

have brought about that happy condition if we had not been disposed to meet our Roman Catholic brethren in a generous spirit, with due regard to their religious convictions. There is no separate school system by law in the province of Nova Scotia, but I tell this House to-night that the principle of separate schools is more emphatically recognized in the province of Nova Scotia than it is to-day in the Northwest Territories.

Come with me down to the fair city of Halifax and what will you find? The Roman Catholic Archbishop builds the school and leases it to the school trustees. What would they say to that in the Northwest? The Roman Catholic authorities receive consideration and this is one of the means whereby we bring about that happy condition which obtains down there. The sister of charity teaches in our schools wearing the garb of her order, and many of the sisters are among the best teachers in our province. There are schools in the city of Halifax which will be pointed out to you as Roman Catholic schools, and so they are. The Prime Minister once when in Halifax visited one of these schools and he alluded to it as a separate school, and one of the sisters interrupted him and said: no, Sir, it is a public school of the province of Nova Scotia. And so it was, but it was a school which was recognized as a Roman Catholic school and it was attended only by Roman Catholic pupils, and it was taught by the Roman Catholic sister of charity wearing the garb of her order and the cross upon her breast. We have made concessions to our Roman Catholic brethren in the province of Nova Scotia. Why, if a vacancy occurs in the teaching staff of one of the Catholic schools of Halifax, the Protestant commissioners have no vote in the selection of a successor; the Catholic Commissioners only have the right to vote. Such is the system in the city of Halifax, and substantially the same system exists in many of the larger communities in the province, because it is only in a large community that this condition can be brought about. I am less familiar with the conditions in New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island, but I think I am right in saying that they are substantially the same.

Mr. EMMERSON. The same in New Brunswick.

Mr. FIELDING. While we have no separate schools established by law, we have in practice in all these provinces separate schools, and I hesitate not to make the statement that in my own province of Nova Scotia the principle of separate schools is recognized more emphatically than it is recognized in the Northwest Territories to-day. I would have this parliament bear in mind that if we have that happy condition of things in that fair province, if we can be quoted from time to time as models of good citizenship and toleration and modera-

tion, it is not because we have allowed principles to be carried to dangerous extremes, but it is because we have recognized the rights and feelings and even the prejudices of our Roman Catholic brethren. What interest has suffered? There was a little friction years ago, but there is none to-day. The sensible people of Nova Scotia have made up their minds that this is a matter in which we can please our Roman Catholic brethren without hurting ourselves, and when we can do that why should we not make an effort to do it? I repeat then, that the happy condition in the province of Nova Scotia which is so often referred to—which I myself have again and again spoken of with pride—has been brought about by paying due regard of the rights, and the feelings of the Roman Catholic minority.

Mr. SPROULE. Does the minister think that the people of the Northwest Territories would be less liberal or less generous than the people of Nova Scotia?

Mr. FIELDING. Perhaps they would not, but if forty-one per cent of the people of Canada think that there is a danger, we might well see if some compromise, some arrangement could not be made. We have to-day before us perhaps the most important measures that have ever engaged the attention of the parliament of Canada. They are measures which are wide-reaching in their effect. Whether we have regard to the interest which is manifested by the people throughout the country to-day or whether we have regard to the future welfare of this Dominion which all, irrespective of party, are so anxious to advance, we may feel, I am sure, that these are great measures, and that we should approach them with the utmost care, with the utmost deliberation, with a desire to find a happy settlement of any differences that may arise. Let us not conceal from ourselves certain facts; let us be frank with one another. Let us say that the gravity of this situation is even more serious than many think. If my right hon. friend the Prime Minister is to retire from office, as he would be obliged to do, if this Bill were defeated, what then? Under ordinary circumstances the retirement of a minister or the retirement of a government means very little after all. The public adapt themselves to new conditions; one government goes out and another comes in. Party interest may suffer. But that is not the situation to-day. There are interests involved in this question which far outweigh any mere party consideration. What matters it if one government should go out and another come in? But think for a moment of what would happen under the present state of affairs. Some one will say: what matter if the Prime Minister goes out, somebody else will come in. Sir, no government could be formed under such circumstances

Mr. FIELDING.