

in violation of justice, could get some hold in that province. I wonder whether that doctrine is taught in what are called the national schools. The opponents of our schools are trying to make a good deal of the fact that some of our schools seem to have accepted the new law. I am in a position to say that not a single one of those school districts is in favour of the new system. If left free they will all favour the Catholic school system. Notwithstanding all that has been said about us, so eager are we to give our children the best instruction available that some of our school districts, deprived, as they were, of their legitimate share of the government grant, deprived of the right to levy taxes on their own property for the support of their schools, obliged to pay besides for the maintenance of the so-called national schools, were unable to keep up their own schools. Still they were desirous of not leaving their children without education. Inducements were offered to them by the local government through their officers to attend the schools without entirely sacrificing their views, and they thought they might try the new system. It is not on account of any preference for the public schools but because of their poverty and of the peculiar inducements offered to them. The local government were anxious to have some of our schools brought under the law in order to be able to base an argument upon the change. An inspector was sent to them who told them that if they wanted to keep up their schools the government would not be too exacting about compliance with the regulations. He told them that they might quietly give any religious instruction in the school after school hours. He told them that they could begin and close school work by saying the ordinary Catholic prayers and even suggested how it should be done. Instead of opening the school at a certain hour, they might open some few minutes before, and at the closing they might close a few minutes after the regular hour, so that they might be able to say that there had been no prayer during the school hours. There are forms of report provided by the government. I have been informed by certain parties that the teachers of those schools were advised that if the clause as to religious instruction was embarrassing to their conscience, as this report has to be under oath, they might strike out that clause. It was by such inducements,

contrary to the spirit of the law, that those schools, in their poverty, thought they might avail themselves of the opportunity presented to them to get their share of the taxes and of the government grant, and thereby keep up their schools. The changes having been brought about under those circumstances, the opponents of our schools cannot base any solid argument against our contention. It might be said that the local government, being disposed to shut their eyes to the management of these schools, we might be satisfied and let the matter drop. My reply is that there are principles involved which we cannot overlook. Besides, the result would be that it would work well enough for some years and then, after abandoning all our rights, we might wake up some fine morning to find the law applied to us in all its severity and we would be without recourse. We are justified in apprehending this when we bear in mind the doctrine lately advanced in Manitoba and expressed yesterday in this House, that the majority cannot be bound by any previous agreement. Let us look at this assertion about the rallying of certain schools to the new system, in some other way. If we look at the report of the government, we see that some of these schools never received any grant from the government. How can they be said to have been under the law? Is it by the election of trustees? There being no law in force at present in Manitoba except the school act of 1890, if we want to keep up our school organization we must elect trustees as required by law, but this alone cannot be said to be a test. I repeat that all these schools without an exception would gladly return to the Catholic school system if an opportunity were given them to do so, and therefore the argument based upon that falls to the ground. I know personally that some of the schools in Manitoba have never had anything to do with the new law except perhaps to receive taxes from the municipality. They could not receive the taxes unless they, to a certain extent, recognized that they were public schools, but really it is more a matter between the municipalities and the school districts than between the government and the schools themselves. I may add that if to-morrow our rights were restored all those schools would return to the Catholic system. The hon. gentleman has also propounded another strange doctrine, which is but a