

There was a crisis. The worst crisis that could happen would be the defeat of the present government, but I tell you that once they are defeated there will be no crisis. There are men on this side of the House who are perfectly willing and perfectly able to take up the work and carry it on as they did in the past. Then he says :

It was for them that the government of Manitoba had endeavoured to enforce the Act and remove the stigma of illiteracy that formerly hung over them. Let them not think that there was an attempt to repress the Catholic minority. Outside of a few centres—

I do not know whether the hierarchy or the authorities are controlling their priests or not, but this is what the hon. member for Brandon says, and I suppose I have a right to take his word for it. He says that :

Outside of a few centres the great bulk of the Catholic people desired to be let alone so that they might be able to secure the advantage of the public schools.

Continuing, Mr. Sifton told how, upon assuming charge of his department, he had sent out a French graduate of McGill to explain to the French Catholics the advantage of the public school system. He was instructed not to go about it secretly, but tell the priests first that he proposed to talk to the people. After three years the report was that of 91 separate schools prior to 1890, 24 had been disbanded and the children now attended the public school, whilst others had accepted the public school system.

There had been no complaint against the system in Manitoba. It was a principle of the Canadian confederation—

And here is a principle that I would like to ask the government to bear in mind.

It was a principle of the Canadian confederation that when a province had power to do a certain act the other provinces should not interfere, even when they did not agree to it, so long as the act in question did not affect the general power of the Dominion. That was the Liberal platform, and when Sir John Macdonald was alive the platform of the Conservatives also.

Conditions were changed now. Would the remedial order have been made—

Here is a very pertinent question, and I hope the hon. Minister of Finance (Mr. Fielding) and the hon. Minister of Customs (Mr. Paterson) will give me their attention. The hon. member for Brandon put this question to the people :

Would the remedial order have been made if Quebec had five votes in the Dominion and Manitoba 65 ?

Would this question have been introduced during this session if Quebec had five votes and the great Northwest 65 ?

There was not a member of the government that was not ashamed of it.

We have heard of a few hon. members on the other side of the House who are ashamed of this.

Mr. SCHAFFNER.

There was not a member of the government that was not ashamed of it, not one that wanted to make it, not one French or English, that did not know he was trading sound constitutional principles for votes. By re-electing Dr. Montague would declare they approved of the attempt to restore separate schools in Manitoba.

The Northwest was the hope of the Dominion. If it did not develop and become populous and wealthy, it would be a sad thing for Canada. Its people were laying the proper foundation for the future and were met by a most unjustifiable attempt to destroy the school system and place the province in a position where it would be impossible to carry on efficient work.

Now I come to what the hon. member for Brandon says as to a compromise.

It was declared that they would fight the system to the bitter end (the Catholics) and they are fighting the system to the bitter end. We took hold, and when the government undertakes to reform abuses that have lasted for twenty years, that have grown up and have entwined themselves into the institutions of a country, and in which a large number of persons are peculiarly interested, it requires to be done with a strong hand, and we passed the public Act which provided that there should be one system of schools, that there should be no distinction between one man and another, that the law would know no man's religion—

That means the separation of church and state.

—but give each and every one the same privileges. But we have not done all we want to by a good deal, we are getting on as fast as we can, and if they leave us alone down at Ottawa we will bring the school system of Manitoba to a higher degree of perfection than it is at the present time.

Why cannot that hon. gentleman, whom I respect and who has great ability, stand by us to-day on this important question? When he resigned why did he not stay resigned rather than make this compromise, which, according to his own statement, he did not believe in at that time and which he has told us here the other day he did not believe in? It was only a matter of how much he could compromise to save the government. Governments are nothing compared with the establishment in that great country of a proper system of schools. There should be one system of schools looking to no man's religion and giving every one the same privileges. He continues:

I want to speak of another point. I want to tell you people here, my friends and fellow-citizens, because I am an Ontario boy, that there is no difficulty in Manitoba, that there is no enmity between the Roman Catholic people and the Protestant and that if the Roman Catholic people of Manitoba were left alone, if the priests of Quebec would leave them alone, inside of three or four years, they would accept our school system and come to be educated by it the same as the Protestant people.

I don't think a greater outrage could be perpetrated on the Roman Catholic people of Manitoba than to force upon their children the system under which their fathers have grown up in ignorance and illiteracy. We are