THE HERALD

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 11, 1896.

PUBLISHED EVERY WEDNESDAY,
SUBSCRIPTION—$1.00 A YEAR,
JAMES McISAAC,
Editor & Proprietor.

Discussing the Remedial Bill.

As will be seen by our report of Parliamentary proceedings, the second reading of the remedial bill was moved on Tuesday of last week, and the question is now under discussion in the House of Commons. As will be perceived Sir Charles Tupper's speech, in moving the second reading, was moderate, forceful and argumentative. He pointed out that the Government were not only constitutionally, but from the point of view of honor and justice, bound to assume responsibility in this matter, and that they would be recreant to the trust reposed in them, if they did not press the question to a vote, even if thereby they should lose office. This is certainly a manly, honest and statesmanlike manner of dealing with this critical matter, and the only manner in which a Government worthy the confidence of the Canadian people could be expected to grapple with it.

Let us now see how the Leader of the Opposition dealt with the question. His admirers say he made a magnificent speech, one of the best of his life. We have seen in the Opposition organs, within the past few months, reports of several "best efforts of his life," made by Mr. Laurier. We have no intention of disputing that the Leader of the Opposition made a fine speech, nor do we desire to deprive his followers of any comfort they may derive from these "best efforts" of his. No doubt Mr. Laurier is a master of rhetorical phrase; but evidence is not wanting that his speeches are, for the most part, words and besides--nothing. In the first part of his address, Mr. Laurier launched into an eloquent denunciation of "coercion," as applied to the bill before the House. This is a favorite shibboleth with those who oppose remedial legislation, and Mr. Laurier, of course, wanted to make it appear to a certain wing of his followers that he opposed the measure. After he had waxed warm on this phase of the question, he turned a sharp corner and faced about in an opposite direction. It was his turn now to throw a sop to those of his followers who were in favor of remedial legislation. He went on to show that the minority had a constitutional right to relief, when their educational privileges were taken away. He was free to say that, under certain conditions, Parliament must interfere. Not satisfied with all this, he proceeded to arraign the Government because the Manitoba school acts of 1890 had not been disallowed. Our readers will please notice the duplicity underlying this argument. The amendment of the present school law, so as to restore to the minority rights of which they had been deprived in 1890, Mr. Laurier calls "coercion"; but the disallowance of the act, he pretends, would have been quite proper and not at all coercive. Does Mr. Laurier imagine he can humbug and deceive the whole country?

Having thus expressed himself on both sides of the question—for and against remedial legislation; in favor of disallowance and against "coercion," and having evidently got himself into such deep water that his best friends could not tell just where he was, he suddenly breaks out in favor of a commission. Now, surely his followers know what he is about. He has been talking commission for some time and now it seems plain he is going to prove the sincerity of his contention, by asking Parliament to appoint such a commission. But, astonishing to relate, this master of political acrobats disappointed his friends. When he came up to the fence, instead of jumping he shied and moved the six monthss hoist. To ordinary mortals, it would appear that no great amount of ability or statecraft is required to move that a bill be read the second time six months hence. But it seems to be the most exalted ideal of political strategy to which the brilliant genius who leads the Opposition in the Federal Parliament is capable of aspiring. And this after six years of investigation, consideration and discussion!

