

Haldimand tour, for recollect that while he journeyed down to the constituency of Haldimand he journeyed back again minus that scalp which he as a western brave sallied forth to secure. He made a speech of a violent character against the schools we had in the province of Manitoba and also appealed to the sympathy of the people of Haldimand on the ground of provincial rights. I desire to read to the House a few of these gems from a speech delivered by that hon. gentleman in the county of Haldimand as reported in the 'Globe.'

At six o'clock, House took recess.

After Recess.

The House resumed at eight o'clock.

Mr. W. J. ROCHE. Mr. Speaker. Before you left the chair at six o'clock, I was referring to the speech made by the ex-Minister of the Interior (Mr. Sifton) at the town of Caledonia in the constituency of Haldimand in the year 1895. I shall quote from the report in the 'Globe' of April 15, of that year. I do not read these extracts from the speech of the ex-minister (Mr. Sifton) with the idea of lending my endorsement to them, but as one hon. member read extracts from the remarks of clergymen and public men in the United States to show they were not entirely satisfied with the school system of that country, it may be well to hear what the hon. gentleman (Mr. Sifton) has to say about the separate schools as they existed in Manitoba. Some of these gentlemen in the United States, although their remarks apply to a condition of things said to exist over twenty years ago, were represented as having said that the public schools in that country were hot beds of immorality. As I have said, I do not lend my endorsement to the remarks which I shall quote from the hon. member (Mr. Sifton), because it so happens that in my constituency there was not a single separate school existing prior to the abolition of separate schools in Manitoba, and personally I cannot speak from experience. We were told by a gentleman on the other side of the House, that the statement as to the clergy of the province of Quebec interfering in elections was a mere myth, a figment of the imagination. However, that may be, I shall quote from the present member for Brandon, the ex-Minister of the Interior and ex-attorney general of his province, as to what his opinion was. I may say that the hon. gentleman made this speech when he occupied the responsible position of attorney general of Manitoba, and as we know he has a great deal of experience in connection with educational affairs, because he told us so himself the other day. Some of these expressions are very harsh, but I must inflict them upon the House in order that hon. gentlemen opposite may form their own opinion on the merits of the separate school system as it existed in Manitoba, from

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the words of one of their own friends. Mr. Sifton said :

Catholics made false returns of school population to get large grants from the government.

A pretty serious accusation that.

They conducted their schools in a manner that would be a disgrace to any civilized country. The priests and the Catholic clergy connected with their orders were their teachers.

I regret the hon. member for Labelle (Mr. Bourassa) is not present, because when he spoke he took great pride in the fact that the clergy were the teachers in so many of these schools in the province of Quebec, stating that a great deal of the good derived from the schools in that province, and the high standard of education there was due to clerical influence. Evidently the ex-minister (Mr. Sifton) had a different impression as to the character of the teaching done by clergymen of the Roman Catholic church in Manitoba, for he said :

Schools sometimes were kept open only two or three weeks, sometimes two days in the week, while these priests drew their money as teachers. This, he said, was a common thing.

In other words, according to the Minister of the Interior, these priests seemed more anxious to get the educational fund and to pocket it than they were to educate the children by keeping the schools open five days a week. Mr. Sifton goes on to say :

The system followed was no system at all. As a result people who grew up in districts where separate schools existed were in a state of absolute ignorance and illiteracy.

Pretty hard language in reference to these schools that were so lauded by some hon. gentlemen on the other side of the House. Mr. Sifton continues :

It is a notorious fact that in Manitoba, in districts where the people are French and Roman Catholic and where this system of schools has been in existence for twenty years, that it is a rare thing to find a person who can read and write.

And still the hon. member for Labelle (Mr. Bourassa) spoke about the great proportion of the prizes being carried off at St. Boniface by pupils of separate schools of Roman Catholic institutions, in competition with their Protestant brethren there. Evidently, the ex-minister does not look upon separate schools in as favourable a light when he says it is a rare thing to find a person who can either read or write where these schools have been in existence for twenty years. Mr. Sifton further said :

He could show the audience a petition which came in from the reeve of a Roman Catholic municipality in which six councillors of the municipality made their signatures by putting crosses, and to which only one could sign his name. When it was proposed in the legislature to require by municipal law that the reeve and councillors should be compelled to read and