

were carried on in the Northwest? How long would the rights of the Catholics to religious instruction in the schools of the Northwest remain, if the views of the hon. member from East Grey (Mr. Sproule)—which views, I have no doubt, he entertains sincerely, were carried out? How long would the Catholic minority in the Northwest have the privilege of having religious instruction in their schools?

Mr. SPROULE. I can tell the hon. gentleman (Mr. Belcourt) that the hon. member for East Grey (Mr. Sproule) has never spoken or written one word that would be fairly susceptible to that interpretation.

Mr. BELCOURT. Perhaps it is time to learn now where the hon. gentleman (Mr. Sproule) stands.

Mr. SPROULE. I stand exactly where I have always stood. I objected to the interference with the rights of the provinces to deal with the subject.

Mr. BELCOURT. We are not dealing with the question of provincial rights now, but with the question of religious instruction in the schools.

Mr. SPROULE. But we are dealing with a subject laid down in the British North America Act, a subject with which it is the birthright of every province to deal—the subject of education.

Mr. BELCOURT. My hon. friend (Mr. Sproule), no doubt, thinks he has triumphantly answered my question. I submit that he has done nothing of the kind. What I ask is whether he is in favour of religious instruction in the schools or not? Will he answer?

Mr. SPROULE. That is my own business. I wish to say that I was led to refer to the question in the remarks I made upon the subject, by what the Prime Minister said in introducing the Bill. In reply to that, I referred to some matters which otherwise I should not have introduced into my speech at all.

Mr. SCOTT. I would like to be permitted to put a question to my hon. friend (Mr. Sproule). Will he deny that he wrote letters to residents of the Northwest Territories, even before these Bills were introduced, pointing out to these gentlemen to whom he wrote that this was the time for them to get rid of separate schools for all time?

Mr. SPROULE. I deny it. There is not a word of truth in it.

Mr. SCOTT. I would like to say that I cheerfully accept my hon. friend's words and to add further that I have been misinformed by a gentleman who lives in the Northwest Territories.

Mr. BELCOURT. My hon. friend from East Grey (Mr. Sproule) is a great adept at

Mr. BELCOURT.

beating about the bush and turning sharp corners. My hon. friend is not candid—I will not use another expression which I might—when he refuses to state whether or not he is in favour of religious instruction in the schools. But we know what his views are.

Mr. SPROULE. Better than he does himself.

Mr. BELCOURT. He is entitled to his views. He has consistently advocated certain views in this House and elsewhere, and they are not favourable to religious instruction in the schools. He has told us that in the House. He has told us that he is not in favour of separate schools. What does he mean by it? I do not know, but I would assume that he was not in favour of religious instruction in the schools. If the hon. gentleman wants to be candid he will tell us that he is not only not in favour, but he is unalterably opposed to religious instruction in the schools.

Mr. SPROULE. If the hon. gentleman wants to cross question let him try his hand on the hon. the ex-Minister of the Interior and the hon. Minister of Finance.

Mr. FOSTER. They will be more sympathetic.

Mr. BELCOURT. The hon. member for East Grey is the witness now before the court, but it is very difficult to get him to give an answer. I am sure I am not going to tackle anybody else until I have got something from him. I take it according to the French maxim, *qui ne dit mot consent*, that the hon. gentleman is unalterably opposed to religious instruction. And he is not alone. I can count them by the dozens on the other side of the House who are opposed to religious instruction in the schools. We have heard them say so one after the other—yes, by the dozens on that side of the House who are opposed to religious instruction in the schools. Well, Sir, I want to know—

Mr. SPROULE. How many on that side?

Mr. BENNETT. Give them a run of the commandments over there.

Mr. BELCOURT. I want to know, Mr. Speaker, if the hon. gentlemen who sit on that side of the House have their way whether you will have very much religious instruction in the schools of the Northwest or if you will have that spirit of fairplay and justice upon which we are told we must absolutely rely? Why, Sir, remember Manitoba. We had confidence in the spirit of justice and fair play of the people who inhabited Manitoba, but how long did it take to shatter our hopes and