

their unshaken and persevering fidelity, for the great services which they rendered to this country, the French Canadians deserve better reward than the unfriendly treatment whereby their brethren in Manitoba have been placed, with regard to the exercise of certain rights, in a position of inferiority. Inferiority means inequality, and, in the eloquent language of Mr. Gladstone, the stamp of inequality is the brand of degradation. Mr. Speaker, my main reason for opposing the Bill now before the House is that it leaves the minority in Manitoba branded with the stamp of inferiority.

There are gentlemen in this House who oppose this Bill because they are entirely opposed to separate schools—because they contend that a system of public schools, with purely secular teaching, is the best system. There are no doubt a large number of people who prefer that system to any other. But, it must be borne in mind that there are also a very large number of persons, not only Catholics but Protestants also, who do not like that system, and who prefer that the education of their children be somewhat immersed in religion. They prefer that their children should receive an education which would develop in their young minds and hearts the love of religion, and of those principles of morality which may have an influence upon their future life. A couple of those gentlemen have referred to the fact that some European countries have done away entirely with religious education, and have secularized the teaching in the schools. But I believe it cannot be doubted that there are to-day in those countries a very large number of persons who, after having been favourable to that system have come to regret it, when they contemplate the numerous subversive doctrines that prevail in some European societies, and which are feeders of socialism. Sir, let me quote the words of a celebrated French writer, Mr. Jules Simon, who has been, all his life, a free thinker. In an article which he published about a year ago, I do not remember in what review, he uttered these words:

When I was Minister of Public Instruction more than twenty years ago, I did all that I could to secularize the teaching in the schools. I did not succeed, I thank God for it. Others who came after me have succeeded. I regret it; it is a misfortune. I regret it, since I saw boys twenty years old throwing dynamite bombs on the heads of our representatives in Parliament.

Sir, the men who would establish in this country a system of public schools, with mere secular teaching, are the men who say openly that minorities have no rights other than those which they enjoy in common with the rest of their countrymen. They are the men who told us no longer than a couple of days ago, by the mouth of their most illustrious leader, that they do not want to disturb the separate schools in Ontario. Then, they must be repentant sinners, for they are the same men who, during

the last two electoral campaigns in Ontario, for the election of members to the legislature of that province, did not hesitate to proclaim, as the first article in their programme, the suppression of separate schools, and who, on that ground, assaulted the position so gloriously defended by one of Canada's best statesmen and most illustrious sons, Sir Oliver Mowat. I say, honour—honour to the veteran statesman who, on those two occasions, fought for the constitution of his country, for the maintenance of the rights of the minority, and triumphantly succeeded in hurling back the wave of bigotry and intolerance which threatened to overflow his province. Those gentlemen to whom I have been referring, have a policy of their own. It is offered to the acceptance of the people of this country under the captious name of equal rights. It is a new platform erected in our political field. Since confederation, I had never heard of it until a few years ago, when it first attempted to take ground in our political domain. Possibly, the doctrine of equal rights is not altogether new in Canada; but I believe, that the name under which it is now travelling in Ontario and Manitoba, is of recent coinage. However that may be, the most important thing is to know its real meaning. So far as I could understand it, such as expounded in speeches delivered within the last few years at different places in Ontario, it consists in the suppression of the separate schools and the official use of the French language, wherever they exist in this Dominion, except, perhaps, in the province of Quebec. That policy can be resumed in the following formula: One school, one language. Sir, I say, that, in a country like Canada, with a population composed of two distinct elements, speaking two different languages, professing divers religious creeds, such a policy, must, of necessity, be unsound and impracticable. It is a policy calculated to throw a ferment of discord among the citizens of this country; it is a policy which is bound to lead to strife, disturbance and disunion. By far wiser and more patriotic is the policy which was adopted by the fathers of confederation, who, in framing our federal constitution, embodied in it the great principle of equality of rights before the law, but the law so understood and framed on such a wide basis that it could meet the views, wishes and wants of all the elements composing our population. Sir, it is the equal right for each element, each race and creed, to enjoy certain franchises and rights, in the enjoyment of which the law will protect them. It is for them the right to exercise those franchises and rights to the best advantage, for their own benefit and advancement, limited, however, by the requirement that they must not infringe on the rights of others. This, I believe, to be sound doctrine for a country like Canada. I believe the observance of that doctrine would make