

The member for North Toronto and the cabinet to which he belonged endeavoured to put back on Manitoba a useless and inefficient and expensive system of education.

I deny it. All that we proposed to do was to embody the principle of remedial legislation to the largest extent to which it could be embodied; but never with the idea that we should make permanent there a system of schools which should not be up-to-date, well inspected, well grounded and well carried out. We were not advocates of an inefficient school, neither do I think that the gentlemen who represented the cause of Manitoba were advocates of that kind of a school. No, it was not that. 'But,' said the ex-Minister of the Interior, 'when the commissioners came from Sir Charles Tupper's government, we offered them a compromise, which they refused to accept.' 'After the 1896 elections were over,' he added, 'we offered to the Laurier government, the right hon. gentleman's government, the very same compromise, *ipsisssima verba*—the very words he used—and they accepted it.' What does the First Minister say? When fresh from that settlement, of which there was no written but only a verbal record, he went down to the city of Montreal, and, standing up amongst his own people there, he said:

Yet after we have accepted from the provincial government of Manitoba much more than the commissioners of the late government asked last spring, we are now to be denounced none the less in the name of religion as traitors to our race and religion.

There was the statement made by the ex-Minister of the Interior, and here is the statement made by the right hon. gentleman himself. Which is true, which is correct?—the prime actor in the one case, with his memory fresh, with all the scars and all the laurels from the conflict still fresh upon him, and the Prime Minister of this country, who could not have gone through those negotiations and that contest of 1896 without having his memory also fresh with reference to what had happened. There is what the Prime Minister says in December, 1896; here is what the Minister of the Interior says in March, 1905; which is correct? Did the theory that was put forth by the Solicitor General exercise its malign influence then, and did a responsible government in Manitoba, with important interests and grave issues at stake deliberately make up its mind that it would not give to a Tory government what it was prepared to give to a Liberal government?

Now, Sir, look again at what takes place. The Prime Minister comes down and makes his argument absolutely on the constitutional phase of the question. He disclaims the breeding of strife, the letting loose of the demon of discord in this great parliament where different races and religions are represented. He says: Though I believe

Mr. FOSTER.

in separate schools, yet I argue this out on the constitution. His statement, is in so many words, that the constitution binds us, compels us, to give to the minority in these provinces that we are forming in the Northwest the same rights that are given under the constitution to Quebec and Ontario minorities. That is his exact statement; it is in the unrevised 'Hansard'; it is in the revised 'Hansard'; it has been quoted before; it has not been denied; he will not deny it. Well, Sir, I do not commend that version of the compact of confederation to this House, and I do ask the House and the country to look into that for a little. So much has been said about toleration in Quebec, so much has been said about the binding power of the constitution, that, if my hon. friends opposite will allow me, I want to reason that out with them for a moment. I do it in the broadest and kindest spirit. You say you are tolerant to the Protestant minority in Quebec. I am glad to hear it. I am not going to stand here and deny it. But, when you say that you are tolerant to the minority, I ask you, ought not you so to be? They are your fellow-citizens. They are not your wards; they contribute to your finances; they build up your country; they live side by side with your families; the weal or woe of the province of Quebec must be shared equally by them and you. Ought you not to be tolerant toward them? But, will the hon. member for Labelle (Mr. Bourassa) allow me one word to show why he should be a little self-contained when he makes this the plea for any extraordinary toleration for those of his own faith and race in other provinces. Here is a Protestant child in Quebec. He goes one morning to what is called the Quebec school. You may call these your national schools if you like; but am I wrong in saying that, from the time that child enters the school at nine o'clock in the morning until he leaves it at four o'clock in the afternoon, he is under the direct, impressive, constant, inculcatory spirit and teaching of the Roman Catholic church? I am not mistating the facts in that. For, the hon. member for Labelle, speaking on behalf of his people, says: We believe we cannot properly exercise our religion unless we have the right to teach our children our religion as and when we please. So, does it not come to this, in all reason—that your schools in Quebec are not national schools; they are Roman Catholic schools? The influence of the church, in the books, in the teachers, in the adornments in the positive dogmatic teaching is there from nine o'clock in the morning until four o'clock in the afternoon. And the Protestant boy has no other school to go to, unless you make provision for him. Is it extraordinary toleration that, having no national schools, no schools that are undogmatic and unsectarian, if there is a Pro-