

But it is to be remembered that in most parts of the Province the Public Schools are in the hands of Protestants, and it is only in very exceptional circumstances that the Protestants of the Province want Separate Schools. There are (I think) but eight of such schools in all Ontario. The public sentiment in the Protestant churches is, that it is better that Public Schools should be supported, and not denominational schools. (Applause.) Protestants hold that it is better for our whole people, no matter what denomination they belong to, that the children should all learn together in our Public Schools as well as in our High Schools. But the law does provide for the establishment of Separate Schools for Protestants if they want them, as well as for Roman Catholics when they want them. He would read to the House some of the Statutory enactments, in order that there should be no doubt about this. The second section of the Separate School Act read as follows:—

“Upon the application in writing of five or more heads of families resident in any township, city, town or incorporated village, being Protestants, the Municipal Council of the said township, or the Board of School Trustees of any such city, town or incorporated village, shall authorise the establishment therein of one or more Separate Schools for Protestants.”

Then the Attorney-General read the sixth section as follows:—

“In any city or town the persons who make application, according to the provisions of section 2 of this Act, may have a Separate School in each ward or in two or more wards united, as the said persons may judge expedient.”

So, continued the Attorney-General, that was what the law provided for Protestants in this matter.

MR. MEREDITH asked if the Attorney-General understood that this applied to the rural districts.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL replied that he understood so. If before or since Confederation more convenient machinery had been provided for Roman Catholic Separate Schools than for Protestant Separate Schools, it was because Protestants had not asked for changes in the original provisions as to Protestant Separate Schools. No class of Protestants, no church, no individual, so far as I am aware, had ever asked for any such changes. Speaking generally, Protestants do not want to make use of their power to establish Separate Schools, and he was glad they did not. (Applause.) He thought it

WOULD BE A CALAMITY TO THE

country if they did. It was for the common advantage that they should not use these provisions of the law, and that all should