant majority to secure them against greivous wrongs. Even from that parliament they could not obtain full justice. Now their educational interests were to be in the hands of a legislature controlled by French Catholics. "Even in the past their failure to secure proper provisions for their separate schools had tended to discourage the settlement of Protestants in the province," and had actually "caused many families to leave the country." Besides that they were "liable to be taxed for the support of Roman Catholic schools; and they had difficulties in establishing separate schools for themselves." Failing to get redress from the Protestant parliament of Canada they had accepted the promise of Sir George Cartier that the legislature of Quebec would concede all their demands after the union. They willingly put faith in the pledge of the French leader, but they were not willing to trust to the generosity of the French legislature in the future. And so they demanded and received the protection of the federal powers. To the Protes-