

know that separate schools in Ontario are an inherent part of the confederation compact, and cannot be done away with. This quotation from this reverend gentleman illustrates my point, which is this: Whatever one's individual views as to a system of education may be such language as I have quoted can only lead to trouble, to misunderstanding and to friction. It in no manner whatever contributes to the solution of the problem in hand; on the contrary, it constitutes only, and it is intended only to be a threat to the Ontario Catholics, and is as unwise as it is idle.

Sir, it had not been in my mind to discuss the constitutional aspect of this case, but in relation to that I want to quote from this same paper, the Toronto 'News.' The Toronto 'Globe' had said: that it was not a question of separate schools versus national schools; it was purely a question of provincial rights. That is to say, it was a dry constitutional subject, purely a matter of constitutional law, and on that principle the Toronto 'Globe' took its stand. The Toronto 'News' however, was not able to, or did not care to take that view of the question, and in commenting on the 'Globe' position said:

Nor would it be wise from their point of view—

He is referring to the opponents of the measure.

Nor would it be wise from their point of view to narrow discussion down to the interpretation and application of constitutional documents.

Oh, no, that would not suit the firebrand press.

That is an important matter no doubt, but it is one that interests only a small proportion of the people. The study of the constitution is a useful and interesting pursuit, but not in that way can a formidable public opinion be aroused and brought to bear upon the government.

What does that mean? If the English language can be made to convey any meaning it means, that you cannot excite the people about a constitutional point; you must import into the controversy something of a semi-religious tinge in order to excite them, and the Toronto 'News' and those who stand with it on this question propose to import that tinge into the discussion.

The article continues:—

In laying down the rule, therefore, the 'Globe' is asking that Hamlet be played with the part of Hamlet omitted.

It has been said in criticism of the government and its supporters, that diverse attitudes have been assumed by the advocates of this measure. Well, I will not say whether that is true or not, but it certainly strikes me that very diverse attitudes are being assumed both by hon. gentlemen here and by their press in opposition to this mea-

sure. What was the one note ringing through the speech of the leader of the opposition in this House; how many times did he repeat it; these were the words, we all know them by heart:

I argue not for separate schools; I argue not against separate schools.

And the hon. member for Calgary (Mr. M. S. McCarthy) said: With the merits or demerits of separate schools I have no concern, I do not know anything about it. And the hon. member for Brantford (Mr. Cockshutt) entered into a long, able, discursive theological discussion on the demerits of separate schools—the only part of his speech I could agree with was the peroration in which he quoted a part of the Lord's Prayer. The hon. member for Souris (Mr. Schaffner) also made an onslaught upon separate schools; he said they tended to disunite the people, that they tended to all manner of evils, and he thinks the merits of separate schools enter into this discussion although his leader does not think so. I instance these only to show how very wide apart and on what different views gentlemen who are opposing this measure take their stand.

I said a moment ago that it was not my intention to discuss the constitutional bearings of this Bill. Other men of the legal profession, very much better fitted than I am, of very much more authority than myself, have done so, and I feel that it would be bold indeed for me to touch that question. But in a broad way, Mr. Speaker, what was the spirit of the union compact? What was the spirit that guided the fathers of confederation in 1866 and 1867? Surely it was the spirit of toleration; more than that, it was the spirit of solicitude for the conscientious convictions, not to say the undoubted rights, of minorities; and the same spirit which actuated the fathers of confederation in 1867 should actuate us in 1905 when we are extending confederation—because it is really one and the same thing. In organizing these Territories into provinces, we find that the minority has been for over a quarter of a century in possession of certain school privileges. I say we should respect these rights. Nay, more, we should put it beyond peradventure that these rights shall be maintained to them. It has become the fashion to say that these minority rights amount to very little, that they are very trifling, and, therefore, we may leave them. While such may be the fact, I do not think that in itself would constitute a ground for perpetuating those rights. The ground is broader and deeper than that. It has its root and being in a great and generous principle, and that is, respect and care that the weaker party be protected and be treated with consideration, so that its confidence may be won and retained. I would not seek to make this Bill palatable by saying that it is nothing. I would say that by law and by right the minority have certain educational privileges in the Northwest, and