

do not trust the Government. The Liberal party are a party that will not do more for Roman Catholics than for Protestants, but will mete out equal-handed justice to all. As regards the question before the House, I am not afraid, as I have never been afraid, to state my own views and position upon it. My views no doubt differ to a considerable extent from those held by some hon. gentlemen who will vote as I will vote upon this question. From the speech delivered by the Minister of Finance a few days ago, it was evident that a great change had come over the position of certain parties in this country. I was highly amused to hear a Conservative argue exactly on the same lines so far as the rights of the minorities are concerned as we in Ontario have been arguing for many years past. As I understand the question, separate schools are guaranteed to the province of Ontario under confederation; dissentient schools in Quebec are in exactly the same position. I have always understood that the separate school system originated at the instance of the Protestants of Quebec. I know this from an acquaintance with dissentient schools in Quebec, that the Protestants of that province will not be willing to surrender them; and I further believe that the Roman Catholics in that province have done even handed justice to the Protestants and will continue to do so. So far as Ontario is concerned, I believe the same conditions will prevail, and to my mind it is not a question as to whether we like separate schools or not, but the question is what has been guaranteed under the constitution to the minorities in those two provinces in that respect. Those conditions we are bound to maintain. So far as I am concerned public schools would satisfy me, and I want nothing more; but I am not disposed to ask other men to take my medicine. As I understand it, the only difference between Protestant and Catholic on this question is one of degree. In Quebec, the Protestants want separate schools, and in Ontario the Catholics want separate schools. It is true the Protestants are satisfied with a less degree of religion in their schools, I believe, than the Roman Catholics are, and it is only in this respect that they differ.

Now, Mr. Speaker, my views on this question are as follows: In so far as the maritime provinces are concerned, I do not think that the Dominion Government would have any right at all to interfere. These provinces had their legislatures before confederation, and no change was made at that time. I believe, that in so far as these provinces are concerned, it is within their own jurisdiction to continue their school affairs as they please. In so far as the provinces of Ontario and Quebec are concerned, we have the separate schools as a fixture, and I

do not believe that they will, or can be changed. Now, then, in so far as Manitoba is concerned, and in so far as any provinces that may in the future come into confederation are concerned, I believe that the same rights should be extended to these new provinces as exist in the provinces of Ontario and Quebec. In so far as the minority in the province of Manitoba are concerned, I am perfectly willing that they should have well regulated separate schools. I believe that a grievance exists, and I believe that that grievance should be remedied. But, Mr. Speaker, I am not prepared to vote for a law that coerces Manitoba. I believe that that question can be settled in a far quicker way than by a resort to such means. I believe in the proposition of the hon. leader of the Opposition.

An hon. member. Of course you do.

Some hon. gentleman says "of course you do." Well, whether my leader propounded that doctrine or not, I would certainly believe in it. I have said, Sir, that a grievance exists, and that that grievance should be remedied. But, Mr. Speaker, I further believe that the Government have been playing with this question for the last six years. I am not a lawyer, and I do not pretend to know anything about constitutional law, but there is one thing which appears very strange indeed to me, and that is, that this very Government which allowed the Manitoba School Act to become law, asks us to-day to wipe out that Act by legislation in this House. Why did they ever allow the Act to go into force when they could exercise the veto power? So far as I am concerned, their course seems to me to be devoid of reason and common sense. It seems to me perfectly absurd, that this Government which allowed the Act to go into force, and who put themselves under the shadow of the courts of the land, until finally they are driven into a corner on the question, should come and ask this Parliament to restore the school laws of Manitoba which existed before 1890, and which they themselves allowed to be abolished. Although I do not believe in disallowance generally, I do believe that this Act of 1890 should have been disallowed. Strongly as I believe in restoring their rights to the minority of Manitoba, I am not prepared to vote to-day for this Bill, because I believe that a joint commission appointed by this Government and by the Manitoba government would arrive at a solution of the question, and would settle it in a manner far more satisfactory to the country than by making it a political question, as has been done. Mr. Speaker, I will not delay the House any longer. There are several other gentlemen who wish to speak. I have expressed my views upon the subject and I have nothing more to say.