

question of the separation of the children in the school houses, but we offered a compromise upon other things. But the commissioners declined our offer and came back, and the government then undertook to proceed with the Remedial Bill. When the election was over and the government of Sir Charles Tupper had been defeated, and Mr. Laurier, now Sir Wilfrid Laurier, came into power, he sent for the members of the Manitoba government to which I then belonged, and asked us what our views were. We pointed the right hon. gentleman to the proposition we had made to the commissioners of Sir Charles Tupper, the same proposition *ipsissima verba*, and we said that was the best we could do. The right hon. gentleman accepted that proposition, wisely, as the result shows, because matters are going very much more smoothly and satisfactorily in Manitoba since then. We drew up a basis of compromise. It will be found in the sessional papers of this House. The terms were submitted to the leading men of both political parties who had stood by us in the fight in which we had been engaged. We did not desire that any principle should be yielded without full consultation. Amongst others it was submitted to the late Dalton McCarthy,\* and it was approved by him. That compromise was carried into legislative effect. It does not go quite so far as the compromise upon this question which is before the House at the present time; but it was a substantial compromise on the general principle with which we had to deal. Yet at that time there were some men who said: No compromise; who said: Don't give in till you get the whole thing, you will get it if you stand up. I did not agree with that view. I thought that some compromise should be made. My colleagues in the government of Manitoba thought the same thing, and a compromise was made. But, Mr. Speaker,—and this is an observation I desire to commend to the attention of the House—there were very very few people who said, no compromise. And why was it that so few people then opposed the compromise? It was because the people of Canada had been fighting about this question for five years, they were sick and tired of the contest, and desired that there should be a compromise of some kind so that they might have peace. More than that, the material progress of this country had been stopped. My hon. friend from Lanark (Mr. Haggart) knows perfectly well that the Manitoba school question paralysed governmental activity for a considerable length of time. The members of the government practically did nothing else; they could do nothing else but attend to the agitation and difficulties that arose out of this question. When a question of this kind has to be met it has to be met in a practical way. Complications arise, govern-

mental activity and administration are absolutely destroyed, it is impossible for ministers to attend to their departmental duties or to attend to the business of the country as they should. Therefore, in 1896 when this settlement was made—although it was a settlement that hon. gentlemen opposite had refused to accept—although it was a settlement which led my right hon. friend the leader of the government out of a great difficulty and made his path smooth, yet the settlement has never been combated or criticised by any member of this House from that time up to the present moment.

Mr. FOSTER. Will the hon. minister—just—

Mr. SIFTON. Not minister—member.

Mr. FOSTER. Member—former minister—just for the information of the House just tell us briefly what the difference was between the conditions before the compromise and after?

Mr. SIFTON. The principle was embodied in the compromise that wherever there was a certain number of Catholic children there should be a Catholic teacher. In that way it goes farther than the compromise we have here. I cannot from memory give the exact figures but in a rural district there was a certain number of children called for and in a town a larger number was called for, and wherever a certain number of Catholic children attended a school then, for each unit of that number, a Catholic teacher was required to be employed. Further, a provision we inserted that the children should, where the rooms in the school house permitted it, be divided up at half-past three for the purpose of having religious exercises, the Catholic teacher taking the Catholic children and the other teacher taking the Protestant children:

(An hon. member having handed Mr. Sifton the statute in, question he read.)

In any school in towns and cities, where the average attendance of Roman Catholic children is forty or upwards, and in villages and rural districts if the average attendance of such children is twenty-five or upwards, the trustees shall, if required by a petition of parents or guardians of such number of Roman Catholic children, respectively, employ at least one duly certificated Roman Catholic teacher in such school.

Where the school house permits it by reason of different numbers and different rooms the children are divided, the Roman Catholic teacher takes the Roman Catholic children and the Protestant, or public school teacher takes the other children, and religious exercises are conducted in that way. As a matter of fact this compromise was a great and substantial advantage to the Roman Catholic people of Manitoba because in a very great number of cases where the Roman Catholic people live they are in