

I judge for myself. I accord to them the same freedom I claim for myself, and I would rather, a hundred-fold, be the victim of the wrongful judgment of others, than myself become the instrument of wrong to any portion of my fellow-countrymen.

It being Six o'clock, the Speaker left the Chair.

After Recess.

Mr. CHARLTON. I feel called upon, before recording the vote I shall give upon the motion now in your hands, to explain the reasons that will actuate me in voting for that motion. I feel that, in doing this, I am separating myself from the majority of my friends in this House, that I am acting with a minority, and probably with a very small minority, of its members; and, were I to look at this question purely from the standpoint of its value in votes, I should no doubt feel perfectly content to give a silent vote, and a vote with the majority. My convictions, however, forbid my voting in this way. I realise that the position I take is an unpopular one in this House. I realise, also, that the position I take will quite possibly send me to private life after the expiration of this Parliament but I feel bound from conviction of duty to take the course I propose to take in reference to this matter. Many of the gentlemen who have addressed the House upon this question have professed to be able to do so entirely independent of all feeling of a religious character. They have professed to be able to divest themselves of all prejudices of bias resulting from their religious belief. I do not know that I will claim to be able to do this. I presume that I am swayed and influenced in the course I take in this matter by my education, by my religious belief, and I approach the consideration of this question, I am free to admit, from the standpoint and influenced by the belief of a Protestant; and, although I shall endeavor to be, and I believe I shall succeed in being, impartial in this matter, I do not, I repeat, believe I shall be able to divest myself entirely of all influences that religious training and religious belief may be calculated to exert in reference to it. I feel that this is a question of very great importance, and one of far-reaching consequence, and I feel that it is a question upon which men should act from conviction, upon which men should act in the way they believe they are required to act in the best interests of their country and for the purpose of securing the best results as to the future welfare and the future well-being of that country. This question has been discussed from a legal standpoint fully and ably. The views of those who are opposed to the action of the Government in this matter, the views of those who will support the motion of my hon. friend from Muskoka (Mr. O'Brien), were most ably presented to the House and to the country by the hon. member for North Simcoe (Mr. McCarthy). The defence of the Government was made in a brilliant and able effort by the Minister of Justice, and the effort of the Minister of Justice was ably seconded by the scholarly and profound argument of the hon. member for Bothwell (Mr. Mills). I shall not attempt to traverse the ground traversed by these gentlemen. My education perhaps does not fit me for an exhaustive disquisition upon the character of this measure from a legal standpoint, and I shall endeavor to present the case from a layman's standpoint, and to present the reasons which influence me in the course which I shall take upon this great question.

There is one feature of this case that has not yet been dwelt upon, at least, to any considerable extent—I refer to the peculiar ethnologic conditions of this Dominion. When the younger Pitt, in 1791, erected the two Provinces in Canada, granting to one Province the use of the French language, French laws, French customs and institutions, giving to the other Province the English language, English

laws, and English institutions, avowedly for the purpose of creating two rival, jealous, and, in a sense, hostile Provinces, that the catastrophe that had occurred a few years before, when the thirteen colonies revolted from the British Crown, might not recur again; when, I say, that he erected these two Provinces upon these divergent lines for this avowed purpose, he certainly succeeded most admirably in creating two Provinces with mutual contrasts in language and in the essential characteristics of nationality. These Provinces are not only diverse in race and in language, but also in religion, and the dominant church in the Province of Quebec is a political factor of the very highest importance in this Dominion. It naturally exercises its power and its great influence for the purpose of forwarding its own interests and designs. It does this, Sir, with sleepless vigilance, it does it with consummate ability, and it has been enabled to exercise a most powerful influence upon the destinies and upon the politics of the Dominion of Canada. Now, Sir, as I say, this power is exerted for the furtherance of its purposes, as is most natural. I do not complain of this, I do not say that it is to be expected that any other course would be taken by the French Catholic Church of Canada, I would not say that it was in the interest of Canada, but it is not unnatural that the church should do this. The Minister of Justice last night, in the course of his speech on this question, in defending Mr. Mercier in the course he has taken in regard to the Jesuit estates, alluded to one fact which exemplifies, in the most vivid light imaginable, the great influence and power of that church in the Province of Quebec. He told us that the Jesuit estates held by the Government of Quebec to be Government property, held by them to be a property in which the Jesuits' fraternity had no legal right, to which they had no legal claim, notwithstanding the position of the Government in regard to these estates, the Government was unable to sell this property, that it had been offered for sale and no purchasers could be procured. Why, Sir? Because the power of this church was so great that men did not dare, or would not, as they were deterred by the influence of the church, purchase this property; the power of this church was so great that estates held by the Government to be the property of the Crown, to be a property to which the church and the Jesuit fraternity had no legal claims, could not be sold in consequence of the opposition of the church to their sale. Well, nothing could exemplify more vividly the great influence of this society than this fact referred to by the Minister of Justice.

Sir, I referred, a moment ago, to the peculiar ethnologic conditions of this Dominion. Now, no man, I presume, in this House or in this country, would for a moment assert that it was not in the interest of the country that homogeneity, that assimilation, should be promoted. But the question is, how can this result be obtained? How can the diverse races of this Dominion be made homogeneous, how can they be made to assimilate? It is desirable that such should be done. Every man who wishes to see the Dominion of Canada become a great nation, must desire to see the races occupying this country acting in concert, acting in harmony, and to a much greater extent than at present made homogeneous. I hold, Mr. Speaker, that any measure that will retard the realisation of this desire for the assimilation of these races, that any measure that will, on the contrary, have a tendency to set them wider asunder, that will have a tendency to create and foster animosities and the jealousies that are natural to the existence of two such races, is a measure that should be deprecated, is a measure that should be opposed by every lover of his country in this Dominion. Now, events as they are developed have hitherto had a tendency, in some respects, to put these two races wider apart, and this very tendency, in face of the desire of those who wish to see a homogeneous people and a great nation, this very tendency to drive