

told the people what their duties were under the circumstances and counselled them not to join in rebellion. On the 11th of December, 1837, Monseigneur Signay, the bishop of Quebec, wrote to the people of his diocese :

That, by legal and constitutional means, one should endeavour to remedy grievances of which one may think oneself entitled to complain, is a right which we do not pretend to deny any one, but that, in order to attain this object, one should resort to insurrection, is using means not only ineffectual, imprudent, baleful for the very ones who appeal to them, do we say, but moreover criminal in the sight of God and of our holy religion ; under the delusion of escaping an evil, it means throwing oneself into an abyss of irretrievable wrongs—and the experience of all the centuries shows that these our words are in accordance with the most absolute truth.

I could go on, Mr. Speaker, and cite several other extracts of that kind which I have here, but I do not propose to delay the House by doing so. I am much mistaken, Mr. Speaker, if six months hence people in this province who have indulged in these appeals to passion and prejudice, will not ask themselves, after all, what all this great to-do was about ; and I am much mistaken if some of them at least will not, in their own estimation, cut a very sorry figure when they look upon the part they played in this agitation.

But, Mr. Speaker, we were asked the other day, who is responsible for this agitation ? The hon. member for East Grey answered the question. Some other gentlemen on the other side of the House also answered it. Well, Mr. Speaker, I do not think that the member for East Grey is a very profound thinker or a great orator ; I do not think he himself would lay claim to be either ; but there is one thing for which I am willing to give him the palm, that is, that he is a consummate actor. For the hon. gentleman, without a wrinkle on his face, without a smile, in tones of apparent earnestness and conviction, told us that the man responsible for all these appeals to passion and prejudice, the man responsible for this storm, is—who ? The right hon. gentleman who leads this House.

Mr. SPROULE. Yes, and I repeat it again.

Mr. BELCOURT. Why, Mr. Speaker, there is a pretty general opinion in this House that the petitions with which it has been flooded during the last few weeks have all originated with the hon. gentleman himself—that he is the father, the instigator, the propagator of these petitions—that he is the one who has gone into the by-ways and the back townships to get them signed and sent here.

Mr. SPROULE. That is entirely incorrect, allow me to say. I think I am within the mark when I say that half the petitions

which have come here never originated through me or by any suggestion of mine.

Mr. BELCOURT. The hon. gentleman has told us on several occasions that petitions which were being presented by other members had come to him, and that he had sent them to those members to be presented. Why, he was the manipulator, the whole thing, in connection with those petitions. They were his special business, and he gave it all the attention and the zeal he could. We know that the hon. gentleman has, through the press, in this House, at meetings of the great Conservative organization of which he is the sovereign grand master, and which he so consistently, so constantly and so profitably steers for the benefit of himself and the Conservative party, appealed to the brethren to keep up the agitation against this measure. It is a well known fact, Sir, that this campaign did not originate in the west, with the people most concerned, but in the province of Ontario. I believe that before the Bill was introduced into the House, there was absolutely no feeling in the Northwest against the perpetuation of the privileges granted to the minority. I have it from hon. gentlemen from the west who sit opposite that they had to come to Ottawa to learn that there was such a thing as a school question, for they had never heard of it up there. But, forsooth, the hon. gentleman for East Grey and his friends had to start an agitation in the province of Ontario among people who were more interested in the matter than the people directly concerned. It is true, Mr. Haultain told us some time ago that so far as he was concerned, he had no objection to separate schools—that if he were a dictator there, he would not think of abolishing them. I am told that the draft clause in the Bill which he submitted two years ago is very much on the lines of section 16 of this Bill. It is true, he has changed his mind about that.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. Which draft clause was that ?

Mr. BELCOURT. In his Bill of 1902.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. I have examined that Bill, and do not recall any such clause. Which draft clause does the hon. gentleman refer to ?

Mr. BELCOURT. The draft clause with reference to educational matters. I have not got it before me. It is true, Mr. Haultain has changed his mind, as is evidenced by the letter which he has addressed to the Prime Minister. Is it not true, Mr. Speaker, that this agitation has been confined almost exclusively to the Conservative press and to gentlemen who belong to the Conservative party ? With the exception of a few misguided or misinformed or