

without my being present to hear it. I think it is very much to the credit of this parliament that such should be the case. I think that the new provinces should be free to choose their own educational system. The Protestant majorities will give, I feel confident, their Roman Catholic fellow citizens even-handed justice. No reasonable argument can be presented by any member in this House to lead us to believe that such will not be the case. I come from a province where we have free schools, where the people, Roman Catholic and Protestant, get on in perfect harmony. There is no jar. The Catholic people of that country educate their children according to their own religious beliefs, especially in the large centres of population. I recollect when what is called the free non-sectarian school was first established there was a little friction but it soon became a matter of compromise. There was a desire on the part of the people to get on harmoniously with their neighbours and everything went on as our best citizens could desire. So, it has continued.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I will refer in a few words to my position, and also to my position on the Remedial Bill when it was before the House. I happened to be a member at that time, and I voted in favour of the Bill. I voted in support of the government. I was nine years younger in age then, and I had nine years less experience than I have now. I voted largely from party exigencies. I am frank in saying so, and I think I will have many sympathizers amongst my friends who are supporting this measure on this occasion. I acknowledge that I made a mistake. I now, before this House and the country, disavow my action at that time. And why? I found that when I went to my people, when I went to my Roman Catholic citizens and supporters, after voting in favour of the Remedial Bill, in the interest of that church and in the interest of the minority of Manitoba, they would have none of it. I found that they were frank, honest, open and above-board. When I went to them I told them, and they knew as well as I could tell them, the position that I occupied. They were frank, open and square, and they told me they would not vote for me, that they were supporters of the Liberal party, and although they did not tell me so, I inferred that, inasmuch as the Right Hon. Sir Wilfrid Laurier was the leader of that party, it was particularly attractive to them. They received me in the most hospitable manner and spoke to me in pleasant terms, but vote for me they would not. Of course, this is a personal matter, but it has some bearing on my action on the Remedial Bill. At the close of the poll in the election of 1896, in one of the most populous Irish Catholic districts, it was reported to me by a very intelligent supporter of mine, an active man engaged in the election, that out of 98 votes in that section I had received 3. That legislation was in the interest of the minority in

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Manitoba, and it would naturally be supposed that Sir Wilfrid, being a co-religionist of the minority, would have stood by them. Did he do so? No. Had he done so the Conservative party would have remained in power. Had he done so the Liberal party would have continued to remain in opposition, and therefore I was led, as any reasonable man would have been led, to the natural conclusion that the course adopted by the Liberal party at that time was adopted for party reasons and party reasons alone. Because of the manner in which my Catholic constituents, my fellow-citizens, treated me, and because of the manner in which the people of the Dominion of Canada treated Sir Charles Tupper, I felt absolved from any obligation to continue my support to any such legislation. Therefore, I say now before you, Mr. Speaker, and this House, that I took the course I did, and that I regret the vote I gave on that occasion. Had I voted against the government at that time it was a moral certainty that I would have been successful in my appeal to my constituents. I was defeated only by a comparatively small majority. My Protestant friends I found were very much dissatisfied with the course I had taken. However, that is all past and gone. But my position I feel in duty bound to clearly define. I know that my fellow-members will bear with me, for I do not pretend to be a speaker. I wish a few minutes more, and then I will give them relief. I remember, Mr. Speaker, it was stated at the time of the Manitoba agitation that certain agreements had been arrived at and put in shape. At that time, as you all know, there was a territorial government established to rule that country. Certain agreements had been entered into regarding schools by a few scattered people in that vast country in conjunction with the good Christian missionaries of the Catholic Church, and all praise and credit should be given to these pioneers of religion and morals in that great country.

Certain agreements were entered into with these people at that time, and the question arises whether it is reasonable to suppose that such agreements should be carried out for all time. These good people, on one part poor ignorant half-breeds, honest and good as they were, in conjunction with these worthy pioneers of the Catholic Church were then the only people living in that country, and I ask in all fairness and sincerity whether it can be considered reasonable that the future generations in that country which will be populated by millions, should be restricted in their social and political and educational life by such an agreement. Personally I do not think so; I cannot make myself believe any such proposition as that would be reasonable. It has been said that this is not a question of sectarian against national schools, but that it is a constitutional question. Well, the good God in Heaven if he heard this dis-