

during the past sixty years on this educational question, and to those gentlemen who think that this will be a final settlement I commend this history. In 1840, now sixty-five years ago, the first squabble over separate schools began in Ontario. The first law was introduced on or about the year 1840, and I will read so that hon. gentlemen may see what has happened :

The first attempt to frame an educational Bill was made in 1840, when the matter was left to a committee of the House composed of fifteen members from Lower Canada and eight from Upper Canada. The Bill this committee submitted was a crude affair, but in it the principle of separate schools was imbedded. Provision was made that 'any person, by merely dissenting from the regulations, arrangements and proceedings of the common school commissioners could establish separate schools.' The introduction of this principle provoked a prolonged and bitter controversy lasting till 1863.

From 1840 to 1863, there was a bitter controversy over the introduction of separate schools into the province of Ontario, a struggle lasting for twenty-three years. I point out to these gentlemen opposite that from the first introduction of separate schools in Ontario, year after year there has been introduced into the legislature various amendments with small beginnings until in the year of our Lord 1905, that system is unrivalled in any country in the world. So far as I know no country has a system equal to that which at present prevails in Ontario and Quebec. As I said before, these separate schools are here and they are here to stay. We are willing they shall stay, but at the same time we point out to our brethren in the Northwest what the term separate school means, so that they may learn from past experience what is likely to happen. If hon. gentlemen opposite think it means only half an hour at the close of the day they will soon wake up to find out their error. The history of separate schools shows that the system far from losing its grip has been making a steadfast onward advance. I commend to hon. gentlemen opposite the conditions of the present day in the old land of France. I am sorry to say that not many of our French compatriots are now in the chamber, but I have remarked that although these hon. gentlemen have held up to our eyes the system in vogue in the British Islands, they have not one word of commendation for the school system of France. As though it were the irony of fate, while we are discussing this question in this House, a similar discussion is going on in France, but in an opposite direction. There, the system of union between church and state which has been in existence for five centuries is now being destroyed; religious orders are being driven out of the old land of France, and where will they find a resting place? We welcome them to Canada, but we welcome

them to enter this Dominion as common citizens of a common citizenship and to become British subjects the same as ourselves. We welcome them to our shores as we welcome all nationalities. But I ask you, Mr. Speaker, would it be an enlightened policy at the present moment to introduce and plant in our soil institutions, be they ever so estimable, that have become dead in the old countries of Europe? I know it may be said that I am speaking from a narrow point of view. I am ready to have that said now. I believe I have had as great experience of life as the average man of my age. I have had the opportunity of travelling in many lands; I have visited many countries in my time; I have visited many countries the language of which I did not know and the religion of which was strange to me. I have had the privilege, Mr. Speaker, of worshiping with all classes and all denominations, as much perhaps as most of the men who sit around this chamber. I have had the privilege—yes, I say privilege, advisedly—of worshiping in the Roman Catholic Church. I have visited purely Roman Catholic countries, where I have heard the ceremonies of the Roman Catholic religion gone through in the churches, and I have been inspired with the fervour of the worshippers, their religious zeal, and the reverence that they show to their Maker in their own way. I have been inspired by that worship. I have seen it in such countries as Mexico, Cuba, Italy, France, Switzerland. I have witnessed that worship in all these countries and have said to myself: These brethren—I am ready to call them so—can teach me a lesson; they have more fervour and more religious zeal than I ever aspire to have. I regret to say that many of our Protestant bodies are far behind the Roman Catholic Church in this respect—that they have not the same reverence and zeal, and are not so constantly on the watch tower. While this is to be regretted, I cannot for one, see why we should treat one religious body with any more tolerance or favour than we treat another religious body. I am ready that the religious body with which I am connected shall receive common treatment with all the other religious bodies in this country. But I do submit that in a country with such a variety of population, such a variety of religions, and such a variety of creeds as we have, we cannot afford to set up all these divisions, and to say that all these may prosper and thrive and have their separate schools. We cannot do that, and therefore we must devise a system that will make them all good citizens, true citizens, and citizens of one common country and one common empire. I believe this will be best attained by a national system of schools. That may not be the ideal system, but is there any better that can be devised? The Northwest makes the best approach to that