

SPEECH

OF

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— ON —

The Manitoba School Question.

Taken from Hansard, March 19th, 1896.

In the discussion of the matter before the House, we have listened to many long and able speeches. Of the hon. gentleman who has just taken his seat (Mr. Costigan) I will say this, that I thoroughly believe in the sentiments he expressed in his closing remarks. I believe he is a man of broad gauge. I have always respected him, and I hope I always shall respect him. Mr. Speaker, the hon. gentleman who opened this debate, the Secretary of State, also made his closing speech to-day, and what did we expect on such an occasion? We expected some summary of the debate, some argument, and some broad discussion of the question. But after eulogizing the hon. member for Bothwell (Mr. Mills) he devoted himself to the leader of the Opposition, and what did he say? He said that his speech was eloquent, and he very properly congratulated him on the eloquence of his great speech; but he said at the same time that it was 'nothing more or less than a bundle of contradictions from beginning to end. Did he take up that speech, and show wherein the leader of the Opposition was chargeable with one single contradiction? No, sir, not at all. He devoted himself to an exaltation of his own acts. He also greatly deplored the discord which this debate would create in this country as the result of turning nationalities and creeds against each other. Was there ever a speech delivered in this House more calculated to turn class and creed against each other than the speech of the hon. gentleman? He is the great man. According to his own statement, he made Nova Scotia; after he made Nova Scotia, he created the Dominion; he is now engaged in the unification of the Empire, and when he has completed that work, he is going to tackle the universe. The hon. gentleman claims that in a lecture he delivered as a youth he laid the foundations of confederation. I have always understood that the Hon. Joseph Howe and Mr. Alexander Galt were the first men who introduced that question, they being followed by Hon. George Brown, and to Mr. Brown more than to any other man confederation is due. I have stated that the speech of the Secretary of

State was calculated more than any speech to which I have ever listened to turn creed against creed and nationality against nationality. He has done a great wrong to the country in that regard. But there is a party in this House to whom the country owes a gratitude for the manly position they have taken. I refer to the French Liberals of the Province of Quebec. But for them we might have a war of races; owing to their noble conduct, however, they have averted such a disaster. What did the hon. Secretary of State do? He took position after position to show how the Liberal party had been unjust from confederation forwards to the Roman Catholic minority. Is the hon. gentleman aware that there is a Conservative party in Ontario? What has been the conduct of that party for many years past? Is that not the party which has attempted to wreck the constitution, to destroy separate schools in that province, to put down the French language. Three successive elections have been run on those lines in Ontario, and the chief of the party who ran the elections in the interest of the Conservatives has received his reward, and is now Chief Justice of the province. From whom has he received his reward? From the very men who are now claiming that they are defending the rights of the Catholic minority. So far as the rights of the Catholic minority are concerned, their defence is more largely to be credited to the Liberal party than to any other party in the country. Hon. gentlemen opposite have asserted that the leader of the Opposition was making a great bid for power. The Minister of Finance said the other day that my hon. friend was playing a bold game; he even referred to cards up his sleeves, but the hon. Minister knows more about matters of that kind than I do. The Conservative party to-day, driven into a corner, are making a desperate bid for the entire Roman Catholic vote of the Dominion. But they are not going to obtain it, for the Roman Catholics well know that the present Government have made this school question a political one throughout. They have simply deceived the Roman Catholics, and they in turn