Judging by the latter portion of Mr. Laurier's speech and by his motion he is in favor of indefinitely postponing the question of remedial legislation for the Manitoba minority. But, if we refer to the records of Parliament we will find that this is in direct contradiction to his declarations of past years. In 1893 he said, in his place in Parliament, while this same question was up for discussion, that "something must be done, because this policy of delay, this policy of vacillation, is not only paralysing, but fast disintegrating national life. I say, because it is fast arraigning creed against creed, and race against race." If he believed what he uttered on this occasion, that delay was so disastrous, why does he now wish to create an interminable delay? In 1894, he was still of the same mind, for during the parliamentary session of that year he declared that "the longer this question is kept before the public, the worse it is for the good of Canada. It is a question upon which there should be an immediate and speedy answer." The question was then about to be brought before the Imperial Privy Council, and this is how Mr. Laurier regarded the proceeding. "It has been dragged from tribunal to tribunal, and if it is to be dragged to another tribunal what will be the consequence? The consequence will be that passions will be inflamed." At the Liberal convention held in Ottawa in 1893, he took occasion, in his French speech to place himself thus on record: "I will tell you what I would do if I were Prime Minister, I would render justice, no matter what the consequence might be, and not shift away my responsibility." What his idea of justice was, he thus explains in a speech at New Carlisle, Quebec, on August 24, 1895: "I will see that justice is rendered to the Catholic minority. I will see that they obtain their own proper schools." Either he was lying then or he is lying and deceiving now; for that very "justice" which he said he would obtain for the minority in Manitoba, the Government are endeavoring to obtain for them, and Mr. Laurier is doing his best to prevent them from obtaining it. He has been for years inveighing against delay, and now he moves to have the question indefinitely delayed. Now, dear readers we have submitted to you Mr. Laurier's course on the Manitoba School question, what is his policy in the matter?

Mr. Laurier, during his speech on the remedial bill, took occasion to state that it had been intimated to him that his course on the question under discussion was not agreeable to the Catholic Hierarchy of Canada. No doubt Mr. Laurier was actuated by a special motive in making such a declaration at that particular time. We observe, moreover, that this declaration has won high praise for him, from some of our local contempararies, which refer to him as "so devout a Catholic." All we have to say about the matter is this: A really good and "devout" Catholic always understands the proper relations that should exist between himself and the hierarchy. Such a Catholic never seeks an occasion to lay before the public what these particular relations may be; or to make any apology for them. These are matters of conscience, for which he is not responsible to the public. The very fact of Mr. Laurier's receiving praise from the quarter indicated, is presumptive evidence that he is not "so devout a Catholic," as is made to appear. A really good Catholic is satisfied to be judged by his acts, rather by anything he himself, or anyone else may say concerning his religion. We prefer judging Mr. Laurier's Catholicity by his acts. We understand Mr. Laurier is married to a non-Catholic. When he was in this city a few years ago, he attended the services in the Catholic Church on Sunday morning, and the services of one of the Protestant churches in the evening. He did the same thing on the occasion of his last visit to Winnipeg. These are a few small matters; but they are not the actions of a "devout Catholic."

One or two Toronto papers are threatening rebellion if the remedial measure is passed. Major Mulvey is encouraged to take down his gun and told that others will be with him. By all means let us have a rebellion. It would be too bad if a few half-breeds in the Northwest were permitted to educate their children according to their own ideas instead of those of their Protestant neighbors—Ottawa Citizen.

We regret that space does not permit us to give a lengthy account of the excellent entertainment given, according to announcement, by the pupils of Notre Dame Convent, in the spacious hall of that institution last evening. The different parts—vocal and instrumental music, callisthenics and dramatic performance, were well executed and elicited hearty applause. There was a large and most appreciative audience.

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THE REMEDIAL BILL.

