

cation which in process of time shall be thrown on one side as of an antiquated pattern and worn out by long use. I take precisely the opposite opinion. In my views, the normal education, the normal machinery for education required alike by the parent and by the community, is the voluntary school. I do not say there ought not to be—I have no attack to make on—a school board system. We require to deal with these questions, one who will look at them from a broader standpoint, who will feel that, outside the question of grants and the question of classes there are other issues to be decided, other interests to be considered, and who will feel his duty as Education Minister as but very imperfectly accomplished if he does not do all in his power to foster every influence which may mould, not merely the children committed to his care, not merely these subjects of secular learning—which may not advance their happiness in life—but these larger questions, the sense of these greater issues, necessary, as I must firmly believe, to the well-being of every community and most of all necessary in these days among the rising, full-fledged forces of the new democracy. In making this profession of my educational faith have I said anything which runs counter to the interests of that democracy to which I appealed just now.

Sir, if there is a man whose name has been heralded throughout the length and breadth of this country as that of a great statesman; if there is a man whose imperial policy we have been asked to adopt; if there is a man who, in one section of the country at least—enjoys unlimited confidence and great popularity—this man—this British statesman is Mr. Chamberlain. What views does that enlightened statesman hold on this question of education?

In the course of this controversy, I observe a great number of people appeal to the time-honored principle of religious equality, well, I entirely approve of that. I consider myself to be a devoted advocate of religious sentiment of that kind. What do you mean by religious equality? How far are you prepared to go in order to secure? For instance, do you think it consistent that churchmen, Roman Catholics, Jews, Unitarians and a number of other minor sects should be forced to pay rates which provide religious instruction which in their opinion either leaves out the essentials which make it valuable, or in other cases teaches doctrines in which they do not believe. Do you think, I say, that it is religious equality to insist upon that and at the same time refuse to those denominations the right of having their religious instruction for their children to which they do attach real importance?

And further:

I ask another question. You are in favour of religious equality. Would you be willing to accept a system by which it has been attempted to secure that equality in some of the provinces in Canada, where every ratepayer is permitted to say to what class of school his rates should go? That is a religious equality.

And further:

And if you admit the right of these people who built the schools for the greater part by

private contributions, who have supported the schools by really very large contributions, amounting on the average during the past 30 years to something like one million pounds a year—if you admit their right to have secured to them the results for which they make their sacrifices—that is to say, the right to give and have given to their children the education, the religious education, which they believe to be essential—then there is no reason whatever why upon every other point sensible men and moderate men should not be able to come to an agreement.

As I said a minute ago, Mr. Balfour met a very strong opposition when he introduced his Bill—even in the ranks of the Unionist party, many friends of the government were somewhat influenced by the wild appeals such as that I have already mentioned. Mr. Chamberlain uttered the words I have just quoted at a meeting of the leading Liberal Unionists held at Birmingham on the 9th of October, 1902. At the conclusion of his speech, the stand taken by Mr. Chamberlain in favour of denominational schools was endorsed by the whole party.

I might quote the opinions expressed on the same subject by Mr. Lyttleton, the present Colonial Secretary, by Sir William R. Anson, by Canon Maccoll, by Mr. Haldane, M.P., and many others, but I do not wish to worry the House.

It seems to me, Sir, that the opinions of the leaders of public opinion in the British empire have on such a grave issue, more weight than that of the hon. gentleman from East Grey (Mr. Sproule).

But, Sir, my friend from Grey (Mr. Sproule) has triumphantly referred to France in his address of Thursday last. Church schools have been abolished in France, exclaimed my friend, because forsooth they had produced illiterates, and to remedy that state of things the government has established a system of neutral schools. True it is, Sir, that in France the government is seeking to suppress denominational schools. But what has been the result? Does not my hon. friend read the papers? The government which suppressed the schools, which exiled the religious orders, denounced the Concordat—that government has been also suppressed, yes suppressed after many a tumult, many an uprising of all liberty-lovers in France. The movement against that act of the French government was not started by the illiterates; it was organized by whom? By members of the Académie Française, by men like François Coppée, Jules Lemaitre, Brunetière—by men of all parties, of all creeds; aye, by free thinkers, by French Protestants like Mons. de Pressensé, one of the most eminent French writers of the day. These men are all united, and they have published a manifesto protesting against the policy of the government. Let me quote a few lines of that manifesto: