

Winnipeg with the government of Mr. Greenway himself, because, if there is such an outrageous state of things existing in the province of Manitoba, not a moment should be lost in coming to the rescue of the oppressed minority.

Hon. Mr. SCOTT—Hear, hear.

Hon. Mr. FERGUSON—That was three years after the Manitoba School Act was passed, and perhaps it might be excusable for the hon. gentleman not having in those three years been able to discover this fact—which I do not think is an important fact at all—as to whether these were Protestant or Catholic schools. Notwithstanding he thought a moment's time should not be lost in getting a remedy. Now, we find the hon. gentleman putting himself again on record in 1893, at a Liberal convention held in Ottawa, and I shall read everything he said about the Manitoba school question in that convention :

Now it is my duty to refer to another question which is an irritating subject, because it touches questions of creed and race, I refer to the Manitoba school question. I have received several communications urging me to take a course upon that question. Different persons in the different provinces have asked me to take opposite courses. To them, I have given no answer.

I hope I will be excused when I say that this explanation of his having been asked by friends in one part of the country to take one kind of action, and by friends in another part of the country to take another action, and that he has given no answer, reminds me of the story of Buridan's ass who was placed midway between two bundles of hay and before he could make up his mind which bundle to feed from he died of starvation. So the leader of the Liberal party finds himself in this position; he is implored by people from one province to take one side, and implored by another class of people to take another side, and to each of them he gives no answer.

I give it now, he says. I wish the question were in any another condition.

The complaint the hon. gentleman was making was that the government had tied the matter up by sending it to the courts, but he wished it was relieved from this condition, so that it could be fully and freely discussed.

Those of you who follow political events know that Mr. Tarte on the one hand and Mr. Dalton McCarthy on the other, agreed that the govern-

ment were a pack of cowards—that they did not deal with that subject in a manly way. For my part, I speak in the same sense.

They were all happily agreed on that point.

And I now say that the government acted in a cowardly way and did not dare to speak either one way or the other. It was there bounden duty to say one thing or the other. But instead of acting like men of courage they allowed passion to be inflamed in Manitoba and Quebec, and never dared to stand up like men and put an issue of the question. They are to be blamed for this. They shunted the question to the courts where it is now. The opposition are not in a position to take any action until such time as a report has been given by the courts.

Here the government were a pack of cowards because they did not discuss it when it was before the courts, and he turns round and says the opposition were not in a position to say anything upon it until such time as a decision was given by the courts. He adds :—

And until the courts have decided whether or not the government have no right to interfere. Then it will be time for us to say we will act or not.

At all events, we learn from this that the hon. gentleman was not then prepared to speak. He had been pressed by his friends from different parts of the country, holding conflicting views, to take one side or the other and he gave no answer, and he condemned the government because they did not do anything, and then says the opposition could not do anything until the question came out of the courts. Now, the hon. member has spoken again on this question. I might quote from a speech which he made in Winnipeg, in which he substantially repeats what he said in April, 1893. In Winnipeg, on the 3rd September, 1894, he declared that he is a firm believer in provincial rights. I must quote his exact words in order that there may be no misapprehension about it. It was on this very question that he was speaking when he declared in this way that he was a firm believer in provincial rights, although my hon. friend does not seem to think that provincial rights are at all involved in this question. He says.

I am a firm believer in provincial rights. In the Dominion House of Commons I have stood up for the authority of the provinces. When I took up the petition of my fellow-religionists of Manitoba, complaining of the legislation of the government of Manitoba, I asked myself, what is the complaint? * * * I took up the petition of the Archbishop and of those who signed it with