The galleries of the House of Commons were packed on Tuesday afternoon 3rd., when, according to announcement, Sir Charles Tupper, Bart. rose to move the second reading of the remedial bill. On rising, to make this motion Sir Charles said he did so under a deep sense of responsibility. The question transcended in importance any measure that had ever been submitted to parliament during its existence. Before entering on the discussion of the measure, he would like ro ask the attention of the House while he reviewed what had been accomplished since confederation. In 1864, a measure was concerted between New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and P. E. Island for Maritime union. Sir Leonard Tilley was then premier of New Brunswick, the late Col. Gray for P. E. Island, and he (Tupper) held the same position in Nova Scotia. Sir Leonard Tilley was known throughout Canada from his high attainments and able public services. At that time a deputation came down from Canada to suggest confederation. The position of Canada at that time was most unfortunate. Racial and religious strife existed and Upper and Lower Canada were divided into hostile camps. The credit of the country was low and trade was stagnant. It was under these circumstances that the leaders of public opinion in Canada sought to bring about a change in her constitution, and made overtures to the Maritime colonies for a federation of British North America. He outlined the negotiations which took place and made a graceful reference in passing to Sir Hector Langevin, the only father of confederation now in parliament except himself. Confederation was brought about, all the colonies joining together except Newfound land, but he hoped the time was not ar distant when confederation would be rounded off by that colony becoming a portion of the Dominion. (Cheers.) Sir Charles proceeded to sketch in eloquent language the progress of Canada since confederation. To-day her credit stood as high as any country in the world; her colonies were joined from the Atlantic to the Pacific, and the country was united by ties commercial, political and social. But confederation would never have been accomplished except for the acceptance of a proposal of Sir Alexander Galt's, then the representative of the Protestants of Quebec, with a view to the protection of the rights of the minorities, whether Catholic or Protestant. The British North America act provided that a province should legislate exclusively on educational matters, except as otherwise set forth. Minorities, whether Catholic or Protestant, were given a guarantee of their educational rights, including an appeal to federal authority and the right of the parliament of Canada to pass remedial laws. The talk of coercing Manitoba, in view of the provisions of the Confederation act, was simply absurd. Once the right of the minorities was infringed upon and an appeal was made to the federal authority, and the provincial authority declined to redress the grievances complained of, then ipso facto the federal parliament was seized of the right to legislate on this subject. (Cheers.) Sir Charles was glad to know there was no doubt on that score, there being the highest authority in the empire for it. He eulogized the judicial committee as being without a peer among the legal tribunals of the world. He proceeded to quote at considerable length from the judgment of the privy council to show that the Manitoba legislature denuded itself deliberately of the right to legislate exclusively on the question of education, and the duty was imposed on the central government of the dominion to legislate in this case. But it might be contended that the duty of parliament was not definite, that they "might" make laws and "should" not make them. If that view were pressed, it was a contention which would be unworthy of the government of any civilized country. (Cheers.) He trusted, therefore, no one would hide behind a subterfuge like that. (Hear, hear.) He repeated that not only was this provision made at confederation for the protection of the rights of minorities, but what was more, it was made at the request of the Protestants for the protection of Protestants. (Cheers.) But besides the question of constitution there was a higher law which should be respected, and that was to do unto others as you would be done by. (Cheers.) He referred to the views of eminent Protestants like Sir William Dawson and others, who endorsed the act of the parliament of Canada in giving redress to the Catholics of Manitoba, whose rights had been infringed upon. He asked whether the peace and harmony of the country was to be disturbed by this unfortunate question being allowed to be thrust upon it. Was a small minority in Manitoba to be deprived of rights guaranteed to them by an imperial statute? The Canadian who, with the history of the past or present before him, would do anything to foment a war of races was an enemy of Canada. (Cheers.) This was not simply a question of separate schools; it was a question of the constitution of the country. (Cheers) It was a question of sacredly maintaining those rights, guaranteed under the constitution. Continuing, he said; In framing this bill the government, while doing substantial justice to the rights of the minority, have been careful to encroach as little as possible upon the local government. No person can read this bill without seeing on the very face of it that it is not proposed that the government of Canada should take action under even this bill, by the appointment of a board, the appointment of the superintendents, the guarantee that the schools shall be of the same high character as that of the other schools in Manitoba; before all that is done, this bill provides first to invite the government of the Province of Manitoba to take action, and it is only when they refuse, and when the unpleasant and disagreeable duty is forced by the act of the imperial parliament upon the Dominion of Canada, that this government proposes, in the last degree, to interfere with this matter. And as I say, the coercion comes not from the Dominion Government. There is not a line of coercion to be found in the bill from beginning to end. There is a simple, a most easy and natural provision to meet the interests of these people whose consciences deprive them of the opportunity of making use of such schools in Manitoba as they are now taxed to sustain. Under these circumstances the government have been compelled to adopt the policy which they have adoped. I need not say that they have adopted this policy in the face of great difficulty, because it is always an extremely unpleasant thing for any government to find itself in a position in which there is a single member of their great political party that does not see eye to eye with them. In the face of even this difficulty the government have felt compelled, in justice to their own position and in regard to their duty to the country, as imposed by the imperial act, to take the step they have taken. They have taken that step in the most moderate and temperate manner that was possible to be devised, and even down to the present hour they have been open to any suggestion by which the responsibility which is imposed upon them under the circumstances could be removed. They are still open to any suggestion from any quarter of any means which will remove the necessity of their being compelled to take action of this kind. And having done that, Mr. Speaker, I have no hesitation in saying to you that the government would feel that it was unworthy the position it occupies, that the government would feel that it did not deserve the confidence of that great liberal conservative party who have enabled it to accomplish so much for Canada, that the government would feel it was unworthy the confidence of gentlemen on either side of the house if on a question so momentous, so important and so vital to the good government, progress and prosperity of Canada, they were not prepared to lay down office if necessary or to refer to the great intelligent electorate of this country for a decision as to whether they had discharged their duty or not. (Loud cheers.)

