

bec and conclude that the only policy under which we can have peace and a good understanding is to agree to disagree on this subject. A great deal has been said on the other side of the House about provincial rights. It is a very catchy phrase and it can be rolled under the tongue like a sweet morsel, but after all we must remember that at the very inception of our constitution provincial rights were accorded in respect to education with the restriction that the rights of minorities in respect to denominational schools must be respected.

That being our constitution, it appears to me we ought to carry it out in its entirety and in the spirit of tolerance and generosity in which it was framed. A good deal has been said regarding the efficiency of separate schools, and I know that the prevalent idea among a good many Protestants is that they are not as efficient as they ought to be. In many cases, however, those who thus criticise these schools have in their minds the poor parochial schools maintained by conscientious Catholics out of their own money after being obliged to pay their taxes for the national school system. Is it any wonder then that separate schools so handicapped should not be as efficient as they would be otherwise? But the very fact that the minority feel compelled by their conscientious convictions and scruples to impose burdens on themselves ought to convince us that we should at least meet them half way and give them the privilege of having the money raised by their taxes devoted to the maintenance of schools to which they can send their children.

A great deal has been said about our school system in the province of Quebec. My hon. friend from Dundas (Mr. Broder) quoted a speech made by the hon. the Minister of Justice (Mr. Fitzpatrick) in the Quebec legislature, away back in 1893, in which the minister criticised the separate schools then in existence in that province. But my hon. friend did not take the trouble—perhaps he did not know—to explain the circumstances surrounding the delivery of that speech. Why, down in the province of Quebec we are animated by a spirit of educational reform, and at that time the Minister of Justice was pleading for an increase in the educational grant and endeavouring to arouse a sentiment among the people in favour of a greater expenditure on education, in favour of paying the teachers higher salaries and building better school-houses. That was the object my hon. friend had in delivering that speech, and it is quite possible that his zeal in the cause of reform induced him to make the most of his case and perhaps even exaggerate the conditions. But what he was endeavouring to do was to get the Quebec government to spend more money and take every means possible to put our educational system there on the most satisfactory footing. And I have no doubt that in the superior province of

Ontario, an equally earnest advocate of reform could find plenty of grounds for making a similar plea. I have no doubt that a member of the Ontario legislature, who was endeavouring to have the educational system of that province improved and no one will deny that it is not susceptible of considerable improvement—could easily find data on which to base an argument that elementary education there was not at all that it ought to be, and make just such an appeal to the people of that province, as the Minister of Justice did to the people of the province of Quebec, to put their hands in their pockets and do more for the cause of education than they had hitherto done. But with all its defects, I venture to say that in the province of Quebec, under our system there, both Protestants and Catholics have on the whole as efficient schools as can be found in other provinces. I believe that we are doing as good work there in the cause of education as is being done anywhere else in this broad Dominion, and I am confident that we are as ambitious to have our system made as perfect as possible and equal to, if not superior, to that of any other province as are the people in any other section of this country; and that, Mr. Speaker, is a sort of rivalry which we can all applaud.

I find it difficult to refrain from making a contrast between the treatment accorded the minority in the province of Quebec and that accorded the minorities in the other provinces. In the province of Quebec the Protestant minority have not only been treated fairly but most generously. We are given more than our share of public money, we are perfectly free to adopt whatever system we choose, and our constitutional guarantees have been carried out to their fullest extent. My hon. friend the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Fisher), who is connected with the system of Protestant education in that province, and my hon. friend from St. Antoine division (Mr. Ames), who also holds a high place in the educational system, both stood up a few days ago and explained how the minority have been treated in the province of Quebec; and I appeal to any man who listened to them if their words did not carry the conviction that nothing could have been fairer or more just than the treatment there meted out to us. The result is that everybody there is satisfied, and we never hear a word of complaint from any one. Take the Protestant press of the province of Quebec, and what has been its attitude during this debate? Nearly all the papers have been enthusiastic supporters of the educational clause in the Bill before us, and those who have not supported it actively are giving it their tacit approval. Even the Montreal 'Witness,' which, as far as Protestantism is concerned, is the watchman on the tower has declared that any Protestant in that province would be acting a mean and contemptible part if he should assist in any attempt to withhold from the