

unanimous as to its merits. Under those circumstances, it seems strange that we should wander away from British traditions and be seduced into favouring a system which, to my mind at any rate, presents some very serious objections.

I did not wish to take up more time than I should, but I wished to give fully my views to the House. I regret to have to say it, but there has been in the public discussion of this question an endeavour to convey to the public that outside of all other considerations, outside of the constitutional question, which is a very grave one, it would be, from the point of view of expediency and policy, a great misfortune to see established in these provinces the schools of the Catholic minority. Are they then so inferior? Are these schools productive of nothing but ignorance? One is entitled to ask that question in view of what one reads and hears every day. Is that the fact? Well, in the United States where the natural rights of the parent to educate his child, the natural right of the citizen not to pay taxes for the support of schools to which he cannot send his children, is disregarded, what do we find? The calculation has been made and the statistics are there to prove it. We find that the Catholics, who cannot conscientiously send their children to these public schools, are obliged to expend, and do expend annually—what amount do you think? Over \$50,000,000 a year in order to provide that adequate education for their children which their consciences oblige them to provide. I forget how many millions they expend in the city of New York alone. And they expend those millions to provide schools of their own with Catholic teachers. These schools are sometimes visited by impartial judges, and the education given in them is found just as good, and often better, than that given in the public schools. So that we have this spectacle in the United States, of a large portion of the people being obliged to pay taxes for schools to which they cannot send their children, and having to tax themselves further in order to provide schools which will satisfy the dictates of their conscience and enable them to exercise that right which is the natural undeniable right of every parent, the right to educate his own children in the manner he thinks best. But under this tyranny exercised under the American constitution, they are obliged, in order to exercise that right, to pay double taxation. Is that what we want to see under the British flag in Canada? I say it is not desirable that anything of the kind should exist in this country. And outside, of constitutional considerations—the value of which I acknowledge and to the opinions of those who hold them I pay every deference—I will always uphold the principle in discussion under the present Bill, namely, the right of the parent

to educate his child as he thinks best. And at the risk of being a little lengthy, will you allow me just to quote what the First Minister of England had to say with reference to that phase of the question in discussing the Educational Bill. Speaking of the religious question, Mr. Balfour said:—

I cannot leave this topic of the necessity of the voluntary schools without saying that in my opinion they are necessary also for another and a very different reason. What is the theory which, on both sides of the House as I think—I do not recognize any difference of principles between us—we ought to adopt with regard to denominational education in public schools. We do not insist, as everybody knows, upon teaching the children of this country any particular religion. We do insist upon teaching them a recognized arithmetic, a recognized geography, history, &c. In the one case we decline the responsibility, leaving the responsibility to the parents, and in the other we are agreed that the state may properly take the responsibility of saying to every parent, so far as secular education is concerned, your child shall learn what we think fit to teach it. Of course the reason of this difference is known to all. We are agreed about secular education. We are not agreed about religious education. Whatever be the historic origin of the present state of things, we have, as a community, repudiated responsibility for teaching the particular form of religion. We maintain the responsibility, we gladly assume the responsibility for teaching secular learning. As we have thus left to the parents the responsibility for choosing what religion their children are to learn surely we ought, as far as we can consistently with the inevitable limitations which the practical necessity of the case put upon us, make our system as elastic as we can in order to meet their wishes.

And he goes on to explain exactly the position they take in England in regard to this difficult matter and how they have solved it. I have read many of the speeches of English statesmen upon this Education Bill, a Bill which has afforded ground for so much discussion in England. I venture to say that there is not a word in those speeches that could not be uttered from the pulpit of any Catholic Church in my province and to every sentence of which every member of the congregation would not be prepared to say, 'Amen.' Which shows how far they go in regard to religious liberty in educational matters on the other side of the water.

And now, Mr. Speaker, I feel that I have sufficiently made known my opinions in regard to this matter. I wish before resuming my seat, to make a very brief allusion to the character of the discussion of this matter in the public press. We have heard a great deal about freedom of the Northwest and about common schools; we have seen in some papers a clear indication that, were opportunity offered, there exists a great desire to deprive this minority, once for all of even a shred of the rights which they preserve at the present moment in the

Mr. MONK.