Mr. Laurier who was received with loud opposition cheers, said at a time when the name of the constitution had been outraged, and in the name of peace and harmony in this land, in the name of this young nation, he rose to ask parliament not to proceed any further with this bill. (Liberal cheers). If the measure were to become law, while it would not afford any protection to the minority in Manitoba it would be a most violent wrenching of the principles on which confederation was based. Sir Charles. Tupper had taken credit for the government as being the champions of the minority. The burden of his speech was that the government were not free agents, they were simply the creatures of necessity. If their objects were to do justice to the minority only, he could commend their motives but not their judgment or good sense. Whenever there was a question in which the community was divided it was the part of statesmanship not to force down the views of any section but to endeavor to bring them all to a uniform standard and uniform conception of what was right. Reference had been made by Sir Charles Tupper to confederation, but there was one page to which he had not alluded, not even a line had been read, and that was the manner in which his (Tupper's) native province of Nova Scotia was forced into confederation. Since the days of Athens of old, there had never been such a galaxy of able men as the small province of N va Scotia had produced. (Cheers). It would have been the part of statesmanship to make the people of that province realize the grandeur of the idea of confederation. But such was not the case. There was at the head of the government in Nova Scotia a gentleman who was determined to force the measure down the throats of the people of Nova Scotia by his mechanical majority in a moribund legislature. That was Sir Charles Tupper. (Liberal cheers.) To-day the young generation of Nova Scotia had become reconciled to confederation, but not until the men of confederation days had entirely passed away would it be forotten how the manhood of the province was outraged by the manner in which their dignity and rights were trampled upon. (Liberal cheers). Coercive methods never led a people to good and wise government. He joined issue with Sir Charles Tupper in his statement that the Canadians had been happy and prosperous since confederation. Was it not a fact that the country had been torn by almost continual agitations which more than once had shaken it to its very roots and threatened its very existence? In this connection he referred to the New Brunswick school question, the Quebec school question, the streams bill agitation in Ontario, the railway agitation in Manitoba and the Jesuits agitation in Ontario. To-day we could hear the roar of another agitation coming upon us. The demon of discord was out in the island, blowing the wind of strife from all directions and in all directions, awakening slumbering passengers and arousing old prejudices. It could be seen in the cities, in towns and in villages and even in the backwood settlements. The rude life of the pioneer was not proof against its evil suggestions. (Liberal cheers.) Mr. Laurier proceeded to sketch his ideal of government, laying down as the first principle the axiom that majorities must rule. If a minority felt that it was not getting justice it should agitate and endeavor to bring the majority to its way of thinking. It was obvious that if the minority would not concede to the arbitrament of the majority and an appeal was made to the parliament of Canada, the result would be to import into the Dominion Parliament the bitterness of strife, where it would rage with equal violence and probably increased fury. Perhaps, therefore, it was not an unmixed wisdom when this power of supervision of the local legislatures was introduced into the constitution. If it were to be applied it should be done in a manner so as not to provoke irritation. A remedy must be applied according to the circumstances of the case, and only after full enquiry into the facts and all efforts of conciliation had failed. (Cheers.) The time was when an easy way presented itself to settle this question. Mr. Ives—How? Mr. Laurier—I will tell the honorable gentleman. In 1890 four acts of the legislature in Manitoba came for review before the Government of Canada. One related to the abolition of the French language, another abolished separate schools, a third to quarantine, and the fourth to public companies. What did the government do? They disallowed the acts relating to quarantine and public