

colonies. Were I a member of a Russian parliament—an institution which, of course, does not exist to-day, but which may pretty soon come into existence as the outcome of current events, and fortunately so—I would not take a hand in riveting by statute the tongue and traditions of the Slays on the inhabitants of Finland. In these matters of belief and feeling, my sympathies for the minorities are well enough known to my friends; and, as regards others, they will have no difficulty in believing me to be sincere in that respect, if, as is likely, the good name of the people whom I have the honour to represent, for toleration, benevolence and fairness, has come to their knowledge. It cannot be said that, as a matter of course, the views of the minorities are wrong. The fundamental principles of justice and truth remain unaltered; while those in the majority to-day may be in the minority to-morrow, in the same way as the wealthy man of to-day may be destitute to-morrow. The main difficulty, if I may say so without hurting too much our self-conceit, lies in the limited disposition or ability of man to grasp what constitutes justice and truth. And the very sense of our inadequacy in that respect should be sufficient reason for all good-natured and sincere men, who would not unwillingly commit an injustice, to move slowly and show toleration under circumstances such as these. Those who claim they have a monopoly of truth, and who act on that belief in their intercourse with their fellow-men, are the most dangerous enemies of peace and harmony, without which no community can enjoy happiness. If the spirit of toleration, of freedom, of philanthropy, which I advocate and which you condemn as criminal, said a philosopher addressing a bigot, has inspired your fellow-citizens and mine, there would not have been so many wars, and so many of our children would not have lost their lives on the fields of battle. Principles should be judged by their results.

As for those who seek by force to bring about the unification of the various religious and racial elements, let me state that they are undertaking a task which they cannot hope to accomplish. Powers greater than those wielded in Canada have failed in their endeavour to do so. The Spanish inquisition, at a time when Spain was at the height of her power, vainly sought to crush the Protestants in the Netherlands. Protestantism in another country and in another age has similarly failed to blot out the Catholic faith in Ireland. You are intent on establishing a state religion, said a French statesman; you may expect that there will be agitation, uprisings and probably bloodshed. From where I am addressing you, he added, I behold the window whence the criminal hand of one of our kings, armed by fanaticism, gave the signal for the massacre of a portion of the French people.

Mr. BEAUPARLANT.

Bigots may have used the knife, majorities may have crushed opposition, groups of men may have shown themselves cruel, unjust, inhuman, towards their fellow-men; families may have been afflicted and homes desolated; people may have been made miserable, persecuted, spoiled in all countries, all communities, all ages; but never has violence, which is a blot on the principles advocated throughout it and renders them odious and unacceptable, ever succeeded in uprooting from the human soul its cherished beliefs.

We appeal to all good natured men, whose kindness, benevolence and righteousness forbids them to have recourse to spoliation and to whom violence is repugnant—violence which experience and history have shown to be of no avail—we appeal to these men for their support on behalf of legislation making for toleration and equal rights for all. Such is the Act which is now under discussion and which we are glad to see supported by a goodly proportion of English-speaking members.

I shall now, Mr. Speaker, take up a few objections which I wish to answer very briefly. It has been stated here more than once that the question should be referred to the legislatures of the provinces which this Bill is intended to organize. As I stated a moment ago, I do not like to be personal, especially as I am addressing the House in a tongue which is not well understood by gentlemen on the other side. However, I think I may say without leaving myself open to a charge of unfairness on the part of any one, that had I, on these questions of provincial rights, made on any previous occasion such distinct statements as those attributed in the course of the debate to hon. gentlemen on the other side, I, for one, would have abstained from voicing to-day exactly the opposite opinion, a stand which has been taken in the hope that, by means of this out-and-out inconsistency, an objectionable interest might be promoted.

In the second place, these gentlemen should take the responsibility of stating what is their policy on that question. It seems to me they should not be relieved of that responsibility by merely stating that the matter of separate schools is within the purview of another legislature. They should, besides, state what stand they would take if they occupied a seat in these legislatures we are about to organize. The country is entitled to hear more from them in this respect.

Then again I say: The new provinces are receiving from our hands a constitution, together with money grants and pecuniary advantages attached; we should be entitled to state on what terms these things are granted. Is the donee entitled now-a-days to accept a donation while at the same time rejecting the terms? In the fourth place, by the process of disallowance or