

days ago in this House, I came to the conclusion that there was certainly a very material change of front and I asked myself the question: What could have occasioned that change of front? Was it the fact that he has changed sides in this House? Was it the fact that he was no longer in power? After having given the matter careful consideration I came to the conclusion that it was due to neither of these things, it was due to a change of climate; the sudden change from the cooling breezes of the Atlantic ocean to the more contracted and sultry breezes from Toronto bay must have brought about the change of front displayed by that hon. gentleman. He said in that speech, in which he was very strong for toleration:

These two principles of good faith and a broad and generous toleration are principles which have nowhere been more strongly illustrated than in the growth in the progress in the present condition of the greatest empire in the world, I mean the British empire.

Great Britain is a nation which has been distinguished by the tenacity to which she has held to every compact and every agreement. She has been distinguished no less by that spirit of generous and broad toleration with which she has treated every religion, every class of nationality which form the components of her great empire. Now, Sir, these two principles of good faith and toleration are the very principles which underlie our constitution, and especially those clauses of the constitution under which the present question arises and which have to do with the educational rights of minorities in the different provinces of the Dominion.

Later, the hon. gentleman (Mr. Foster) called on the members of the House to support the government, in these words:

Let them consider as well why that question has to be settled by us; let them clearly see whence it comes, and however strong their opinion may be, give to the government and the party who happen to be in power when this question comes up for settlement their good feeling, their utmost charity and their honest hearty support.

I notice that the hon. gentleman did not ask for the support of this House for the present government in introducing this measure.

Mr. SAM. HUGHES. Will the hon. gentleman allow me to ask him a question?

Mr. BICKERDIKE. Yes.

Mr. SAM. HUGHES. The hon. gentleman said that as an evidence of Roman Catholic toleration in the province of Quebec, he represents a division of Montreal that is largely Roman Catholic. Will he kindly tell us who represents that same constituency in the local legislature?

Mr. BICKERDIKE. The federal constituency which I represent in this House is divided into two constituencies in the local legislature, and one of these is represented by a Protestant and the other by a Roman Catholic.

Some hon. MEMBERS. Hear, hear.

Mr. BICKERDIKE. It is not my intention to touch for a moment on the legal or constitutional phase of this question; I leave that to the many eminent jurists who occupy seats on both sides of the House, but I must express regret that there is such a disagreement of opinion amongst them on the subject. I represent one of the divisions of the city of Montreal, a city that has been styled the Rome of America, and, as a Protestant representing that great Catholic city, I wish to give a few instances of the toleration that exists there between the people of the different religions. I remember in my early days being chairman of the Protestant school board for fifteen years. The Catholic school board sat immediately across the street, and during those fifteen years, while a priest was chairman of one board and I chairman of the other, always the kindest relations existed between us, and nothing but courtesy prevailed between one and the other. I simply mention this to show how well we get along in the province of Quebec, and I will extend an invitation to the members from Ontario to come down and visit us, and see if they cannot take a leaf out of our book. I do not find fault with the remarks that have fallen from the member for East Grey (Mr. Sproule), for, although I cannot agree with him, I can praise his consistency, which is, more than I can do with regard to some hon. gentlemen on that side of the House. But for his benefit, and for the benefit of others, I wish to cite a few more instances of the toleration which prevails in the province of Quebec. My hon. friend from St. Antoine (Mr. Ames) will corroborate my statement, that when the Hon. I. D. Rolland was chairman of the finance committee of the Montreal city council, he was defeated in a French Canadian ward, and it being felt that his services were of great value to the city, one of the aldermen for St. Antoine ward resigned to give him the seat, and we, the Protestants of that ward, unanimously elected Mr. Rolland. Here is another instance of the good feeling which exists among the people of different religions in the city of Montreal. We had a very saintly old priest there, the Reverend Father Dowd, of St. Patrick's Church, and when the funeral service for Father Dowd was proceeding no church bells in the city tolled more solemnly than did the bells of Christ Church Cathedral. About the same time Archbishop Bond took seriously ill, and when it was feared that his sickness was unto death, prayers were offered up in nearly every Roman Catholic church in the city for his restoration to health. I am sure that no happier state of affairs could exist in any country; I do not think that it could possibly exist in any other province than Quebec. Let me point also that when Bishop Mountain, the first bishop of the Church of England in Canada, arrived in the city of Que-