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CITY HALL NEWSBOY. "Hully gee, Chimmie, here's der best choke er der season."

"Wot it 'tis, Swipesy?" "Didn't anybody put yer wise, Chimmie, ter wot der Meterris' Scotlander sky pilots did der udder day?"

"Nix, I didn't hear nuttin' ermost it. I never hits der trail much, Swipesy. I had er wotch swiped wotch."

"De odder day, der bunch held er meetin' an' passed er vote er tanks ter der Hon. Cliff Sifton on der noble gran' stand play he made on der 'tonermy bill, an' dey sent him er letter tellin' him he was der swellest mug in all der worl' an' der adgacent islands."

"Tell dey did. Dat coittinly is er corker. But it's just like dat crowd, dey'll butt in where angels woudn't have der nerve ter go if dey was wearin' gum shoes, Swipesy."

Glimpses of the Political Field

Two weeks of fighting within the cabinet and negotiation with the Western Liberals seems to have resulted in the patching up of a compromise on the separate school clauses of the autonomy bill. The most that can be said for the compromise is that it tides the government over a dangerous crisis. It is a compromise of to-day, having little or no heed to the day when the government must answer to the people for its invasion of provincial rights.

The question is: Are the provinces to be allowed freedom in the management of their educational affairs or are they to submit to the dictation of a government whose interference is inspired by the hierarchy of Quebec? This is the question which will govern the public in its estimate of the compromise which has been fixed up among politicians at Ottawa.

A compromise that commands the support of the western Liberals will not necessarily carry the approval of the people of the West. It is a question if the whole contingent of Western Liberals would have objected to the original draft of the bill but for the action of Hon. Clifford Sifton. They are partisans to the core, partisans born of self-interest. Their strength in nearly every instance is nothing more or less than the strength of the government which endows them with many forms of patronage.

The debate in the house the other day was notable for the effective attack made on the government's position by Hon. George E. Foster, and for the venom of Hon. Chas. A. Fitzpatrick's reply. Not in many years has there been revealed in parliamentary debates, the ill-feeling and bitterness that characterized the clash between the leader of the opposition and the minister of justice.

The government will attempt to show that a modification of the separate schools clauses which commands the support of the western Liberals means everything. In reality it means nothing. The modified clauses, even if they are genuine concessions to the exponents of provincial rights, which is doubtful, leave the principle at issue undisturbed. The difference between the bill in its original form and the bill in its amended form is the difference between the bite of a cobra and the bite of a rattlesnake.

The western Liberals could not honestly revolt at the one and smilingly accept the other. All the negotiations leading up to the drafting of the compromise clause were so much political jugglery. They had no regard for the rights and wrongs of the separate schools clauses. They had the one object of rendering the crisis less acute, and to ease the exigencies of

the moment. The western Liberals it appears have pledged themselves to stand by the separate schools clauses. In so doing they have been governed absolutely by the demeanor of Hon. Clifford Sifton. Unfortunately the public cannot place implicit faith in their guidance. No one but Mr. Sifton himself knows the true inwardness of his resignation. His acceptance of a compromise that does not touch the principle at stake looks suspicious. It supplies strong reason for believing that he did not resign for the sake of principle alone. Perhaps he was playing his own game, perhaps he was playing some other person's game.

Has the country sufficient faith in Hon. Clifford Sifton to believe that what is acceptable to him should be acceptable to the friends of provincial rights in Canada? What has Mr. Sifton done to invite this confidence? What principle of public rights has he championed since 1896? What principle of political morality has he not violated since he became a member of the Laurier government? Mr. Sifton's political career has been a chequered one, unmarked by a single act of courage in behalf of public rights.

The most surprising statement made by Mr. Fitzpatrick was that it was not intended that the autonomy bill should confer any privileges on the minority further than those which they now enjoy. It requires no fine legal ability to discern the difference between the separate schools clause of the Northwest Territories Act of 1875 and the separate schools clause of the autonomy bill. Clearly, the latter measure proposed to confer on separate schools a share of public lands and money, a privilege which is not even hinted at in the terms of the Northwest Territories Act. Mr. Fitzpatrick must have known that he was greatly enlarging the privileges of the minority, and Sir Wilfrid Laurier must have known it. But, strangely enough, the country's first awakening to the enormity of the outrage came thru Hon. Clifford Sifton.

La Patrie takes R. L. Borden to task for referring sarcastically to the inspiration of the autonomy bill. Mr. Borden, it will be remembered, pointed out that Hon. Clifford Sifton had nothing to do with the preparation of the separate schools clauses of the bill. Hon. W. S. Fielding had nothing to do with and Hon. F. W. Haultain had no

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Northwest that might be mistaken for an instinct less worthy. Can judgment would have led him to appeal to a reasoning public, but he appealed only to Quebec.

"I say now," he declared in one of his most fiery passages, "I speak for myself. I say there can be no peace except that peace which is based on justice. There can be no peace that is not based upon equal rights and respect for the honest convictions of every man in this country."

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thing to do with it. Who, then, asked Mr. Borden, did inspire the bill? The process of exhaustion thus adopted by Mr. Borden obviously led to the conclusion that the bill was inspired by the Quebec hierarchy. There was undoubtedly a touch of sarcasm in Mr. Borden's sly intimation that the Western Liberals must have guided the government in the preparation of the bill. But there was no occasion for Mr. Tarte's hysterics over the incident. Mr. Tarte seems to be again worming into the confidence of the government from which he was expelled. Let him explain what line he directed the government in the preparation of the separate schools clause. The public will readily endorse his suggestion that to accuse the Western Liberals of the authorship of the clauses is to propound a manifest absurdity. But who did inspire the bill? Who composed the sub-committee of the cabinet that drafted the legislation, and who have held out against the modification of the most obnoxious clauses? Sir Wilfrid Laurier has so far declined to supply the information to the house, but the answer is accessible to any one who can put two and two together. The bill was inspired by the hierarchy of Quebec, and the execution of the plans of the church was entrusted to Sir Wilfrid Laurier, Hon. Charles A. Fitzpatrick and Hon. R. W. Scott.

Some of Sir Wilfrid Laurier's newspaper flatterers are telling him that he deserves great credit for modifying the autonomy bill. He is to be commended, so we are informed, for heeding public opinion, when he might have brazened it out. The public will not off-hand endorse this tribute to the prime minister. If Sir Wilfrid had possessed a reasonable respect for public opinion, he would have consulted its accredited representatives before preparing the bill. He would have consulted Hon. Clifford Sifton, the minister who is especially entrusted with the management and control of the Territories. He would have consulted Hon. W. S. Fielding, who, more than any other minister, was competent to speak for the Maritime Provinces, and last, but not least, he would have consulted Hon. F. W. Haultain, the premier of the Northwest Territories. But Sir Wilfrid did not consult any of these sources of public opinion. He took advantage of the absence of Messrs. Sifton and Fielding to attempt to steal the liberties of the people of the West. Because he has dropped the goods, his journalistic admirers are heaping all kinds of praise upon him. This is a new doctrine, based on the theory that the thief who abandons his spoils is worthier than the thief who clings to the plunder. Sir Wilfrid has come down—not confessing his crime against the public, not conceding the virtue of the public opinion that threatened him, but simply because he saw in partial surrender the only possible means of saving himself, his government and his party.

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