

but where there is so much smoke there must be some fire, and there is no doubt that there is a great disturbance in the cabinet to-day, a disturbance which is retarding business and is detrimental to this House and this country. Then the hon. gentleman referred to what was said by Mr. Kenny, a member for Halifax, as to the way the school laws were being operated in the province of New Brunswick, as follows:

I was glad to hear him say he went further, and would be willing to leave it to the common sense of the majority of the people of this country that they would not inflict an injury upon any minority in this country. Well, Sir, if that is the case, if the hon. gentleman has so much confidence in the good sense of the people, why should he not leave the administration of the law in the province of Manitoba to the people who are charged with administering that law? Why not give them an opportunity at any rate of showing whether they are willing, by the administration of the law, to do as the government and people of Nova Scotia have done—that is, consult the prejudices or requirements of the minority of that province. Mr. Speaker, in the province of New Brunswick we have a law similar to that of Nova Scotia. I was here during part of the time in 1872-73-74 when the question of the New Brunswick school was brought up by the present Minister of Marine and Fisheries, who invited us to interfere. Wisely, Sir, we abstained from interference, and what is the result to-day? The result is that in New Brunswick the law is being administered in a way that is satisfactory to all classes of the community. Suppose we had listened to the hon. gentleman who now fills the position of Minister of Marine and Fisheries, who so eloquently urged upon us the necessity of interfering with the legislation of New Brunswick, and had undertaken to interfere with the laws of that province. Suppose we had interfered, what would have been the position in that province to-day? Think you that you would have had the same amicable and friendly relations between that province and this Dominion that exists to-day? No, Sir. If the hon. gentleman had prevailed he would have sown the seed of discord throughout this Dominion. As a result I say that to-day you have in the province of New Brunswick as happy a condition of things as exists in the province of Nova Scotia, so also in the province of Prince Edward Island. There is a Public School Act and there is no difficulty among the different denominations in that province.

There we have the three maritime provinces of this Dominion presenting an object lesson to this parliament to take note of and to take warning by that it is possible, nay that it is probable that if the province of Manitoba is left to the administration of its own laws it will administer them in such a way in its own interests, if it is wise that every part of the community shall be satisfied.

These are the words, these are some of the sentiments expressed by the Minister of Militia who, I suppose or really I cannot suppose, was one of those who sanctioned the Bill introduced some three weeks ago.

But hon. gentlemen opposite propose, without having given that province an opportunity to

say whether they desire to make their law satisfactory to the minority of that province, to start out on a policy of coercion. They take the province of Manitoba by the throat by issuing their remedial order, and then follow up that remedial order by legislation.

Hon. gentlemen propose to coerce that province. Mr. Speaker, I ask you and I ask this House whether anything was ever gained anywhere by a policy of coercion. I say you cannot coerce Manitoba, and the legislation will be a failure. We hear a good deal about the rights of minorities.

And that is something of which we will hear a good deal when this question comes up for discussion. I said in the beginning that I believed in treating these questions freely, that I believed in treating them on high national principles and when we treat them in that way we will certainly settle all these questions to the very best interests of this country.

I have referred to the particular view that the member for Leeds takes of the rights of the minority, but speaking seriously we all desire from the bottom of our hearts to protect the rights of the minority everywhere. The rights of the minority appeal to our best sympathy always. But, Sir, we have to consider what is the best course in the interest of that minority. Is it the best course to pursue in the interest of the minority to run a muck of the great majority of the people of Manitoba and to attempt coercive measures upon that province? No, Sir, I think not. I think that no more fatal mistake could be committed in the interest of the minority of Manitoba than to attempt to force this measure through this House at this time.

If we substitute 'the Northwest Territories' for 'Manitoba' we will have a pretty good description of the Bill which is now proposed in this House, and which no doubt this House will be asked to sanction. We have here just what the Minister of Militia thinks about this question, and if he thinks that, how is it possible that he could have approved of the present Bill which is contrary to the views which he expressed before. Now, let us sum up briefly the opinions which he expressed. First he objects to coercion. None of us like that word. Then he takes the stand that what is past cannot be changed even down to the third or fourth generation. I am afraid that before that time we will all be chloroformed. He also takes the stand for provincial rights: he thinks the minority should be considered, he thinks that before any great change in the policy of the country is made there should be an investigation. He thinks that if Manitoba is left to administer its own laws it will administer them in its own interest and in the interests of all parts of the Dominion. I have taken some pains to find what the minister said on this question, and I want the House to take it into consideration that it is difficult to understand how this gentleman ever supported the introduction of a Bill of this spirit. As