

proceeded ordinarily with perfect good humour, and in perfect decorum. There have been some exceptions and I shall probably call attention to them before I conclude. What, however, is the real question before the House at the present time? The discussion has taken a wide departure from the Bill which has been introduced by the First Minister and the First Minister is responsible to a large extent for that departure, because, Sir, he unnecessarily imported into the discussion upon the first reading of the Bill a disquisition upon the relative merits of public schools and clerical schools.

Therefore, if there was discussion far afield from the real point involved in the Bill presented by the First Minister, he himself is the gentleman primarily to blame for this extended discussion. And, Sir, what is the question before the House? It is not a question of separate schools; it is not a question of race or religion, and probably it may be necessary—it may, at all events, be opportune—at this particular time to state to the House what is the question before us and upon which we are soon to vote. The question is this: This parliament by virtue of constitutional rights has had introduced to it by the First Minister a Bill to organize unorganized territory into a province, and in that Bill he has inserted clauses which we on this side of the House say are not justified by the constitution, clauses we say that should be eliminated, and in support of our contention the leader of the opposition has proposed his amendment. That is the only question before the House. It is a question of law, it is a question of constitutional interpretation, and when gentlemen supporting the government say it is a question of race and religion they are trying to throw dust in the eyes of the members of this House and in the eyes of the people of this country.

Now, Sir, let me refer to the policy of the First Minister upon this question. In 1896 the right hon. gentleman declared, or professed to declare, that he stood upon the rock of provincial rights; to-day he and his party stand upon the slippery platform of coercion. The policy of the right hon. gentleman to-day is directly opposed to the policy he pursued in 1896. And how shall I characterize his policy now? Well, I might say that it could be aptly characterized as a sort of kangaroo policy—first a hop in one direction and then a hop in the opposite direction, and no mortal man can tell what will be the direction of the next hop. Time will not permit me to dilate further upon that interesting topic. I regret that my hon. friend the Minister of Finance is not in his place to-night. When this Bill was introduced the Minister of Finance was not in Ottawa; he came here shortly afterwards, and the rumour was that there was a sort of civil insurrection in the ranks of the government. But, presto; in a few

days the Minister of Finance rose in his place and said—what? Not that he saw a ghost, but something almost as alarming. He said that he saw a crisis of great proportions looming on the political horizon. And what was the crisis? Why, it was that if we did not permit the Prime Minister to have his way the Prime Minister might take it into his head to resign—a very remote possibility indeed—and the Prime Minister having resigned, it would dissolve his government, and then, under the constitutional usages of our country, the Governor General would call upon my hon. friend the leader of the opposition to form a government, and, *mirabile dictu*, the leader of the opposition would have to form a wholly Protestant government without a Roman Catholic in it. That was the entire crisis; but if the Minister of Finance had only waited a few days he would have listened to a speech, one of the best speeches delivered in this House, one of the best reasoned speeches, from the member for South Toronto, a Roman Catholic, objecting to and opposing the proposal of the right hon. gentleman.

In 1896 my hon. friend the Minister of Finance thundered from the platforms of Nova Scotia in opposition to separate schools—to-day he is advocating the imposition of separate schools upon the great provinces to be created in the west. In 1896 the Minister of Finance stated on the public platforms of Nova Scotia that Sir Charles Tupper, through the influence of the Roman Catholic pulpits of Cape Breton, was trying to climb into power—to-day the Minister of Finance is afraid that there would be no Roman Catholic in a Conservative government. And what do we find now? On the other side of the House is the Liberal party led by my right hon. friend, the party of coercion; on this side of the House is the Liberal-Conservative party led by my hon. friend (Mr. R. L. Borden), the exponent of liberty and freedom. Mr. Speaker, you have coercion to your right; liberty and freedom on your left. I will not go further in that direction because of the absence of my hon. friend the Minister of Finance.

It has been said that this debate has taken a tone that is worthy of and creditable to this House of Commons. Ordinarily speaking, that is true, but, Sir, there have been ungenerous and illiberal remarks made by the supporters of the government in respect to gentlemen on this side of the House. Because I choose to support the amendment of the leader of the opposition, why should I be called a bigot or a fanatic? When I come here and seek to give my best judgment to the solution of a question which is constitutional and legal, how can it be said that I am trying to trample upon some race or upon some religious belief? I am bound to say, Sir, that when I heard the wholesale remarks made with respect to the city of Toronto, I felt that it was a shame that such a city should be so charac-