

our own affairs and allowing the provinces to attend to theirs, upon whom should the responsibility rest? It must rest upon the right hon. the First Minister. True, his followers will have to bear a certain share of that responsibility, but to him alone must be left the responsibility of having put his followers in such a position that they are obliged to choose between serving their country or their church, between serving the right hon. gentleman or the people. Upon the question of the advisability of having a system of separate schools in any portion of this Dominion, there is fair room for differences of opinion. We can quite understand why our Roman Catholic friends desire such a system. It is quite natural that I should entertain an entirely different attitude. That I do, there cannot be very much doubt, but I want to point out this. Whether separate schools be right or wrong is not the question before us. Every man has a right to his own religious belief, and I would be the last man to interfere with it. But to observe the laws of God and make laws for good government are two entirely distinct things, and I draw that distinction in this measure. The late Dr. Ryerson, than whom perhaps the country never had a greater educationalist, made use of this language in pointing out a similar distinction:

What ought to be done in regard to religious instruction and what the government ought to require are two different things. Who doubts that public worship should be attended and family worship performed? But does it, therefore, follow that the government is to compel attendance upon the one or the performance of the other? If our government were a despotism it would compel what it pleased, but our government is a constitutional and popular government.

I could not express my views upon that subject more forcibly than Dr. Ryerson has expressed them. And another reason why I am opposed to this system of separate schools is that the conditions do not at present exist in this country that would warrant the establishment and maintenance of such schools. It is, to my mind, very much better, very much more in the interest of the children growing up in this country that there should be a common system, that there should be a mingling of the children that will promote the growth of a common interest and a common sentiment. It is much better that that state of affairs should exist than that we should have a condition that would produce the opposite result. Dr. Ryerson said, speaking of the establishment of separate schools:

In the earliest history of separate schools they were desired to meet peculiar circumstances or extreme cases of neighbourhoods where religious bigotry and party spirit deprived the minority of protection from injustice and oppression.

Mr. PORTER.

Now, I venture to think that no such condition of religious bigotry or party spirit exists in any portion of this country as to warrant any section of the people in asking for separate schools to protect them from injustice and oppression. These being the grounds upon which separate schools were originally established, and there being no such condition of affairs existing in this country, I argue that it is not in the best interest of the country as a whole that that system should be continued or that we should enact laws to force such a system upon these new provinces.

There is an additional reason. I put it as matter of time. When you come to look at the time devoted to secular education and the time allowed for religious education, what do you find? You find that in the school week of five days there is a total of thirty hours, cut down by daily recesses to say 27½ hours. On the other hand, if you allow ten hours a day for sleep, you have seventy-one hours still left for religious instruction. If 27½ hours is sufficient for secular education, surely 71 hours is sufficient for religious instruction. Or carry it a step further and make the comparison on the basis of a year. We find that the school year, taking out vacations and holidays, including Saturdays and Sundays, is about 1,100 hours. This is the time allowed in a year for secular education. And upon the same basis as before what are you allowed for religious instruction? Seven thousand hours—over six times as much time as is allowed for secular education. Looking at the fact that ninety-seven per cent of the children never get beyond the common school, and of that proportion a large number attend school for only a short time, is it not manifestly unfair that the time these young people have to prepare themselves for the battle of life should be cut down by even half an hour a day? Would it not be better that the time for secular education should even be increased rather than diminished? That is why I should say it would be an injustice to the youth to impose this system upon them. We must recognize that there is a duty resting upon the parents and pastors as well as upon the state. The state has recognized very clearly and specifically parental duty. The state, for instance, does not furnish food and clothing for the children, but that leaves that for the parents to do. So, I think, the state should recognize the duty and obligation upon the parent to provide for the religious education of the child. And if the religious education of the child is deficient or wanting in any respect the blame rests upon the parent and upon the pastor—it does not in any way, to my mind, rest upon the state. It seems to me that it would be a very bad position for this country to occupy to make itself the tax-gatherer for the church. In all countries where that has been the case we know the result. The result has been that the people have attained no efficiency in matters of education. It is