

North Toronto, in opening his speech, made a remark which I cannot help but consider almost offensive, when he said the right hon. leader of the government started in by doing the baby act. Now, without saying anything about the delicacy of such language, I do desire however to state that if ever there was a man in Canada who has never shown the white feather on any occasion when he required to take courage, to take heart, and to stand before the people and boldly tell them what they should do, it is the right hon. the leader of this government. I remember when, in the campaign of 1896 at the time the Manitoba school question was before the country, the right hon. gentleman went down into his own constituency in the city of Quebec, when the people of that province were more or less excited on the question which was then occupying all minds, and he led them into the way of peace, he showed them that justice and consideration ought to be given to provincial rights in Manitoba; and in the ensuing elections we saw that by his courage, by the justice of his pleas, and the justice of his position, he was able to defeat the government in the province of Quebec itself, when the Conservative party, by the help of the ultramontane press and members, hoped to carry the province by an enormous majority in favour of the Tupper government. Sir, there never has been in the history of Canada an exhibition of greater moral courage and of greater devotion to duty, whatever the cost might be. I remember another occasion when the right hon. gentleman went to the city of Toronto, at a time there was an agitation being carried on throughout the province of Ontario in relation to the Jesuit Estates Act. The right hon. gentleman faced a great audience in the ultra Protestant city of Toronto, and the first cheer that arose during his speech was on his mentioning the name of Col. O'Brien, who was then supposed to be the champion of Protestantism in Ontario; the right hon. gentleman showed that audience the justice of his position, and the actual condition of affairs in the province of Quebec, and before he had spoken for twenty minutes, he had that audience in the hollow of his hand, and when he sat down he received an applause which has never been equalled in that great Protestant city of Toronto.

Mr. SPROULE. May I ask the hon. gentleman why they do not put up a candidate in that city to-day?

Mr. FISHER. Because we do not want to give you and your friends an opportunity to raise fanatical prejudices on this question. Sir, for the hon. member for North Toronto to impute cowardice to the right hon. leader of the government, is going from the sublime to the ridiculous.

Mr. SPROULE. That is pretty strong language.

Mr. FISHER. The case requires strong language, but if it is not parliamentary, I can withdraw it, but nevertheless I want to say it. The right hon. gentleman was charged a few minutes ago with having shown heat when he rose to speak in reply to the leader of the opposition. I do not wonder that one who has seen what has been going on here during the last few days shows heat; I do not wonder that a man who has his country's good at heart shows heat when he sees the efforts of the press of a great party in this country devoting itself to stirring up religious strife and national prejudice. Sir, heat is required to put down such action as that, and to challenge it, and to meet it. I say that the Liberal party and the Liberal government are ready at all times to fight such a policy whenever it is attempted to be carried on in this country. Sir, the question at issue is the false assertion that this government has refused to extend the boundaries of Manitoba westward because of the school question. The right hon. leader of the government, in introducing this Bill a few weeks ago, gave a clear and explicit statement of the reasons why the boundaries of Manitoba could not be extended to the westward, and in that statement and those reasons there was not a single suggestion that the boundary question had any connection whatever with the school question. The reasons were explicit, and they are shown in the papers laid on the table of the House. The reasons given were that the people west of Manitoba did not wish to be joined to Manitoba and preferred to be in the new provinces, and we had to consider the people who were concerned rather than the desire of the government of Manitoba. And, as I am reminded by my hon. friend from Centre York (Mr. Campbell), why did not they extend it in 1884, when Manitoba made the request. The reasons given then were very much as they have been given now in the answer to the memorial of the government of Manitoba. Those reasons were conclusive with the Conservative party in 1884; they are doubly strong to-day. The conditions which made the westward extension undesirable then have been intensified by the development of the country. And these reasons, and these reasons only, caused the government to reply to the government of Manitoba and say that the boundaries of Manitoba could not be extended westward, but that the whole of that territory must go into the two new provinces. It is assuming a great deal—unfortunately hon. gentlemen opposite and their press live on assumptions and they therefore must assume a great deal—but there is no justification for the assumption that the school question was in any way connected with the decision of the government that the boundary of Manitoba could not be extended to the west. I will not deal with this question longer. I regret exceedingly that to-day and yesterday, as several