companies, but allowed the acts abolishing the French language and separate schools to remain on the statute book. The power of disallowance had always been held by the government to be essential to the administration of the affairs of the country, and if ever they had a fair chance to put the doctrine they had always preached into operation it was then. Mr. Moncrieff—I would like to ask the honorable gentleman if he thinks the government should have disallowed the separate schools act? Mr. Laurier—Did the hon. gentleman or any one else on his side ever take the view of the liberal party on the question of disallowance? (Ministerial laughter.) Mr. Moncrieff—This is no answer to my question. Mr. Laurier said he judged the government by their own methods and their own doctrines. If it were right and proper to disallow the cattle quarantine act, was it not proper to disallow the school act? He contended that the bill would be no benefit to the minority and claimed that Manitoba had not been approached in the proper spirit with a view to a settlement. The policy of the government had been wrong from first to last. Why had they approached Manitoba in a haughty spirit? Why, after the judgment of the privy council, did they not say to Manitoba, do not compel us to exercise the power the privy council says we have? Probably Manitoba would then have acted. Why did they not send an ambassador to Manitoba not a few days ago, as they had sent Sir Donald Smith but twelve months ago? However, the government was not even entitled to the least faint measure of credit, for Sir Charles Tupper had declared Sir Donald Smith was not sent by the government. (Liberal cheers.) Investigation and conciliation were the only means by which the question could be dealt with rightly and settled. He had taken that one stand from beginning and he stood upon it still. (Cheers) Adverting to the threatened influence of the Roman Catholic Church against him, he said: Sir, this is too grave a phase of this question for me to pass it by in silence. I have only this to say: Even though I have threats held over me coming from high dignitaries in the church to which I belong, no word of bitterness shall ever pass my lips as against that church. I respect and I love it. But, sir, I am not of that shool which has been long dominant in France and other countries of continental Europe, which refuses ecclesiastics the right of having a voice in public affairs. No, I am a liberal of the English school. I believe in that school which all along claimed that it is the privilege of all subjects, whether high or low, whether rich or poor, whether ecclesiastic or layman, to participate in the administration of public affairs, to discuss, to influence, to persuade to convince, but which has always denied even to the highest, the right to dictate even to the lowest. (Liberal cheers.) I am here representing not Roman Catholics alone, but Protestants as well, and I must give an account of my stewardship to all classes. (Renewed cheers.) Here I am, a Roman Catholic of French extraction, entrusted by the confidence of the men who sit around me, with great and important duties under our constitutional system of government. I am here the acknowledged leader of a great party, composed of Roman Catholics and Protestants as well, in which the Protestants must be in the majority in every party. Am I to be told, I, occupying such a position, that I am to be dictated to as to the course I am to take in this house by reasons that can appeal to the consciences of my fellow Catholic members, but which do not appeal as well to the consciences of my Protestant colleagues? (Hear, hear.) No, so long as I have a seat in this house, so long as I occupy the position I do now, whenever it shall become my duty to take a stand upon any question whatever, that stand I will take, not from the point of view of Roman Catholicism, not from the point of view of Protestantism, but from a point of view which can appeal to the consciences of all men irrespective of their faith. (Liberal cheers.) From the point of view of men who love justice, freedom and toleration—(liberal cheers)—and, so far as this bill is concerned, I have given my views. I acknowledge that there rests in this government the power to interfere; but that power should not be exercised until all the facts bearing upon it have been investigated and all means of conciliation exhausted. Having these opinions, I move that the bill be not now read the second time but that it be read the second time this day six months. (Prolonged liberal cheers)

