

new penal law. I have always thought and I think still that legislators are not justified in inflicting harsh penalties save in cases of grave necessity, that is, when imperative needs have to be met and the object in view cannot be attained by less violent methods. So long therefore as we shall not have exhausted all the means at our command, I maintain that we would not be warranted in resorting to so severe a proceeding as that actually suggested.

I see that, by this bill, only *non-Catholic* parents, tutors, curators or guardians are required to send their children or wards to school under pain of a fine of \$5 to \$20 and of imprisonment in default of payment. As will be perceived, this bill proposes not only a penal law, but it also tends to create distinctions between the different classes of inhabitants of this province. If we were to give force of law to such a proposition, we would strip *non-Catholic* parents of a liberty simply because they are not Catholic, while we would maintain it in the case of Catholic parents because they are Catholic. In other words, we would punish a minority, because they do not share the beliefs of the majority, for, it must not be forgotten, it is not the exercise of a right or a privilege that is claimed, but simply the imposition of a penalty.

I may be mistaken, perhaps, but I have always understood that the penal laws in this province and in this country should apply to all citizens without