

Catholics. They have some rights and we must not be too hard hearted. Let the constitution go; let us be tolerant; give them a large and tolerant measure, and what is the measure? All they get up there is their half-hour of the spent day; all they get up there is a decrease in their separate schools instead of an increase. Oh, the generosity, the lofty, wide toleration of the Finance Minister! I did not blame the hon. member for Labelle at all yesterday when he put that little quiet spoke in his wheel and said: Oh yes, Mr. Finance Minister you are quite tolerant down there but you were not always so. You are so now because there is a very respectable number of Catholic votes in your province. What more right has this parliament to put separate schools under the constitution in these two great provinces out there in the interest of the minority than it has to bid the province of Nova Scotia, or the province of New Brunswick or the province of Prince Edward Island to give separate schools to the Roman Catholic minority of those provinces? When you come down to the essence of the thing and leave forms aside what more right has parliament to do it in one case than in the other? Would even the hon. member for Labelle introduce a proposition looking to an interference with the province of Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island or New Brunswick, or to force them to give a legal separate school system to the minority? No, and why not? It is more manly, Sir, to attack a full fledged province able to defend itself and say to it: We will make you respect law and justice; we will make you respect the rights of the minority and we will put a law in force in your province which will compel you to do it under pains and penalties. You have a man to fight then. It is a fair battle, but in this case you take the child, your own ward, the infant in your arms growing up to his maturity who will by and by attain a mighty estate, with powerful, untold possibilities stretching out into the endless future and while he is a child in your lap you bind his limbs with an irrevocable bond, so that however strong he may grow he never can get rid of the bond or the badge that marks him as inferior. The plea for toleration is a good one, the argument for separate schools, as strong as it can be made, may be a good one, but you are in the wrong court when you come here. That is the only mistake. How did you get your separate school privileges in the province of Nova Scotia? Not by the hard letter of the law. It was the good, tolerant sense of the majority which gave you there all you asked. How did you get your privileges in the province of New Brunswick? New Brunswick fought the minority, fought it out in the province, went to the elections on it, fought it out in the courts, made no change in jot or tittle,

Mr FOSTER.

but when it had ascertained and maintained its full rights the majority turned around and said to their brethren that lived in their midst: We are not so intolerant as you thought, we give you those privileges and to-day, in the city of St. John and in every portion of New Brunswick, you have practically better separate schools than you will have in the Northwest. Why cannot you trust the Northwest?

Mr. BOURASSA. Not the same kind.

Mr. FOSTER. Not the same kind? I do not respect very much that judgment, which, standing on the small pivot of the present, cannot look out into the future with its progress, its advancement, its increasing light and knowledge and its ever growing generosity and tolerance and be broad enough to say: Men will be men when I am dead and gone, with the same generous impulses in their hearts as those which they have to-day. Men will treat their brethren as brethren then as they treat them now. The argument of the hon. gentleman carried to its full extent is an argument for tyranny, and a bondage complete and enduring.

Now, let me reason for a moment with my friends. You say: We want a separate school system; we believe in it. Will you look for a moment at the Protestant view? I do not know whether I am able to speak for all Protestantism or not, but I think I can fairly and reasonably outline the view of that Protestantism which stands behind the national schools. What is it? That the schools shall be national, shall be free, shall be non-sectarian, busying themselves with education alone, not leaving out education in morals and on the general lines of right and religious conduct, but absolutely free from all sectarianism.

Mr. BOURASSA. That is the American system.

Mr. FOSTER. It is not the American system alone, it is the Canadian system in every province except Quebec. Where did the right hon. leader of the government get his information when he stated in parliament here the other day that in the schools of Canada religion and religious dogmas were taught from morning till night? Has the right hon. gentleman ever looked into our school systems? Go to the province of Ontario, go to the province of Manitoba, go to the province of New Brunswick, go to all of them and that is absolutely the wrong explanation and the wrong interpretation. These schools are free, non-sectarian and consequently national. They do not allow dogma to be taught whether it is dogma of the Methodist, the Presbyterian, the Anglican or the Roman Catholic. All are treated alike. Is there no reasonableness in the proposition, that, if the great majority of the people of the country feel that the best kind of a system is such a system as that, so