

den) has been very much more moderate. The hon. leader of the opposition has said: I disagree with the right hon. Prime Minister as to the constitutional merits of this case. I cannot agree with him as to what may be the interpretation of the law bearing on the case. In effect the leader of the Opposition has said: There may be those in my party who will not agree with me as to what may be the constitutional rights, and therefore I do not say anything in opposition to or in support of separate schools, but I have brought in my amendment; I will not even ask my own followers to support me or help me to carry that amendment through the House; I will leave it to them to do as they choose. I find that there are legal gentlemen on the Conservative side of the House, possibly just as good lawyers as the hon. leader of the opposition, who disagree with him as to what may be the proper decision in regard to the constitutional aspect of this case.

For my own part I do not, personally, look with favour upon separate schools. I would rather there should be no separate schools throughout the length and breadth of this great Dominion, but that every school in Canada should be a national school so governed and conducted that none of its exercises or practices should be or could be offensive to pupils or parents of any denomination or church. It seems to me that it would be preferable that the Protestant and Catholic children of this country, and of every province of this country, should go to school together and grow up and associate together, for we invariably find that where, in any part of this country there is the greatest prejudice and suspicion upon the part of Catholics towards Protestants or upon the part of Protestants towards Catholics it is where there is the least knowledge by the one party or the other, and where there has been the least intercourse and communication. So I believe that to-day the men of Ontario, most of them at heart good, loyal, well meaning, conscientious and honourable citizens, who have been the readiest to send letters and petitions to this House and to the members of this House, against the establishment of separate schools, and who have manifested some antagonism to anything that savours of Roman Catholicism are not, for the most part, men who are living in Roman Catholic neighbourhoods or who have associated much with Roman Catholics, but men from purely Protestant neighbourhoods. I should think that those to suffer the most in any province from the perpetuation of any such creed prejudice must be the party in the minority, and that, therefore, the party in the minority, that is to say in the proposed new provinces the Roman Catholics, will be the ones to receive the greatest benefit from anything that will cause a closer communication and a more intimate knowledge, and from the abolishing

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of the separate schools and everything else that tends to separate and to disunite.

However, I believe that my own personal opinions as to the merits and demerits of separate schools should have but little to do with my position or with my vote or action in this matter, and, while it seems to me now that were I a Roman Catholic instead of a Protestant, in a province where Roman Catholics are in a minority, I would be much more opposed to separate schools than I am, yet I realize that my Roman Catholic fellow-citizens have consciences of their own, and that it never was intended that they should be guided by my conscience or use my thinking and reasoning apparatus to form their judgments or conclusions, and that my duty in this case is to endeavour to be fair to a Roman Catholic minority without being in any way unfair to a Protestant majority. Though a new member, I will, in a vote, exert as great a part in this matter as the hon. the Prime Minister or the hon. the leader of the opposition. Realizing then my responsibility, I find that in the territory to be included within the two new provinces Roman Catholic minorities and Protestant minorities have had, for thirty years, the right to separate schools by virtue of legislation of this House enacted in 1875, passed it is true when the population of the Territories was very small, when we are told by the hon. the leader of the opposition the population was only 500, but continued in force without interruption while that population was increasing from 500 to 1,000 to 100,000, to two, three, four or five hundred thousand as it is to-day, and those statutory rights have been from time to time recognized and confirmed by ordinances or laws of the Territorial government; and that not only have the minorities acquired a statutory title to separate schools, but also a title by possession they having for many years exercised and enjoyed their rights to those schools.

If we follow an almost universal and a very old custom and practice we will not deprive them or suffer them to be deprived of those rights. If a man obtains possession of my lands, even wrongfully, and without any colour of right, and remains in undisputed possession for ten years, he, under most circumstances, will, by his possession have acquired a title that I cannot defeat.

When the legislature of the province of Ontario, at different times, passed laws to the effect that no person could practice dentistry, do business as a druggist or practice as a veterinary surgeon in Ontario without first having passed certain examinations, it exempted those persons who had been engaged in such businesses or professions previous to and at the time of the passing of the restricting Acts. Possibly the public interest would have been the better served had no such exemptions been