

also to the remarks of the Minister of Justice, 'Hansard' of 1897, page 182-3 :

On the eve of the last general election a pastoral letter, signed by all the bishops of the province of Quebec, was issued and read in all the Roman Catholic pulpits of that province, in which pastoral letter was to be found this paragraph :

Therefore, my dearly beloved brethren, all Catholics shall abstain from giving their assistance or their votes to candidates who shall not bind themselves formally and solemnly to vote in parliament in favour of legislation restoring to the Catholic minority in Manitoba the school rights guaranteed to them by the judgment of the Privy Council.

Now I have many other authorities. The Minister of Agriculture last night referred to the same matter. I refer to it for the purpose of showing that these gentlemen have exercised influence in the past, and if they have exercised political influence in the past it is important to know it, because they may exercise it in the future and they may be at work now. The Minister of Justice, after quoting from the pastoral, says :

Now, those who are familiar with the conditions existing in our province, those who know something of the workings of the Roman Catholic church, to which I belong, those who know something of the influence which that church possesses in the province of Quebec, will readily realize what that pastoral letter meant. And let it now, be understood that, as far as I am concerned, I do not in the least object to the interference of the Roman Catholic church in elections, but I do object to their interfering in mere party politics. I hold that there are times when they not only have the right to interfere, but should interfere, and I am far from taking the position that this case was not one in which they should interfere.

Now the hon. gentleman says further :

Was such the case ?

After saying that he expected they would be entirely neutral in election matters.

Was such the case ? No. The result was—and it is well known by those who invoke those pledges to-day, and who now taunt us with having given them—that those pledges were of no avail, but that—openly and in such a manner as amounted almost to intimidation—the cause of the other side was espoused, and these pledges were set at naught and dealt with by the other side as though they had never been given at all.

Now it is not necessary to refer further to that matter. You may perhaps say that no man of any political standing would give those pledges, and you would say that the deliberations of this free parliament would not be in any way influenced by the fact of the bishops of the church of Rome having required those pledges from candidates seeking election. But that is not the case. The greatest, the brightest minds on the list of liberal candidates for election at that time, including the Minister of Justice,

were of those who with a religious fervour that does them credit (as churchmen), accepted these pledges, and signed them, and gave their adhesion to what was required by that pastoral letter, namely, that the desire and aspirations of the bishops should be consulted, and that men should pledge themselves in advance, before they entered the House of Commons, that they would not only vote for the restoration of the rights of the minority in the province of Manitoba, but that they would conform to the wishes of the prelates to whom they bound themselves. I am not arguing whether that condition of things is right or wrong—I am directing attention to the fact that we were confronted with that condition of things in 1896, that of the candidates who were supporters of the right hon. gentleman, a fulfilment of those pledges as demanded in 1896-7, that a great clamour existed for the fulfilment of those promises; and that by reason of the mission of the Minister of Justice to Rome, a gentleman came out, and his power was substituted for the power of the clergymen of the Roman Catholic church as regards a matter which affected the political interests of the minority in this country. Now it is a logical conclusion or is it not ? If we find that in 1896 the Roman Catholic church was exercising a direct influence upon the people of Canada in that regard, that it had been exerted long before 1896, is it not prudent that we should ask ourselves to-day whether, having regard to all the circumstances presented to us in such lurid light within the last few days, that influence by the hand of an eminent gentleman, His Excellency the Papal delegate, is being exerted to-day ?

Now, some one has been referring to the palladium of liberty, to the bulwark of liberty and so on. What is the palladium of liberty, or the bulwark of liberty as regards the Bill ? We have the Hon. Sir William Mulock, the Postmaster General, and we have the court appointed to investigate into this matter. We have four judges to stand between the people and any attacks that may be made upon their liberties. When I say an attack upon their liberties I do not mean a vicious attack, an absolutely unjustifiable attack ; I mean that when the advance guard of a great body comes forward to assist what they believe to be right in the interests of their church, but which we do not believe to be in the best interests of Canada, we have as the palladium of Canadian liberty the hon. gentleman who is sleeping in his seat to-night and we have three more. I, as a Protestant—and I do not think I am saying anything offensive in saying that—rest my case mainly with him. The others may be prejudiced, they may be carried away with their religious zeal, but the champion of civil and religious liberty, the gentleman