

school system and the opportunity for the greatest sectarian endowment that could be created. When we have two ministers of the Crown differing as to the interpretation of a clause of this kind, a clause of such importance, we are encouraged to believe that it was prepared with care, with calmness and with deliberation?

And, again, the speech with which the Prime Minister introduced this clause, was, in my humble opinion, not calculated to secure for it that reception which I know he desired, that reception which all peace-loving men throughout the country would desire in the case of a question of this kind. I have endeavoured to analyse the speech, in order, if possible to see what the Prime Minister had in his mind when he was defining the original educational clause before this House. And his line of reasoning as I found it, was something like this:—What are separate schools? For a reply he reviews their history in Canada. He describes the separate schools before confederation. He traces the evolution of school law in Quebec from 1841 to 1863. He emphasizes the basic differences in matters of dogma between Catholics and Protestants. He shows how and why the separate schools of old Canada were established. He recalls the acrimonious debates of 1863 and George Brown's vigorous denunciations. He reminds Canadians that for fifty years they have disagreed on this subject. He reviews the agitation from 1841 to the deadlock of 1864; reminds us how separate-schools were 'a necessary condition to confederation,' claims similarity of conditions as regards the new provinces of the Northwest, emphasizes how Manitoba avoided the separate school system, how the Northwest Territories cannot thus escape, and finally, though refusing to discuss the merits, denounces the American system, which is the presumable alternative towards which the Northwest is drifting.

Now, what is the impression created by that speech? What is the impression created upon the mind of the man on the street of whom we have heard so often. I went to my own constituency a few days ago and tried to find out what was the impression which existed there with reference to the contemplated legislation. And I failed to find a single man who did not understand that the contemplated action of the government was to duplicate in the Canadian Northwest a system of separate schools similar to that found in Ontario and Quebec. Now, that, I claim, is a misapprehension; but that certainly is the idea fixed in the minds of many throughout the Dominion of Canada after reading the speech with which the Prime Minister introduced his Bill. And what a magnificent opportunity the Prime Minister had. Following the unusual course of delivering a speech on the first reading, he spoke to a Bill which no member of the opposition had seen; making

a speech, therefore, to which no immediate reply could be given. He spoke with care, and the country listened; and for three weeks that was the only speech that went forth to the country as explaining the intention of the government. And no word of criticism could be or was, during that time, given utterance to in this House. The opportunity was his. He might have used it, I think, to far greater advantage than he did. I believe he might have used it in such a way as to have tided us over a period which, I know, has been very trying to many on both sides of the House. Now, there are those who believe that the separate school system, as we find it in Ontario and Quebec, was a 'necessary condition of confederation,' men who are willing that it should then be established and who are to-day willing that it should be continued, but who are not willing that the same system should be duplicated in new, unorganized territories. And we can not blame them. They are as honest and sincere in their opinions as are those who differ from them; but it is their opinion, and, as such, it must be accepted and reckoned with. Now, it seems to me that the Prime Minister and the members of the government, foreseeing that this question would bring on a discussion that was very likely to be a difficult and trying one, should first have agreed among themselves upon a clause that they could all accept. They should then have submitted it to their caucus and secured the support of their own members. That clause should have been so precise, so distinct, so clear, that there could be no misinterpretation of it. If the clause was intended to give nothing more or nothing less to the minority in the Northwest than that which they now enjoy, that should have been distinctly and specifically stated to the House. That clause should be so clear as to lead to no misunderstanding. And, had the Prime Minister, having secured the agreement of the members of his cabinet, having consulted his rank and file and secured their endorsement, had he then come in with a clause to perpetuate the privileges of the minority in the Northwest, and had he frankly stated to the House and people that this was all that could be read into the clause, he could have appealed to the spirit of tolerance and Christian charity of which he has spoken, and I believe that the country from one end to the other would have accepted what he proposed. I believe the country would have accepted it had not the apprehensions been created in the minds of the people to which the original clause and the speech of the right hon. gentleman gave rise. What this country wants is frank and straightforward treatment. What our people want is to be told the truth, even if it be not palatable. As this question was introduced into this House, we find that the people of the province of Quebec had false