

ceeds on the lines of least resistance. It refers to subjects which are many of them not controversial in their nature, but which are just now being discussed in the public press. It will be of great advantage to have the views and opinions of both Houses freely expressed on the many important questions to which reference is made. My hon. friend the leader of the opposition, in criticising the observations made by the senator from Lethbridge in reference to the Autonomy Bills rather departed I think, from the sound sense which usually characterizes him. The question of whether we ought to leave an apple of discord in those two provinces was freely discussed here last session. I think the experience which my hon. friend has had of the terrible consequences of the mistake of the Privy Council in the Manitoba case ought to be sufficient to prove that we should not leave this important question to be settled by a court of law in an action which any Joe Martin might bring, in either Alberta or Saskatchewan.

It was one of the fundamental principles of confederation—I say it because I have personal knowledge of the fact—that wherever separate schools, whether Protestant or Catholic existed by law when any portion of this Dominion came into confederation, these schools were to be preserved. There was an exception, however. No school law had been enacted giving to Protestants in the province of Quebec those special privileges which they now enjoy. Sir Alexander Galt, in the session of 1866, called attention to that fact, and stated that unless parliament then and there made special provision for the minority in that province, he would not remain in the government. Sir George Cartier assured him he might trust to the honour of the parliament of Canada or he might trust the local legislature. Sir Alexander Galt was not satisfied, however, to do so; and he went out of office. Now we have, as I may say, forced on the province of Quebec the schools desired by the minority. That is practically what we did. We did not force any measure of that kind upon Alberta or Saskatchewan. They had deliberately adopted a school law themselves. When the Northwest Territory Act was discussed in 1875 both Liberals and Conservatives in the par-

liament of Canada said then and there, 'we will settle this question for all time, and not allow any apple of discord to exist in the future.' What was done then was done by universal consent. Every man who has since settled in the Northwest knew the conditions of the constitution; but when this government attempted to give force to what had been agreed to in 1875, a howl went up all over this country from parties who protested against any legislation of that kind. Finally we thought that it was infinitely better to make a compromise, if this country was to prosper and continue in the course of united advancement and so we were satisfied, those of us who supported the separate school idea, with a minimum of privileges. The schools were to be practically public schools until half past three in the afternoon; and we have the evidence of my hon. friend who personally visited a school in the Northwest—strong opponent though he had been of the principle of separate schools—that he was rather pleased than otherwise at the prayer or religious instruction which was given between half past three and four o'clock. It does seem in my judgment to be a protest against Christianity, against God himself, when people say, 'we object to prayer in the schools; we object to teaching the children to be devout; all we have to consider is this world; we do not care about the future.'

Now, to my mind we are in this world to prepare for the next, and surely that man must be lost to all sense of morality and Christianity who says, 'I object to an appeal to God to make us a better people.' I do think it is most regrettable that such an objection should be raised. This is a very broad subject, and I do not propose to follow it up; but it was most important that no firebrand should be in a position in the future to raise the question in either of these fair provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan. The minority who believe in religious instruction were satisfied to make a compromise and to accept the least possible concession, which was a half-hour of religious instruction. Surely that could hurt no man. The schools were to be public schools until half-past three and after that religious instruction might be given to those who desired to receive it. There was no