

time, and the New Brunswick school question had been discussed throughout the length and breadth of the land, in every hamlet and every household. There were settled convictions on this great question now. There were many men in this Dominion who believed in the constitutional prerogative of the Legislature of New Brunswick to deal with this question, and who were jealous of any attempt to interfere with that prerogative. There were others who believed that the Catholic minority did actually enjoy certain rights anterior, and for many years subsequent to Confederation, of which they had been deprived by the action of the Legislature, and who desired that the necessary legislation should be accomplished which would restore to them the rights and privileges which they so enjoyed. There were two parties in this House and two parties in the country who entertained honest but different convictions on this important subject. When the motion of the member for Victoria was submitted to the House, followed by the amendments proposed, he hoped the question would be finally settled so that it might cease to be a subject of irritation, controversy and agitation in the Dominion. There was a time when the question could be approached and decided so satisfactorily, so far as the House could decide it, as at the present time. We were not, fortunately, in a period of political excitement. There were no elections at hand which would change the views and actions of hon. members, and if ever a disinterested expression of the House could be given it was at this time. Those hon. members who had, in effect, prevented a full and decided expression of the sentiments of the House, had taken upon themselves a grave responsibility. If it were found that the question were again brought before Parliament two or three years hence, when the country was agitated by other excitements; if the question were brought up in the heat of a general election, and prove a cause of annoyance to hon. members in their constituencies, the responsibility would rest on those hon. gentlemen who had prevented the final settlement of the question at this time. If the House affirmed the amendment, he ventured to say, however satisfactory it might be to hon. members,

*Mr. Colby.*

however much it might relieve them from a temporary difficulty, the result would satisfy no party outside of the House. The Protestants of New Brunswick would not be pleased if this House ventured for a second time to express an opinion which they had previously considered a piece of impertinence. The Catholics of New Brunswick would not be pleased by being tampered with and played with in this way. The Protestants of the Dominion who believed the subject should be definitely settled by a strong Government, would not be pleased by the solution proposed. It might relieve members from the present difficulty, but it would return with tenfold power at some future period.

Mr. BARTHE admitted that the amendment of the hon. Premier was submitted with all the strong reasoning which characterised his speeches, but it contained an abstract principle which, under the present circumstances, he (Mr. BARTHE) could not approve. The amendment submitted by the hon. member for Quebec Centre was not practical, and it was desirable that a settlement of the question should be arrived at. There were various sources of discontent in the Dominion. He admitted that the question of amnesty had been settled to his satisfaction, and he hoped to the satisfaction of the whole country, and he thought that if the Opposition, including the members for Terrebonne and Bagot, had been in office, they would not have disposed of this question in a more satisfactory manner than that in which it had been settled. The feeling of the people of the Province of Quebec was that the clemency of the Crown should have been exercised more fully in the case. They felt, however, that the Government upon that occasion did their duty. The question now before the House was equally important with that, if not the more important of the two. The Catholics of New Brunswick, indeed the Catholics of the whole of Canada, were dissatisfied with the state of things in that Province. The system existing there he did not hesitate to call an unjust and a most unfair one, against reason and against conscience, and he maintained that no one could properly lay claim to liberality and support it. What would the minority of the Province of Quebec have said had the majority there refused to give them their