

French. In the light of the above it is almost superfluous to add that the Icelandic children in but three or four years have attained a proficiency in the English language that the French have not in a very much longer period.

Mr. Ewart's report about the Mennonite schools is to the same effect:

Progress has been made particularly in English, arithmetic and geography. German being the vernacular of the Mennonites is in nearly all schools the medium of instruction, yet where the teacher has sufficient command of English the most important branches on the programme are taught in English.

Now I come to the question asked me by the hon. member for Beauharnois (Mr. Bergeron).

Mr. LaRIVIERE. Before the hon. gentleman answers that, may I ask him a question? He has given the authority for the last two reports. Will he give the authority for the former charges?

Mr. McCARTHY. The statement upon which these are based, is Mr. Wade's pamphlet.

Mr. LaRIVIERE. Which the government paid him to write.

Mr. McCARTHY. As to the others, they will be found in the official reports presented in the year 1895. Now, Sir, the very natural question was asked: Why did not the government seek to reform, instead of abolishing these schools? That question presented itself to the Manitoba government, and the Manitoba legislature. What is the answer? Mr. Sifton says:

When we came to the point that we should abolish the double management of the schools the question came up as to whether we should have separate schools or not; and it is often stated that if we had stated to the Catholic Church that we wanted to regulate these schools and see that they were efficient the Roman Catholic Church would have concurred in the proposal. There is no truth whatever in any suggestion of the kind. From the first moment of the declaration that we were going to do away with the abuses of the system we met with the most uncompromising opposition from the Catholic Church. It was declared that they would fight the new system to the bitter end, and they are fighting it to the bitter end.

Now, I think we may look for support to that statement of Mr. Sifton in a petition against the North-west schools, to which I referred a little while ago. From every Catholic bishop in Canada there is a protest couched in the most violent language against the reform of the schools in the North-west. Now, a member of the Government tells us that when the question was under consideration as to whether they should abolish the schools or simply abolish the dual system, they found they were antagonized by the Roman Catholic hierarchy to the same extent to the one proposed scheme as to the other. And now, having

come to the end of my statement, I appeal to this House to know upon what ground we are called upon to interfere. We have now the power to interfere, we have no duty to interfere. We have got legislative authority to interfere. We are in the position exactly of the higher and central body, who, under the circumstances that have happened in this case, have authority to review and reconsider, and if we choose, to abolish and annul what has been done in the province. But before we do that, we have investigated the charges they have made, I have shown that the charge they made, and the arguments they submitted by their counsel to the committee are absolutely unfounded; and I have given to you what has not appeared before, what it was not necessary to put forward in self-defence and on behalf of the province; I have given to you the grounds which moved the legislature to act in the way they did on that occasion. Under these circumstances, there cannot be any ground for interference except one; that ground the hon. gentleman who addressed us this afternoon (Sir Charles Hibbert Tupper) said he adopted, and that is that there ought to be separate schools. It won't do, therefore, for the Minister of Finance to tell us that this is a side issue. It is the only question. You are asking us to pass a Bill by which separate schools shall be restored; you are asking us, in so far as that goes, to repeal the School Act of 1890, and you are asking us to do that on no ground whatever unless it is good ground to say that separate schools should be established in Manitoba instead of the public school system. And the gentlemen who come from the provinces all about—in no province is there separate schools except Ontario, and only in Ontario because we are not able to do away with them—the gentlemen from these other provinces who won't have separate schools in their own province, are now going on insist that Manitoba should have separate schools. That is the simple, plain fact. Separate schools they won't have for themselves.

Mr. PRIOR. We virtually have them.

Mr. McCARTHY. You virtually have them. If so, let the people of Manitoba virtually have them by practice. Why should we go and pass a law and say: You must have them. I ask you to take warning from the words of John Sandfield Macdonald. I ask you to remember that Manitoba occupies a position in which we will find it very difficult to impose a law upon her against her will. She has now a population of 200,000, and she is adding greatly to the wealth and importance of this Dominion. If our exports exceed our imports, if our exports increase, we owe it to Manitoba. But you are going to sow the seeds of discord there; you are going to coerce the province—coerce is the proper