Clarke Wallace resumed the debate after recess. He said he was firmly in accord with the policy of the government, but could not support them on the school measure. The conservative party in Ontario was united against the bill. He believed Manitoba Catholics were not entitled to separate schools, and if they were once given them, the concession could not stop there. The Catholics would want to apply it to the territories. He ridiculed the idea of a commission and concluded by saying he would support the amendment.

Hon. Mr. Dickey made a lucid speech on the legal and constitutional aspects of the question. He held that the decision of the privy council rendered it necessary to redress the grievances of the minority. If the judgment of that body was ignored parliament could never again submit another case to the courts for settlement, but all future cases of a similar character would have to be disposed of without the assistance of the judicial expressions of opinion. Mr Dickey's speech is admitted to be one of the most powerful and logical delivered in parliament for some time, and has stamped him as a powerful debater. Mr. Edgar moved the adjournment of the deate, and the house adjourned at 11 o'clock.

Mr. Edgar resumed the debate on the remedial bill on Wednesday afternoon. He announced his entire agreement with Sir Charles Tupper as to the momentous character of the question. He feared it might endanger the confederation itself unless dealt with in a spirit of broad statesmanship and patriotic moderation. He was afraid Sir Charles Tupper's long absence from parliament had led him to advance many propositions for contradiction which the opposition never subscribed too. Manitoba, too, had admitted the right of parliament to deal with this question, nor did Mr. McCarthy, arguing for the provincial government before the privy council, deny that the Roman Catholic grievances in relation to education existed. The real question was as to the extent the grievance ought to be enquired into. The opposition did not deny the jurisdiction of this house in the matter of the educational legislative functions and the local legislature, but a respect for provincial rights in general should teach us how to interpret and exercise our powers of interference. He contended that the government itself admitted that the only way to apply the remedy was through the provincial government. The bill was evidence of that. Then as to the best time, there was no doubt that it is proposed the remedy should be applied only as a last resort. The character of the remedy was a matter of opinion so far and should not be determined upon without inquiry. Nothing prescribed that it was parliament's bounden duty to act or when and how it was to act. Very few, except the Manitoba and Northwest members, knew anything of the condition of the schools up there, and it would be as reasonable to expect parliament to deal with the lobster fisheries of Nova Scotia without expert testimony or enquiry as to that as with this question without investigation. Thousands of dollars had been spent to investigate the evils of Chinese immigration and of intemperance by royal commission. Contradictory statements of facts appeared in every private record of this school case. While the case was before the privy council a witness, Mr. O'Donoghue, believed that the Roman Catholics of Winnipeg were satisfied with public schools and would accept, but the priests would not allow them. The disputed facts as to the bill of rights also required investigation. In conclusion he said the bill was an unacceptable and mistaken compromise which pleased neither party. He trusted that the government would eventually withdraw it.

Sir A. P. Caron regretted that such a question should have come before Parliament, because it was causing agitation and turmoil, but the constitution should be maintained at all costs. The question at issue was purely a constitutional one, and should be so treated in the House and so separated as far as possible from irritating circumstances. The judgment of the Privy Council established that the rights of the minority had been taken away. It then became the imperative duty of the government to take action under the remedy provided for in such cases by the British North America act. The government in dealing with the question had avoided everything that might interfere with the autonomy of the province, holding another course would have been most unpatriotic. If the government was now forced to take the course of remedial legislation it was because after all means had been exhausted the Manitoba government was found to be still unwilling to do right by the minority. The Dominion Parliament was the natural defender of the rights of the minority. If the rights of the Protestant minority in Quebec were interfered with he would fight as earnestly for them as he now fought for the Catholics of Manitoba. The Protestants of Quebec held the same view on the school question as the Catholics did, holding they were vitally interested in the present case because their interests depended on the same part of the constitution as that under which the Catholics sought for redress. If Quebec wished it could take away or seriously interfere with the schools of the Protestant minority. This would not be done, but if it was, the minority would have to seek the same aid that the Catholic minority now sought. In dealing with the question at issue the government had strictly carried out the course laid down in 1890 by the motion proposed by Mr. Blake and carried unanimously by the House, by which the questions of interference in the matters of education should be referred to the courts. He quoted the various acts of the Manitoba legislature to show that previous to 1890 the school system created by that legislature under its constitution was carried out on denominational lines as between Catholics and Protestants. Throughout the history of the movement for redress the government first referred all petitions and proceedings to the Manitoba government. The course was not at all drastic. The

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