

of us on this side of the House would not have been astonished if we had seen the hon. Minister of Justice rise to disagree with the right hon. gentleman, and to state that he was not entirely in accord with him; because rumour has been bandying about strange things lately in connection with the name of the hon. Minister of Justice. But that is indicative only of the tempest that is raging or the fire that is burning within those doors. There was a burst out on the 21st day of February, when the Bill was introduced, and we have again had a burst out from the Minister of Justice in another way. But I must refer again to what the hon. gentleman said, although the hon. member for Simcoe has referred to it. The hon. Minister of Justice has stated that we have appealed to prejudice, that we have circulated petitions and have dragged in the creedal question. Sir, I have been in this House during the whole of this discussion since this Bill was introduced, and I say that on every occasion on which it has been dealt with, it has been dealt with on this side irrespective of party, faction, section or creed. There has been no question raised upon which that charge could be visited upon any member on this side of the House. But it has been said that the action of bodies or associations of persons, and of individual persons who have felt themselves aggrieved, and who are exercising their prerogative in appealing to parliament by petition, has been engineered and provoked from this side of the House. I would ask the Minister of Justice if he considers that the action of the Liberal papers in Ontario has been engineered by gentlemen on that side of the House—whether they are responsible for the position which the 'Globe' has taken, and the papers which profess independent support of hon. gentlemen opposite, in opposition to this Bill. Would he like to take one horn of the dilemma or both? If we are responsible for one, is it too much to say that they are responsible for the others? Then, Sir, there is in this measure that which has provoked some questions from the leader of the opposition to-day; and, without desiring or intending to take the time of the House longer than a few moments to run over the ground, I would just like to point out to you, Sir, the extraordinary position, chronologically, in which this government finds itself to-day; face to face with the utterances of the Prime Minister himself. On the 21st day of February there was transacted here an event for which this House had been waiting for some time. In the speech from the Throne we had read that the long-looked-for Bill granting autonomy to the Northwest Territories was to be brought down. Questions were asked in the House as to when that might be expected. On

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the 31st day of January, the Prime Minister was asked across the floor of this House when the hon. Minister of the Interior might be expected to return, and the hon. member for North Toronto was informed by the Prime Minister that the minister was expected to return on the 15th day of February. On the 10th day of February, as appears by 'Hansard,' the question as to the absence of the Minister of the Interior and the Minister of Finance was again repeated by hon. gentlemen on this side of the House, and, in conjunction with other business, it is a notable circumstance that the Prime Minister was asked whether it was his intention to introduce this Bill, and he stated that the Bill would be introduced, so far as he then knew, on the 21st day of February; and significant was his remark, when asked if the Minister of the Interior would be here, that 'the Prime Minister would be in his place'. The introduction of the Bill took place on the 21st day of February. With regard to education, the clause which the right hon. gentleman says is the only one to which there is opposition, the right hon. gentleman, in the course of a deliberate speech, says, on page 1526 of 'Hansard':

I now come to the question of education, and this question is perhaps under the existing circumstances the most important of all that we have to deal with.

This afternoon the right hon. gentleman stated, and the hon. Minister of Justice has echoed his remark, that we on this side of the House are responsible, forsooth, for the outbreak of passion. The right hon. gentleman went further, and put it in an abstract interrogative form, that there was a hesitation on the part of the government, because was it not open to the government to change this measure if it thought fit so to do? Then, what does he say?

There are evidences, not a few coming to us from all directions, that the old passions which such a subject always aroused, are not, unfortunately, buried.

However, this was before the Bill received its first reading. The right hon. gentleman was fully in touch with the situation throughout the country, knew that these old prejudices and passions, as he is pleased to call them, would be engendered and were engendered and further on he says:

The government has been warned, threatened from both sides of this question, from those who believe in separate schools and from those who oppose separate schools.

And then the right hon. gentleman, proceeding to argue the case, set forth reasons why this clause which he read should be introduced, and in order to show the House that he really intended at that time to stand