

If the privileges taken away from these people are to be restored, if their rights are to be respected at all, I cannot conceive any more moderate arrangement or one less open to any kind of objection on the part of any government here disposed to do any justice to the minority whatever.

I do not propose to go into the counter-propositions, for that is not necessary. But I will refer to one subject, and that is that one of the first proposals made by the Manitoba government was to secularize the schools. The hon. member for Winnipeg (Mr. Martin), I believe, would be willing to have the schools secularized, to banish the Bible and every kind of religious instruction from the schools, but I doubt if there are many members on either side who would agree with him.

Mr. EDGAR. The hon. member for Leeds (Mr. Taylor), the chief Government Whip, expresses that opinion.

Sir CHARLES TUPPER. I am very sorry to hear that, but I am sure that the Church of England would not agree to it, I am sure that the Presbyterian body would not agree to it, I am sure that the Wesleyan body would not agree to it, and I am quite sure that the Baptist body—which may not be a very large one in that country—would not agree to it. Therefore, the proposition to secularize the schools, I believe, would run counter to the overwhelming sentiment of all denominations, whether Catholic or Protestant, in the province of Manitoba, and, therefore, I regard that as a step certainly very much in the wrong direction. What a delusion it would be, if you were to have religious instruction after the manner proposed by the Manitoba government. What would it amount to? You have the Roman Catholic Church, the Church of England, the Presbyterians, the Wesleyans, represented in each school, and they are each to take alternate days. So you would have, in practice, half an hour once a week. Will you expect that to satisfy any person, Catholic or Protestant, who wishes to have this religious instruction in the schools? Surely not. I do not intend to prolong these remarks, because I am anxious to avoid doing anything that shall take up a single moment of the time of this committee. But we have been accused of obstructing our own Bill. Absolutely, gentlemen have been found who, in the face of what is known to every member of this committee, actually accuse us of obstructing our own Bill. It has been insinuated that there was some occult influence at work which made the Government desirous of preventing this Bill from becoming law. Well, I have in my hands a copy of the Hamilton "Evening Times," of April 13th, a strong opponent of the Government, which gives the true inwardness of the opposition to the Bill:

Canadians who do not believe in forcing separate schools upon Manitoba, may thank the

Liberals in Parliament for getting an opportunity to prevent the outrage.

They gave to the Liberals the entire credit; they won't allow any Conservative in this House to enjoy the credit.

Mr. LAURIER. The paper is not fair.

Sir CHARLES TUPPER. Hon. gentlemen opposite have said a good deal about last week affording a record-breaking session. This paper adds:

The result is worth all the discomfort of a six days' and five nights' sitting.

So I think proper to give to the opponents of the Government, I won't say they are all Liberals, the credit of the unparalleled obstruction which this Bill has met from the commencement. Now, we have been ardently desirous of settling this question, for reasons which I have often stated, and need not repeat to the House. My great desire has been to remove from the political arena a question of this kind that is calculated to prevent us getting a verdict upon the important political issues that separate the two parties in this country. I believe also that it is very much to be deprecated that the people should have their passions and feelings excited, as they are excited on questions of religion more than on any other question in the world. I think it is very much to be deprecated that such a question should be taken to the polls. I think it is unnecessary, because the Government, while obeying the law and the constitution in the steps that have been taken, and declared to be absolutely necessary to restore the rights and privileges of the minority in Manitoba, have shown from the first that they are anxious that nothing should be done that could be construed as a violent or extreme measure. I do not hesitate to say that the minority, in my judgment, have been most reasonable in regard to this measure. Hon. gentlemen opposite profess so great a desire to destroy this Bill that they are willing to spend days and nights over a clause which is an exact transcript from laws that have been in use in Ontario and Manitoba for many years, and have been found to work perfectly well. Now, I do not understand this pretended anxiety on the part of the opponents of this Bill to have criticised in committee. If the minority are satisfied with the Bill, imperfect as the measure may be, falling short, as the leader of the Opposition holds it does, of restoring fully the rights of the Roman Catholic minority, if the minority are satisfied with the measure, why do some hon. gentlemen object to it? That the minority are satisfied with it, we have the highest authority for saying. Every person knows the respect that is paid by the Roman Catholic people to the views of those who are placed in charge of their religious and educational interests; everybody knows the confidence that is placed