

of the citizens of Canada. Then, I say, representatives of Canada, irrespective of race and creed, let us lay aside any differences of opinion we have on this question; let us think of a nation of a hundred million souls being thrown into the same turmoil and excitement that this country is in to-day, and let us ask ourselves the question; Are we legislating for the best interest of the future Canada, by forcing upon these provinces these clauses with reference to education? Mr. Speaker, I do not believe we are legislating for the best interest of the future Canada by forcing these clauses on these new provinces, and that we would be legislating for the best interest of the future Canada were we to eliminate these clauses and support the amendment proposed by the leader of the opposition.

Those of us who are opposing this Bill have a duty to perform. We are fighting for a principle; it behooves us to fight as we have never fought before, to put forth our best energies and abilities to uphold provincial rights and allow no domination of church or creed. We shall be called bigots and fanatics, men not worthy to conduct the affairs of a state. But we can say with the poet:

They are slaves who will not choose

Hatred, scoffing and abuse,

Rather than in silence shrink

From the truths they needs must think.

Mr. Speaker, I cannot help thinking that many of the supporters of the present government are shrinking to-day from the truths they needs must think. It is said that we are fighting against the Roman Catholic church. But I want to say that is not a fight against the Roman Catholic church, or against our fellow Roman Catholic citizens. Our Roman Catholic fellow citizens have as good a right to live in this country as we have, they are welcome to the best our country can produce, and to the enjoyment of their civil and religious liberty in the broadest sense of the term. Hon. members opposite are mistaken when they talk to us as though we were here representing wholly Protestant communities, charging us with being prejudiced against our Catholic fellow citizens. That is not the case. Some of the best friends I have in private and political life are Roman Catholic citizens of Canada. I want to say to you that I have interviewed a number of these men, and I have failed to find a man yet that will justify the present government in forcing upon these new provinces, as they are attempting to do, the educational clauses of this Bill. We need fearless criticism of this measure, we need fearless criticism of all acts, honest and dishonest, no matter from what source they may emanate. But even more do we need criticism that will be truthful. Taking this stand, can any man reasonably call us bigots and fanatics? We are fighting against a weak government, a government that is to-day trembling before the angry voice of

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the people, a people whose righteous indignation has aroused our nation as nothing ever did before, and we are justified in condemning the action of this government.

In the first place, we cannot condemn too strongly the hasty manner in which this Bill was presented to the House. The ex-Minister of the Interior who represented that great west, and was acquainted with its needs was not consulted on the educational clauses of this Bill. The Finance Minister, whose department is responsible for the expenditure of millions of the people's money, was not consulted; the representatives from the Northwest were not consulted on one of the most important clauses of the Bill; the Northwest members whose interests are closely connected with those of the people were practically ignored in the framing of this measure of such vital importance to the people of that vast country. Now the question naturally arises: Who is the author of the present Bill? If the two ministers of the Crown most directly interested were ignored in the framing of this legislation, if the representatives of the Northwest and the delegation from the Northwest government were ignored, and as we are told that the council meetings are secret, people can only surmise who is responsible for the Bill. The Prime Minister has not denied that he consulted with the Papal delegate with reference to the original clauses of this Bill; the right hon. gentleman has not yet denied that he consulted with that gentleman also with reference to the amended clauses of the Bill that have been presented to this House. Therefore the people cannot be blamed for surmising that this foreign delegate had considerable to do with the framing of the clauses which are before the House to-day.

Since the introduction of this Bill we have had very interesting and strange proceedings. On the 21st of February the right hon. gentleman introduced this Bill with great blowing of trumpets and well rounded periods, proclaiming to this nation that he was standing on the rock of the constitution. But since the leader of the opposition has shattered his arguments to fragments, we scarcely find a man on the government side to-day who will dare stand up and defend the constitution, as we have a right to expect it to be defended by hon. gentlemen supporting the government. Well, in a few days after the introduction of the Bill the Minister of the Interior arrived, and took a bold and brave stand in opposition to it; and the people throughout our land said that the ex-minister was going to stand by provincial rights. They expected of course that the western men would follow him, although they did pound their desks when this Bill was presented to the House in its original form. But the ex-minister has since that time swallowed his principles, and stands to-day as a self condemned man in the eyes of the people of Canada.