

become premier of Canada—was the man who forced the right hon. gentleman to change his clause. The Minister of Finance had an easy job to gather about him a few men who are always ready to follow, and who said, unless that change is made we cannot support the government. I thought the Prime Minister had more force of character than that, but he gave way. I think I recollect hearing the right hon. gentleman say one day: It takes me some time to make up my mind, but when I have made up my mind I stick to it. He did not do it on that occasion, he gave in. It is a dangerous thing for the chief of a party to give in once. Well, the consequence was that we had clause 16, No. 2, that does not mean anything at all. Here I want to repeat what the hon. member for Labelle said yesterday in such eloquent language, that clause 16 is worse even than the amendment of the leader of the opposition, because the amendment of the leader of the opposition does not prevent Roman Catholics from having separate schools if they want them. But if this amended section 16 becomes law, it will for ever prevent the Roman Catholics from having denominational schools in the province of Alberta. First of all, as was said yesterday, it is only the minority who will have separate schools, the majority will have public schools. But what kind of schools have they got there? I take the honest word of the Minister of Finance, who said they were public schools everywhere, there are no separate schools anywhere. The word 'separate' reminds me of a story I heard of an old man in Ontario who was mad because the dual language had been adopted. He said, you can talk to me in French or you can talk to me in English, but I dare you to talk to me in that dual language. We have been speaking so much about separate schools that the word 'separate' has ceased to have any meaning. We should speak about denominational schools instead of separate schools. I ask the Minister of Finance: What is the meaning of the word 'separate' in the law which is now before the House? It will be separate schools for the Protestants if they are in a minority, and separate schools for the Catholics if they are in a minority. We mean something when we speak of denominational schools, but the word 'separate' conveys no meaning at all. It follows that in places where the Roman Catholics are in a majority they must have the public school, which is left in the hands of trustees, who themselves are responsible to the board of education, under the control of a minister who has arbitrary powers, and can dismiss the trustees and do anything he likes with that educational board.

Now the desire for denominational schools is no mere caprice. I want my hon. friend the Minister of Finance to understand that. I have a great deal of respect for the Minister of Finance, I really believe that he is

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sincere in what he does, there is no doubt about it. He has been a long time the premier of his province, and I will give him credit for the fact that the Catholics in the province of Nova Scotia, so far as I know, are perfectly satisfied, I have never heard a word of complaint. So I will give him credit of being a broadminded man, so far as the question of separate schools in Nova Scotia is concerned. Well, there is a strong sentiment at the bottom of this question of schools. I am convinced that it is a good sentiment, it is a most respectable sentiment, and I propose soon to read from the speeches of some English Protestants to show that it is more than a respectable sentiment, and we should grant them either to the French or the English in order to have peace and contentment. Now, Sir, who was it that first spoke about separate schools in this country? Who was it that first objected to all the children being educated together? I met a gentleman yesterday who said, Why should the children not all eat the same thing and all eat at the same table? I did not think the example was very convincing; but it meant this: Why should not the little Catholic boys go to the same school with the little Protestant boys? At first sight that looks very reasonable. But there is something behind all that, and those who are not au courant of that sentiment cannot understand it, because there is a great deal in it. But this idea of separation did not start with the Roman Catholics. I want to show, and I want it recorded on the 'Hansard,' who it was that first spoke about separating the children in the schools. My impression is that we would never have heard of separate schools if they had not been asked for by the Protestant population of Quebec. I am convinced that at the time of confederation there was no question of separate schools, nobody thought about them. It may have been a lack of prudence on the part of our people, because our people are very honest in their way of thinking, they do not apprehend that anybody will do them any harm, that is their character. But the English population of Quebec were more prudent, and I do not blame them. We must remember, Mr. Chairman, that this question of religion is deeply rooted in the heart of every man, and you cannot play with it. More than that, I want to tell my right hon. friend that you cannot compromise with that sentiment. You can compromise on everything else, you can compromise on the tariff; you can preach against protection for eighteen years and then adopt it in part you can compromise upon a fast line by having steamers that take 36 days to cross the ocean; but you cannot compromise on questions of religion and conscience. Now what do I find here? Old members of this House will remember Mr. Holton, who sat in the old parliament of Canada. In the confederation debates I find he said this: