

signatures, and among them are the names of many Roman Catholics, who are petitioning parliament to-day not to pass this clause of the Bill. I have letters in my possession drawing attention to the fact that the names of many Roman Catholics are on those petitions. I have letters stating that if petitions had been sent to the Doukhobors, translated into their language, seventy-five per cent of them would sign those petitions; so would the Galicians, and so would the Roman Catholics of this country. The Galicians say: We left one country because of the tyranny of the church, and we were told that we were coming to a free country, and we do not want it in Canada. They do not want separate schools; they want national schools; and the result is that none of them are asking for this provision in the Bill, while hundreds of them have deliberately petitioned against it. Roman Catholics in the province of Ontario have also petitioned against it, very many of them. I have had petitions sent to me in large numbers, and my attention has been drawn to the fact that Roman Catholic names were on those petitions. In some instances I have known them very well; I have known them for years; and I assume that they knew what they were seeking. So I say the Roman Catholics are not a unit on this question. Many of them are in favour of national schools, and we are not to blame because we desire to give them national schools. I have always understood that the sentiment of this Dominion was in favour of national schools and against interference with the rights of the provinces. I presented one petition from New Westminster, British Columbia with 300 names, another from Vancouver containing 2,097 names; another containing over 300 names; another containing 400 or 500. I have presented petitions in large numbers from the Northwest Territories from Manitoba, from Ontario, from Quebec, from Nova Scotia, from New Brunswick, and from Prince Edward Island. From all over the country have come petitions to the same effect, declaring that it is improper for this parliament to interfere with the rights of the province, and asking that there be no interference with the rights of provinces in regard to education. The church unions all over the country are passing resolutions against it. The Orange lodges all over the country are passing resolutions against it.

Some hon. MEMBERS. Hear, hear.

Mr. SPROULE. Properly so. There is no harm in that, any more than there is in the Jacques Cartier Club petitioning for it. It is the right of every British subject under the Crown to petition parliament so long as he does so courteously and in accordance with the provisions laid down. We have Conservatives petitioning for this

Mr. SPROULE.

Bill, and others against it; that is their right and no one complains. Petitions are coming in thousands in favour of non-interference with the rights of the provinces, and from only one province are petitions coming asking us to force the hands of the new provinces and curtail their rights, and that is the province of Quebec.

But we are told that we have separate schools in Ontario and Quebec, and that everybody is satisfied with them. Here is what the Prime Minister said in introducing this Bill:

I am glad to say, and perhaps it would be permitted if, in this matter, being myself a son of the province of Quebec, I indulge in what may be not altogether unpardonable pride, when I say, that I am not aware that the Protestant minority of Quebec ever had any cause of complaint of the treatment they had received at the hands of the majority.

According to this, everybody is satisfied with the separate schools of Quebec, and everybody is satisfied with the separate schools of Ontario. I know that is not a fact; I have heard it over and over again. I know where a separate school has been converted into a public school, within a few miles of where I live, and the reason the people gave for doing that was that with their strength divided, the task of keeping up separate schools was too onerous and heavy either for the Protestants or for the Roman Catholics. The Prime Minister says: I have never heard of any dissatisfaction in the province of Quebec. Now, I have here a quotation from the Huntingdon 'Gleaner,' and what does it say? It says:

How does the premier reconcile this declaration of his with the fact that the English-speaking people outside the island of Montreal have largely disappeared and are continuing to disappear? Whole townships, settled by them and which prospered under them, are to-day French. Protestant churches are to be found in which no service is held, and the spot where Protestants were buried for three generations and more are now to be found in the corners of farms of French-Canadians. In only one of the counties that composed the eastern townships have the Protestants a majority, yet once they had absolute control. Do men throw up their farms and leave a province where they have no cause of complaint?

Let Sir Wilfrid explain this—the extraordinary spectacle of a people abandoning the land of their birth, to which they are bound by every tie of affection and patriotism, to seek new homes in the United States, for the proportion has been trifling who have gone to our Northwest. What is it they find under an alien flag they could not in the province of Quebec?

Sir WILLIAM MULOCK. We lost a great many from Ontario.

Mr. SPROULE. National schools, I assume.