

Mr. SPROULE. I do not know anything about it. The writer says there are hundreds of Protestant farmers who are forced either to support Catholic schools or sell out, yet the Prime Minister says they have no cause of complaint:

Sir Wilfrid Laurier, who, as premier, ought to be the guardian of the rights that pertain to every British subject regardless of creed or nationality, tells us it is no cause of complaint to compel Protestants to pay taxes to support a religious system against which their very name indicates they protest, and that is the system of schools he wants to fasten for all time on our great Northwest. There is not a Protestant farmer who has been under the thrall in Quebec, who would want to buy land in the proposed new provinces if he succeeds.

That is the answer I give to the statement of the First Minister, and that is why I say we ought not to do the same thing in a country which is new and being rapidly settled. In such a country we should avoid the mistakes committed in the past. For that reason I am supporting what I believe to be a national school system. Forty years ago we had church schools and pay schools and we had no public or free schools. Our educational system then was very poor, and we adopted the national school system because we believed it to be better than the other, and upon trial we found it a great improvement and extended it by degrees until we have it practically enforced throughout the province to-day. Shall we ever go back to these church and parochial schools? Protestants never will because they prefer the national system and because they think it is the duty of the state to see that every child is educated. They have no desire to have religion taught in the schools but are content to leave that to the churches. The sentiment of the 19th and 20th century is in favour of that system. The enlightened, intelligent civilization of to-day recognizes that fact, and that policy is being carried out the world over. Are we going back to what has been discarded in the past? We are told to-day that public sentiment is not against these clauses. Well, one of the cabinet ministers, representing that great western country, has resigned from the cabinet because he could not support the policy of the government, and the right hon. gentleman will not consult the Premier of the Northwest Territories. Dare he test public opinion in the Territories by calling on an election? I challenge him to do it. Let him do it and he will soon find out what the deep seated sentiment of the people out there is. But he dare not make the attempt. If he were certain he could elect a member to support his government in that country and take the place in the cabinet rendered vacant by the resignation of the late Minister of the Interior (Mr. Sifton), he would not lose a moment in having that place filled. Can he be said to be carrying out constitutional government on popular lines when the

Mr. SCOTT.

people of the illimitable west have no one to speak for them in the cabinet, especially at a time when a Bill is being forced through this House which will affect them for all time in the future. He is certainly not, as I understand constitutional government or as the people of the west understand it. The government dare not test public opinion to-day. There is a vacancy in the representation of the city of Toronto. My hon. friend the Postmaster General thinks he is in accord with public opinion. Well, I challenge him to open up Centre Toronto to-morrow with the best candidate he can get. Why in that very constituency the reform party had a meeting the other day and passed resolutions declaring against these clauses and protesting against their being forced on the people. Surely that ought to be a warning to the Postmaster General—a warning which he should take now, for later on it may be too late. The government dare not test public opinion anywhere west of Lake Superior or even in Ontario.

We are told that separate schools work satisfactorily. I need hardly refer to that question. The trend of the age is in favour of national schools. The educational system of Canada to-day is entirely different from what it was when the schools were sectarian and pay schools. They are now national and non-sectarian and we want to keep them so. But a comparison is made with regard to the prevalence of crime in countries where there are separate schools compared with those where the national public school flourishes. It seemed to me that was a most unfortunate comparison. Can the comparison be said to be a fair one between Canada and the United States? No. But take the provinces that have no separate schools and compare them with those that have. Did the right hon. gentleman do that? Not at all. I however have taken the trouble to look up the statistics and I find that there is practically no difference. Take Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, British Columbia and Manitoba, and I find practically there is no difference as regards the prevalence of crime between these provinces and the provinces of Ontario and Quebec. But the right hon. gentleman pointed to the United States and asked how we were to account for the prevalence in that country of divorces. Surely that is not due to the absence of separate schools. Why did he not show that the application for divorces from these provinces which have not separate schools are larger than those which have. The reason is evident. I looked into that question and I found no evidence of any difference so that the comparison between Canada and the United States is not a fair one. I have said that the trend of the age is in favour of national schools. They are to be found in Mexico, Bolivia, in most of the South American republics, Venezuela, Ecuador, France, Italy, Germany and Ireland. Then are you going