

word, no other word will fit the case. You say it is coercion when they interfere in their proper sphere and in their proper right with the school system as it existed. It is nothing of the kind. It was the exercise of a legislative power, and the province has deliberately adopted that system, that has ratified and confirmed it with a popular approval constantly increasing—that province is to be told here by a paramount power that the law is wrong, that her proceedings are all wrong; and this law is to be placed on our statute-book as if it was passed by the free people of Manitoba themselves. Sir, I do not know that I am justified in occupying the time of the House much longer; but I have not dealt with the question to which I devoted a good deal of time, and that is the question of the minority in Quebec. If I have been at all successful in the statement I have made, I think I must have satisfied every reasonable mind that there ought to be no interference with the school system of Manitoba, so far as that province is concerned. But we are implored here on behalf of the Protestant minority of Quebec, not to deny a right to the Roman Catholic minority in Manitoba. If you do, says the Minister of Trade and Commerce, can you doubt that our action will be followed by reprisals from the majority of Quebec? The Postmaster General had anticipated that argument, and said that the generous French people would never interfere with the rights of the minority; and the hon. member for Three Rivers (Sir Hector Langevin), who followed the hon. Minister of Trade and Commerce, spoke in the same strain. But, Sir, I have yet to know when the Protestants of that province are not calling upon us, or not insisting on our staying our hands in Manitoba, why we should do an injustice to Manitoba for fear of a possible contingency which we are told can never happen, in the province of Quebec. What is the word that comes from the province of Quebec? The Minister of Trade and Commerce, the representative of the Protestants, stands up here and implores us on behalf of the Protestants whom he represents, forsooth, in this House, to pass this separate school law, and to impose separate schools on the province of Manitoba. What was the petition presented here the other day? Was that in the same strain? Was that in the language of a politician, or from a body competent and capable of speaking on the subject? And what did they say? A petition was received and read from the Quebec branch of the British Evangelical Alliance, protesting against the introduction and passing of a Remedial Bill in Parliament. The reasons set forth are:

That the Bill seems an arbitrary and unusual interference with the delegated rights of the individual provinces, and calculated injuriously to affect the good relations now subsisting amongst the various provinces of the Dominion.

Mr. McCARTHY.

Also, that it would practically be the endowment by the state out of the public treasury of one particular church to the exclusion of all other churches, and this would necessarily excite religious jealousies and rivalries injurious to peace and prosperity. Also, that it would seriously injure the cause of public education by dividing the financial resources for promoting it, and would waste these resources by providing two or more teachers for small groups of children, who could all meet together under the care of one teacher. Also, that it would be forcibly re-introducing a system of separate schools in Manitoba under clerical control, which are now happily disappearing from all civilized and progressive countries in Europe and America. Therefore, while disclaiming any desire to promote the interests of any political party, or unjustly to interfere with the interests of any church, the petitioners pray that the Bill may not become law.

That is not the only voice we have from that province. What does the "Presbyterian Record" say, speaking on behalf of the Presbyterians. I believe the official organ, and copied in the Montreal "Witness" with approval? Does it ask us to restore separate schools, or to pass a Remedial Bill? On the contrary, it says:

If the present order of things is reversed and separate schools are re-established there will not be fair-play. The Roman Catholics will then have Government-aided schools with their own catechism as a text book, while the Presbyterians, Episcopalians, Methodists, or Baptists, will have no such liberty.

In Quebec, other denominations have not the same privileges that the Roman Catholics have. Presbyterians cannot use their catechism in the separate schools, nor can Episcopalians or others use theirs. These other denominations have to make some sacrifice, to unite on some common ground, in order to get the benefits of an education, and under such a separate school system there is not fair-play.

Fair-play demands that the present order of things in Manitoba be maintained. To go back to the former position is to give the Romanists an advantage that others are not allowed, and every lover of freedom and of his country should stand for fair-play to all and favours to none.

2. A second error in many minds is that the Roman Catholic people feel it to be a great grievance not to have the separate schools, with their catechism as a text book.

If this were the case there would be more of sympathy with the claim for the old schools, even though the claim be unjust. But such is not the fact.

The Roman Catholic people are realizing that the schools as controlled by the church are utterly inefficient; that the children coming out of such schools from the average country district, with little education beyond their knowledge of the catechism and church observances, are sadly wanting in equipment for the work of life.

It is an open secret that a great body of the Roman Catholic people, both in Manitoba and Quebec, would prefer national schools, and if there were a free expression of the opinion of the intelligent Roman Catholics of Canada, there is little doubt that it would be largely in favour of public national schools apart from the control of the clergy.