

The cry raised throughout the country was "hands off Manitoba" and "no coercion." It was denied that this Parliament had the right to pass an Act which would override the deliberate policy of the Manitoba legislature. I do not intend to go into any argument in relation to that question. I am not dealing with the subject with that object, but in order to show on what issue we went before the country. That was the issue clearly and emphatically put. The Government of which I had the honour to be the head, declared in a public manifesto, issued by myself, that a cardinal plank in their platform was the restoration of the privileges which had been taken away from the Catholic minority of Manitoba and they appealed to the country for support on that issue. As the hon. gentleman knows, there was no more clearly defined issue ever put before any country than that which was put openly by the Government of which I had the honour to be the head. The late Government believed that it was the bounden duty under the circumstances, of the Government of Canada to respect the judicial decision of the Queen's Privy Council. They believed it had become their duty, under that decision, to pass an Act which, so far as we were able to do it, would restore the privileges of which the minority had been deprived. The hon. gentleman joined issue with the Government on that question. He declared that there should be no coercion and that whatever was accomplished must be done by persuading the majority to undo what they had done. At Chatham, the hon. gentleman said emphatically :

Mr. Laurier dealt fully with the school question. It was, he declared, a provincial question.

There is a sharp issue joined. We held that it was a provincial question down to the time when the legislature of Manitoba invaded the rights of the minority, but that it then ceased to be purely a provincial question, and the duty devolved upon this Parliament to redress the wrongs which had been inflicted. The hon. gentleman, however, said it was essentially a provincial question.

But because, at Ottawa, there was a Government which had not the courage to do right, it was dragged into the federal arena.

That could only mean one thing, namely, that the Government of Canada had failed in its duty to this country in not vetoing the Act of 1890. The hon. gentleman will see at once that if that be the case, it only renders the duty still more imperative of remedying the wrong. Until at Ottawa there were men prepared to show the courage to do right, the school question would never be settled. That is a good deal like the Delphic oracle. It will admit of half a dozen constructions.

It was the privilege—

Sir CHARLES TUPPER.

This is the point to which I wish to ask the hon. gentleman's attention.

It was the privilege of the minority to agitate and agitate until the majority were convinced.

There is no suggestion that in case the majority failed to do justice to the minority, Parliament would intervene. There is no suggestion that it was the duty of Parliament and in the power of Parliament to restore the privileges which had been taken away from the minority.

I will refer to another leading member of Mr. Mackenzie's Administration, a gentleman whom I am glad to see occupying the position of Secretary of State at this moment, the Hon. Mr. Scott. Mr. Scott in a public speech, delivered here in the city of Ottawa, and reported in the Montreal "Star" of 29th May, 1896, said :

If that question could be laid aside for two or three years it would settle itself, and people would see and do what was fair, but they could not allow questions of race and creed to arise. Mr. Laurier's was the only possible solution of the question. Manitoba was returning members pledged against remedial legislation, so that claims that a Bill should be passed next session was a fraud. It required delicate handling, gentleness, conciliation and fair reasoning, not coercion and talks of standing on rights. The minority would realize that anything could only be granted by the good-will of the majority.

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There is the position to which Mr. Scott committed himself before the electorate of Ontario in the most emphatic manner in his declaration that nothing should be done, that there was no means by which this question could be settled, and he spoke as with authority from the hon. First Minister, whose opinions he endorsed. The hon. First Minister, who is quoted by Mr. Scott, was committed, so far as his colleague could commit him. The fact of Mr. Scott having been taken into the Government is, to a certain extent, an endorsement of the declarations which that hon. gentleman made, that there should be no coercion, that there should be no action by this Parliament to override the legislature of Manitoba.

I think I have made clear the issue between the hon. gentleman and the Government of the day on this question, taking the hon. gentleman's position as he put it throughout the province of Ontario during the recent election. But I now come to a rather curious part of this question, and that is that while the hon. gentleman obtained his support—not a majority I am happy to say—while he obtained the support which he did receive in the province of Ontario on the distinct pledge and declaration that he would never interfere, by any Act of this Parliament, but that only means of