

theory that that was the best method to create an agitation the best method to secure some political advantage at the next general election. And I contend that there is ample evidence that the opposition seek to play upon the quickly responsive cord of religious and racial prejudice for political effect and nothing else. They talk about provincial rights and about the constitution. They talk against separate schools and some of them talk against national schools. I submit that all this is simply a patch work of fig-leaves to hide the naked fact of political expediency.

Let me refer to one or two matters which afford evidence that this is the policy of the opposition. Take the land clause of the Bill. Now, the speech of the hon. leader of the opposition on that clause of the Bill occupies a very small space in 'Hansard.' Surely it was a very important matter. The question of provincial rights might have been as easily raised in reference to the land clause as to the educational clauses. And the people of this country, I can quite understand, were very much interested in the way parliament should deal with the public lands. The reason, I suppose, why we had no petitions in reference to the land clause was that it did not afford so responsive a cord to play upon as the educational clauses. I have a word or two to say about the conduct of the hon. member for East Grey (Mr. Sproule) in reference to this measure. I am not going to say that the hon. gentleman is not conscientious in the position he takes on the educational clauses of the Bill. His conduct in 1896 lends strength to the position he takes upon this occasion. But I think he has had his weather eye open for his party. Now, I very seldom tell a story, and a story is never improved by my telling it. But the conduct of the hon. member for East Grey on this occasion reminds me of a story of Max O'Rell's designed to illustrate a phase of the Scotch character. He was seeking to show how close the ministers of the old school regarded themselves in their relations to the deity. An old Presbyterian minister desiring on a certain day that the wind should blow got down upon his knees and prayed: 'Oh Lord, give us a wind; not a rantin' tantin,' tearin' wind, but a nice, gentle winnin' wind.' It happened that at that moment a breeze came up, which blew the parsons manuscript off the table and scattered the leaves over the room, whereat he said: 'Now, Lord, this is ridiculous.' I think the hon. member for East Grey was praying for an agitation, not a 'nice, gentle agitation' but a 'real rantin' tantin,' tearin' agitation.' And when the Minister of the Interior (Mr. Oliver) blew in here to-day, the hon. member for East Grey must have said, 'Brethren this is ridiculous.' The hon. member (Mr. Sproule) is at the head of an organization. Concerning that organization of course I have nothing to say. But I would say this

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that when a gentleman is elected to parliament his paramount duty is to the state, and, as issues arise he should be in a position to give his untrammelled judgment to them, and that judgment should not be affected by any alliance or connection with any fraternal organization. The action of the hon. member in sending out his letter before this measure was introduced, I submit, was not quite the proper thing. He was, of course, within his legal rights in so doing, and one cannot very well complain of it on that ground. But still I think it is open to the contention that the purpose and intention of his circular letter addressed, 'Dear Sir and Brother' was largely for political effect.

My contention in this respect is confirmed, I think, by the fact that down in the province of Quebec we find a Conservative political club, known as the Jacques Cartier Club, issuing a letter to a different class of people altogether, asking them to oppose the administration for the reason that the educational clauses of the Bill do not go far enough. Now I say that the effect of these petitions was bad for this country. They created an agitation. In the first place, the hon. member for Victoria and Haliburton (Mr. Sam. Hughes) became agitated, and he was going to shoulder his musket and fight for provincial rights. Of course, nothing happened. It affected many newspapers in this country. For instance, the Hamilton 'Spectator' of a recent date used the following language:

The attempt made by Sir Wilfrid Laurier to force separate schools on the new provinces of the west will settle one thing. Never again will a French Canadian be entrusted with the premiership of Canada; never again will a French Canadian have the opportunity to betray the people of this country. Canada cannot afford to take chances again.

This was one of the results of that agitation. I am sure that very few hon. gentlemen who sit with the opposition will approve of these remarks of the Hamilton 'Spectator.' But unfortunately that paper and many others are daily using similar remarks, they are all bringing grist to the mill of the Conservative party, and unless the leaders of that party exercise their influence and have these papers desist from such a low tone of discussion of a public issue, they must bear responsibility for what they say. Now that extract from the Hamilton 'Spectator' was read in this House by the Minister of Customs some two or three weeks ago. The leader of the opposition and the hon. member for West Toronto (Mr. Osler) attempted to apologize for this statement of the Hamilton 'Spectator.' But we find immediately a Toronto paper coming to the support of the Hamilton 'Spectator.' I wish to read something from the Toronto 'Telegram' in reference to that: