

violence to the conscience of any one that there should be religious instruction in the schools. Whose conscience is violated by the privilege that is given to the minority to have one of their own religion come to the school room at stated hours to give the children religious instruction? Mr. Speaker, to put the question is to answer it. The principle recognized by section 16 hurts nobody, and yet for weeks and for months past the Conservative press, the public halls and some of the pulpits in this great province have been filled with angry and unjust declamations, with impassioned and violent denunciations, with appeals to the passions and prejudices of the majority against the minority. This House has been flooded with petitions protesting against the so-called tyranny involved in this legislation, and we have heard a great deal about the shackles and the fetters which we are about imposing upon the poor helpless provinces of the Northwest. The editor of one of the most prominent newspapers in this province had the temerity to say on the public hustings in the city of Toronto, that in this country you must have absolute unity of race and creed. Mr. Speaker what does that mean? It means that the Catholics of this country are to be absorbed or annihilated; it means that the Catholics in general and the French Canadians in particular are to be wiped out. Why, Sir, we are told that the province of Quebec must be wiped out of confederation, all because forsooth the Catholic minority in the new provinces want to have religious instruction in their schools. Our Catholic clergy have been daily assailed and insulted; our priests have been held up to the electorate of the country as retrograde, grasping and tyrannical. Under the pretense of protecting provincial rights in the new provinces; the rights, the religious convictions, the prejudices if you will, of two-thirds of the Canadian people have been made the subject of harsh, unjust, unworthy and unfair criticism and attack. The hierarchy of the Catholic Church has been once again made the butt of prejudice and unfounded assertion. Sir, in the face of the storm which has raged in Ontario over this question it is only fair that I should contrast the calm, the moderation, the spirit of tolerance displayed by that very hierarchy which has been so ruthlessly assailed. Has any one heard the Catholic clergy or the minority in the west or elsewhere say a word in this crisis? Has any one seen them stoop to pick up the gauntlet thus thrown down; has any one heard them answer the insults levelled against them. No, Mr. Speaker, they have pursued a dignified course, conscious that the spirit of fair-play to be found in the Canadian Parliament will uphold their just rights. I should think that the contrast would be sufficient to bring the blush of shame to the cheek of those who profess

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to practise the true Christian spirit, but who seem to have forgotten it for the moment.

And Mr. Speaker, who are those Catholic clergy and who are the hierarchy who have been thus maligned? They need no defence from me; the history of British North America is their best vindication. Let me remind its detractors that the Catholic clergy has done as much as any other body for civilization and christianity on this continent—there has been in Canada no truer, no surer, no more constant upholder of British institutions and British power than this very clergy—if this country has been preserved to the British Crown, it is due in a measure to the loyalty and bravery of the French Canadians and in a greater measure still to the Catholic clergy. Let me place on record some of the utterances of Canadian Catholic bishops in defence of British connection. In the year 1775, the year of the American invasion, Monsigneur Briand, the bishop of Quebec, wrote on the 22nd of May to his flock:—

A body of revolted subjects against their legitimate sovereign, who is also our own, has just invaded this province, less with the hope of being able to maintain themselves within its limits than with the object of drawing you into their rebellion, or at least of inducing you not to oppose them in their pernicious undertaking. The particular kindness and gentleness with which we have been governed on behalf of His Most Gracious Majesty King George III., since the time when the fate of arms put us under his dominion; the recent favours with which we have just been loaded by him, in being given back the use of our laws, the free exercise of our religion, in being made to participate in all the privileges and advantages of British subjects, would no doubt be enough to impel our gratitude and to rouse our zeal in upholding the interests of the Crown of Great Britain. But motives still more eloquent must speak to your hearts at the present moment. Your oaths, your religion, impose upon you an indispensable obligation of defending with all your might your country and your king. Close then your ears, dear Canadians, and heed not the promoters of sedition who aim at your unhappiness and seek to stifle in your hearts the sentiments of submission to your legitimate superiors, which education and religion have embedded in them. Be cheerful, ready for anything that you will be directed to on behalf of a kind governor, who has no other aims but your welfare and your happiness. It is not a question of carrying war into remote provinces; you are only asked for a helping hand to drive back the enemy and check the invasion that threatens this province. The voice of religion and that of your own interest are here united, and assure us of your zealously to defend our frontiers and our possessions.

In 1812, similar language was used by Monseigneur Plessis, then bishop of Quebec. In 1813, similar language was used by Monseigneur Plessis in addressing his people. In 1857, at a time when the French Canadians were, not unjustly, complaining that they were not being treated as British subjects ought to be treated, the hierarchy of Quebec