

friend from Jacques Cartier (Mr. Monk). My hon. friend stated positively that there was not a member in this House from the province of Quebec who had anything to do with these petitions. I am not pretending that there would be any harm in these petitions, people have the right to petition; but I am merely pointing out that if any petitions were circulated, they were circulated by some one who took upon himself to do that work without having had any authorization from any member of parliament. I have not seen any of these petitions, but I understand that in all of them the right hon. gentleman is asked to stand fast by clause No. 16 of the Bill as introduced. The signers of these petitions were afraid that he might drop that clause; they were afraid that he might be influenced by the other wing of the government, and abandon clause 16 for something else. Well, they were not wrong, because my right hon. friend has given up that clause and accepted an amendment which is satisfactory to the hon. member for Brandon (Mr. Sifton). One need not go far to show what kind of an amendment that must be. I call the attention of those who are in favour of separate schools to Mr. Sifton's approval. If the amendment before the House is acceptable to the hon. member for Brandon, you may judge for yourselves how far it goes in favour of separate schools.

In 1896 there was a hierarchy in the province of Quebec just as there is to-day. What happened then? After the elections were over and my right hon. friend was returned to power with a large majority from the province of Quebec, one of the boasts of the Liberal politicians and the Liberal press was that they had been able to carry the province against the hierarchy. If that were true, what did it mean? It could only mean that the hierarchy had no influence at all. But if it had no influence, how could we be called a priest-ridden province? It is not true, however, that the hierarchy had no influence, and I can tell my right hon. friend something which he knows quite well. The hierarchy in 1896 did not do anything. They did not do as much as I would have liked them to do in their own interests. So broad and non-partisan were the mandements they published that they were accepted by the Liberals as being in their favour. But if the day should come when that hierarchy would feel impelled to take a hand in the contest, their influence would be soon felt. My right hon. friend remembers that when there was trouble in Manitoba, when a rebellion was threatened in that province, it was not on its troops that the government relied. No, the government of that day did not send out its troops, but telegraphed to Rome to his Lordship Bishop Taché, and asked him to return home and establish peace in the province of Manitoba. Bishop Taché did so. The government of that day must had confidence in his ability and

influence. Many were the promises which were made him then, but which have never been carried out. For this I am not blaming my right hon. friend. The responsibility lies with other public men, but unfortunately the Liberal party had more to do with it than anybody else.

To come back to the position taken by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Fielding). We are now about to create two new provinces. We are in a sense enlarging Canada. We are making it stronger and more important. I would advise the House not to stand so much upon the letter of the constitution, but to do what is best calculated to make all creeds and nationalities in these new provinces live together in harmony. What we require in this country is tolerance and conciliation, and we cannot have that when we call for the sacrifice of any principle or the destruction of any right. Every nationality and creed in this Dominion should be made to feel that it has the respect and the confidence of other nationalities and creeds, if we want Canada to be united and ever to achieve anything. I sincerely hope that the question now being discussed is the last of the kind that will ever come before parliament. I sincerely hope that in the end we shall all join hand in hand. I trust that every province and every Canadian worthy of the name, and who desires the welfare of his country, will join hand in hand with his fellow-citizens to work together for what we believe the best interests of Canada, and not allow national or religious questions to interfere with that work.

In speaking of the position taken by my leader, I wish to say openly that, to my mind, he made an admirable speech upon this question, a speech to which nobody can take exception. We may not all share the conclusions to which he came, but every man on this side, and I believe on the other side as well is convinced that the leader of the opposition spoke in all sincerity, without any bias, and influenced solely by a desire for the welfare of Canada. So much is that the case, that if in that amendment of his, ten words were struck off at the end, I would be disposed to support it. And in doing so I would be standing on a good principle, namely, provincial autonomy and provincial rights; and in my opinion clause 93 of the British North America Act would give the new provinces the school system they have to-day. But as a doubt has been expressed by the Minister of Justice, I would have clause 16. But here is where I think there is a difference between the position taken by the hon. the leader of the opposition and the right hon. the First Minister. My hon. friend the leader of the opposition leaves the door open by his amendment to the people of the new provinces to give themselves separate schools. From not one man on this side of the House have I heard a word against the system of separate

Mr. BERGERON.