

We should be prepared to listen to all that may be said and to make an honest effort to meet the views of those who differ from us in opinion. We should aim as far as possible to have a system brought about which would come as nearly as possible to our own particular views: yet surely each of us must realize that if we are to carry on the government of the country we must not insist on our individual views, but must try to meet the views of those who may differ from us, must try to find common ground of action. For myself I do not like the principle of separate schools. I regret that such a large number of my fellow citizens in Canada are obliged to take the view, conscientiously as they say and as I believe, that they cannot support a system of free common schools. I think it would be a great thing for our country if in the growth that is now coming so rapidly upon us, our children of all races and sections and creeds could meet from day to day and mingle together in work and in play, in the school room and on the play-ground, and if we could happily agree upon such a policy it would do much for the grander upbuilding of the country of which we are so proud. I say unhesitatingly that if I were to have my own way only, if one could afford to insist that his opinion must prevail regardless of the wishes of his brethren, I would like to see a school law which did not call for this word 'separate.' But we must take things as they are. We have to recognize the fact that forty one per cent of the people of this Dominion do not think as I think on that question; do not think as the majority of Protestants think. What then? Shall we say that they are in the minority and that therefore we shall have no regard for them? Shall we say that they are but forty-one per cent and we are fifty-nine per cent, and therefore, we will be indifferent to them? No, Mr. Speaker, you cannot govern Canada by any such rule as that. Let us remember that the Roman Catholics are not in a minority everywhere; there is one great province in which our Roman Catholic brethren are in the majority, overwhelmingly in the majority. Suppose we insisted upon this doctrine of provincial rights right down to the last point as was argued to-night, what would be the condition of our Protestant brethren in the province of Quebec? Suppose that under the sacred name of provincial rights an effort were made to do away with the separate school system and with the rights of the minority in the province of Quebec, what would we find? We would find the table of this House and the table of the greater parliament at Westminster—because the law would have to pass the imperial parliament—we would find the table of this parliament and the table of the imperial parliament loaded down with petitions, not of the character of so many that come to

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us now insisting upon the doctrine of provincial rights, but with petitions demanding that the name of provincial rights should not be used for such a purpose, demanding that the majority should not have the right to control, demanding that the rights of the Protestant minority in the province of Quebec should prevail instead of the wish of the majority. Let us not forget that, as my hon. friend the Prime Minister has shown, in preparing the constitution of confederation, the strongest advocates of separate schools were the representatives of the Protestant minority in Quebec. And, Sir, if it was necessary then to make an arrangement to protect the minority in that province, is it a dreadful thing that the minority elsewhere should ask to receive consideration? I venture to say that in the minds of the Protestants of Quebec that thought will sink deep to-day, and that they will be influenced by the Golden Rule: 'Do unto others as you would have others do unto you.'

There are three great lines of thought to-day on the question of public education. One, held by a great many people, is that the secular system of education is the only system which we should have in the public schools. There are many people, altogether Protestants I think, who claim that it is useless to introduce anything like religion into the schools, and that all we can do is to devote ourselves to secular education. The second line of thought is that which is held by a large number of the advocates of what may be called national schools. These people think that with secular education you may associate a certain degree of what may be properly called religious instruction; that you may say to the teacher: thou shalt not teach the 'isms' of any denomination, but you may and you should—in the words of the Nova Scotia school law—

inculcate by precept and example a respect for religion and the principles of Christian morality and the highest regard for truth, justice, love of country, loyalty, humanity, benevolence, sobriety, industry, frugality, chastity, temperance and all other virtues.

Well, Mr. Speaker, if under a system of public schools the teacher by precept and example inculcates those virtues, I do not know whether all will call it religion, but in my view the pupils of those schools will receive a very considerable amount of the very best kind of religion. However that may be, many think that it is quite possible to associate with secular instruction a certain amount of instruction—you may call it moral instruction if you like or you may call it religious instruction—and an effort is made in some provinces of the Dominion to do that. The citation I have made is from the Nova Scotia school law and I think it will be found to be substantially