

# Debate on Mr. Crawford's Motion REGARDING REMEDIAL LEGISLATION.

On Wednesday afternoon a large number of citizens interested in the question of Remedial Legislation for Manitoba thronged the galleries of the chamber in the Local House. It was known that Mr. Crawford would introduce his resolution in favour of an expression of disapproval from the Ontario Legislature with respect to the action of the Ottawa Government in directing seemingly coercive measures against the Province of Manitoba regarding the re-establishment of separate schools; and it was also known, or at least surmised, that Mr. O. A. Howland would speak in favour of an amendment to remove the question from the sphere of political jurisdiction, and establish it as a judicial problem to be solved in the less heated atmosphere of non-partisan investigation. The speeches delivered on this occasion by some of the members of the House were worthy of the subject which provoked them; and if the critical observer of human nature desired to draw his own conclusions of the calibre of the minds which prompted the utterances of the honourable gentlemen, he had a splendid opportunity for indulging himself in speculation. From cool business-like reasoning to the noisy utterances of the mere politician there, ranged a fine variety of elocutionary types.

The questions by members having been disposed of according to their precedence in the Orders of the day, the Notices of Motion were read, and the hon. leader of the Opposition, Mr. Marter, moved for an order of the House for a return of copies of all correspondence, documents and writings between any member of the Government, or between any person or persons and the Government, in connection with the recent charges made by James Massie, late Warden of the Central Prison, against certain of the officials of the prison. Also, for copies of the commission, or other appointment, and the instructions given to the commissioners who investigated the charges. Also, for a copy of all evidence taken before the commissioners at the investigation, and of the report made thereon by the commissioners.

MR. MARTER considered that the best interests of the province would be served by calling attention to the fact that the Government had made the life of James Massie an intolerable burden to him; and that Mr. Noxon, his successor as warden of the Central Prison, had been charged by a learned judge, not only with uttering the lie positive, but with having been guilty of a "suppression of the truth" on a memorable occasion. The hon. member explained at length the action of the Government in connection with the matter, and a speech of three quarters of an hour's duration cleared the way for

MR. CRAWFORD'S motion touching the Manitoba school:—"That the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Ontario feel deep interest in all that concerns the well-being of every part of the Dominion of Canada. That the people of this province, believing in the principle of provincial rights, rejoice that the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council of Great Britain declared that the Legislature of the Province of Manitoba acted within their judicial rights in abolishing the dual system of schools, and establishing a single national system

of education in lieu thereof, in the Province of Manitoba. That we regard the legislation now being contemplated by the Dominion Government, known as the Remedial bill, the object of which is to abolish the national system of Manitoba and restore the old dual system in its place, unfavourably. That this Legislature cannot but look upon the legislation which is being promoted at Ottawa as an attack upon the legislative rights of a sister province, and as a measure, fraught with grave danger to the peace and prosperity of Confederation, and consequently, we hope, even yet, that the Dominion Government will decide to abandon the course it is at present following, and to leave Manitoba to manage her own educational affairs in the way that seems best to the people of that province.

MR. CRAWFORD, (Toronto w.), remarked that having due regard to the fact that the substance of his motion was in itself a departure from the ordinary business of the House, and, further, that he recognized his own position as an assumption of responsibility in introducing the motion, he should make his observations to the point. He was not in this matter representing one sect or one party, or even one of the four parties occupying seats on both sides of the House, but he believed that he was voicing the views of the people of the Province of Ontario, and of their representatives in Parliament before him. He desired neither to make political capital out of the fact that he had introduced the motion, nor, on the other hand, to give offence by his attitude on the question, but he was possessed of an honest wish to obtain from the House a free and frank expression of its disapproval of the Remedial Bill now being pressed to its conclusion by the Parliament of Canada. Such action, in his opinion, was not wise. It was fraught with great danger, and its results would be detrimental to the best interests, both of the Dominion and the Province of Manitoba. It was not necessary for him to say that the subject had been so thoroughly threshed out already in the press that even school children were aware of the significance of the words "Remedial Legislation." It had been said that the question was a legal one: if that were so, he would await an exposition of its legal side from some hon. gentleman versed in the law, and would content himself with a reference to a few of its salient features, without going into the question in its entirety. It was sufficient to say that in the year 1890, the Manitoba Legislature enacted a law, the effect of which was to abolish the dual system of schools which had previously existed in that province for four years, and that a single national system of education was thereby substituted. Objection was then taken to this new law by the Roman Catholic minority of Manitoba, and it was taken to the courts, and fought through the different stages, until the Supreme Court of the realm was called upon to decide for or against its legality. The just decision of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council was to the effect that the law was constitutional. The second decision of this august body was that the law in question did affect the privileges

of the minority in such a way as to justify an appeal on the part of the latter. That appeal was therefore made to the Governor-General in Council, and a message was sent to Manitoba from the Dominion Government commanding the restoration to the minority of the rights of which they had been stripped. The reply of Manitoba to this command was a distinct refusal to restore Separate Schools, and the Remedial Order which was at that moment under discussion in the House of Commons at Ottawa, was thereupon issued. It was because he trusted that that bill would be rejected that he had introduced his motion.

"I take the ground," continued the member for Toronto West, "that this bill was born in haste; and secondly that it is in its text and purpose an infringement upon Provincial Rights. I will not discuss the question of whether a grievance does or does not exist in this case. I say, merely, that before such a bill should become law, should be allowed to become law, the most exhaustive report, and the fullest investigation of the facts of the matter should be in the hands of the authorities. It is not the habit of Britons to take kindly to coercion; and if this coercive measure should become law it will be so against the expressed wishes of the people of Manitoba, and will seriously affect the growth and prosperity of that province. I go further and say that in such an event the minority must surely suffer since reaction is the natural result of a coercive measure. Furthermore, it will be evident that other denominations may consider that they also are possessed of certain special rights and privileges in the matter of religious education, and the upshot of this bill may be that Manitoba may be saddled with a large number of sectarian schools—a most undesirable state of affairs. Shall we not also be likely to have a repetition of the disturbance in other provinces of the Dominion? This bill, if passed, may and will result in such a stirring up of strife, of racial controversies, among the people of Canada, that the great questions of the day will be lost sight of, and the whole Dominion will thereby suffer. If the Manitoba Government refuse to put the necessary machinery in force to carry out the terms of this Order which we will suppose for a moment has become law, what a deplorable state of things will ensue! Even the foundations of Confederation may by this short-sighted policy be affected; but let such a possibility be treated by wiser brains than mine. I say that if there is a grievance to be remedied, and if redress is necessary, then this House will do well to say with me that such redress should come through Manitoba itself, and that until all possible means have been resorted to to pacifically bring about this end, coercion should not be thought of. The object of my motion is to obtain an expression of the disapproval of this Legislature of the action of the Dominion Government with respect to the Remedial order. If after investigation it is shown that the minority have been unjustly dealt with, and if the proper means of restoring their rights prove abortive, then I would be the first to admit the