

the majority—that the Protestants of Quebec and the Roman Catholics of Ontario were not given any rights at all. In consequence of a mutual exchange the Protestants of Quebec and the Roman Catholics of Ontario established separate schools, and it was agreed to give separate schools to both. When the hon. gentleman, then, says that we should give the Northwest the same rights that we gave to Ontario and Quebec, he is asking for something that is impossible, because we did not give those rights to Ontario and Quebec. But if we take the hon. gentleman at his word, and give to the minority in the Northwest Territories the same rights that the Protestants have in Quebec, would that satisfy hon. gentlemen opposite? Would that satisfy the premier? Would it satisfy some of our extreme friends in the province of Quebec? What are those rights? What is the condition in Quebec? The schools which we call public schools in other provinces are church schools there; and I say all credit to the Roman Catholics for insisting on an education in religion in the schools. I think it would be better for Protestants if they did the same; but unfortunately the divisions among them prevent that desirable consummation. But in the province of Quebec, as a matter of fact the majority have their schools conducted on religious lines. There is a great difference between a Protestant going to what is practically a church school and being trained in the doctrines of the Catholic faith, and a Roman Catholic child in the Northwest going to a public school of which the worst said is that he is not trained in his own faith. Surely there is all the difference, to use the language of the prayer book, between commission and omission in the two acts. And so, when hon. gentlemen opposite plead with us to give to the Northwest the same rights that are given to Quebec and Ontario, I venture to say that, the Protestants, being in such an immense majority in the Northwest, in many cases it would be a practical impossibility for the Roman Catholics to have their separate schools. They would feel that a gross injustice was being done to a Roman Catholic child if we set up a national school in the Northwest in which the distinctive tenets of Protestantism were taught.

The right hon. gentleman said, on page 1458, in introducing the Bill:

Having obtained the consent of the minority to this form of government, having obtained their consent to the giving up of their valued privileges and their position of strength are we to tell them, now that confederation is established, that the principle upon which they consented to this arrangement is to be laid aside and that we are to ride rough-shod over them?

Now, Sir, I must confess that I am utterly unable to grasp the meaning of that

language. I am not aware of any rights that were given up, any valuable privileges of which they were shorn, any position of strength that was abandoned. If any compact or bargain has been made by which the people of this country are in honour bound to give to the Northwest separate schools or anything else, then I will take the same stand that I took in 1896, and say, if the honour of this country is at stake, let us preserve our honour. But surely it is on hon. gentlemen opposite to show that there was some compact by which we are in honour bound to give some system of education to which we are opposed.

The right hon. gentleman, in introducing the Bill, made another statement, on page 1458; and it is rather singular that he used such an argument and others when the real point at issue is whether or not religious education should be given for half an hour a day. The right hon. gentleman said:

When I compare these two countries, when I compare Canada with the United States, when I compare the status of the two nations, when I think upon their future, when I observe the social condition of the civil society in each of them and when I observe in this country of ours a total absence of lynchings and an almost total absence of divorces and murders, for my part, I thank heaven that we are living in a country where the young children of the land are taught Christian morals and Christian dogmas.

I was rather amused when the right hon. gentleman said that. He was greeted with thunderous applause by the gentlemen behind him. Those hon. gentlemen, I sometimes think, have got into such a habit of applauding their leader for the eloquent passages with which from time to time he regales them, that they often applaud though they fail to grasp the point. I saw some gentlemen applauding that statement who I thought should more properly have held a brief for the Roman Catholics of the United States; and I call their attention to this statement which the right hon. gentleman has advanced as an argument why we should pass this Bill, which is in effect a statement that in the United States there is no religion taught in the national schools; that in Canada you have national schools without religion for Protestants and separate schools for Roman Catholics; and that the consequence is that under this educational system Canada has escaped the murders, divorces and lynchings so common in the United States. Now, what does that mean if logic means anything?

I will not try to put it in words because one is so apt to be misquoted or misreported that I am afraid somebody will be unkind enough to say afterwards that I charged the Catholics of the United States when it is the right hon. the Prime Minister who has done that, and I stand here to defend them.