

men, and that is, that a parent, unless he has forfeited the right by criminal act, has the inalienable right to determine the teaching which the child shall receive upon the holiest and most momentous of subjects. This is a right which no expediency can negative, which no state necessity ought to allow you to sweep away; and, therefore, I ask you to give your attention to this question of denominational education. It is full of danger and of difficulty, but you will meet the danger by marching straight up to it and declaring that the prerogative of the parent, unless he be convicted of criminality, must not be taken away by the state.

Sir, as I said a minute ago, the first important Bill in relation to education in Great Britain was introduced in 1870. For the first time parliament passed a measure making provision for a 'sufficient, efficient and suitable' elementary education; but mark well, it was understood that the work of efficient voluntary schools should not be hampered, but that their efforts should be supplemented. In those days there were men like my hon. friend from Grey who opposed denominational schools. Here is the answer which Mr. Gladstone gave to their opposition:

Can it be said that the prevalence of denominationalism in those schools at the present moment is generally felt to be a grievance? On the contrary, is it not the case that everybody and every section are telling us continually that the religious difficulty directly you came to practice becomes insignificant, and that it is a difficulty made for parliament and for debate rather than on which would be felt within the walls of the schools? Now I come to denominational, or as I shall call them, voluntary schools and if I am told that an overwhelming majority of voluntary schools are denominational, I think I can draw a lesson from that fact, which is that it shows what a powerful agency we have to do our bidding, to perform much of our work for us, if only we will not obstruct it. We are as much convinced as he is that with respect to these voluntary schools, the duty of the state is to make use of them for the purposes of secular instruction which they give, but to hold itself entirely and absolutely detached from all responsibility with regard to their religious teaching.

This was, Sir, the opinion of Mr. Gladstone with regard to denominational schools. But I explained a moment ago, though the voluntary schools were tolerated—they were self-sustaining, whilst the other schools were state aided. I shall not refer to the school legislation which since 1870 was passed by the imperial parliament. I come immediately to the Education Act of 1902, an Act passed by the Balfour government.

Mr. Balfour has himself, in a few words described what reforms were brought about by the Bill:

Our reform, if it is to be adequate, must, in the first place, establish one authority of education—technical, secondary, primary—possessed of powers which may enable it to

Mr. LEMIEUX.

provide for the adequate training of teachers, &c. In the second place, I conclude that this one authority for education, being, as it is, responsible for a heavy cost to the ratepayers, should be the rating authority of the district. In the 3rd place, I lay down that the voluntary schools must be placed in a position in which they can worthily play their necessary and inevitable part in the scheme of national education.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, the object, one of the objects of the Bill was to include in the national school system the voluntary schools. The Bill became law and to-day, Sir, you have in England, a system of denominational state-aided schools. Of course, Mr. Speaker, this law gave rise to a great opposition amongst a 'certain class of people. In England, as in Canada, the government lost many of its friends. Mr. Balfour and his colleagues were assailed. They were denounced as being 'under the unchecked sway of the priest.'

It is a clerical war, said Dr. Clifford, and this Bill is meant to be its victorious Waterloo. The coveted goal is the rule of the priest over the British people. The reason of the cleric is the motive and spirit and aim of this movement, and this legislative measure is the ladder constructed by the cabinet up which the cleric is to climb.

And further:

We cannot therefore treat too seriously a measure which is the latest of a series of efforts of clericalism to capture young England and carry it over to Rome.

And further:

We never dare let the clergy have their own way; they would have destroyed us; we should have been as Sodom and as Gomorrah.

When a bad government and bad religion work together, the ruin of the government is as certain as death. It is that union we have now to face.

You have, Sir, in the few lines I have just read, an idea of the campaign of vituperation to which the government was subjected in England. I find in those impassionate appeals, a certain relationship with those we have heard during last month.

But Sir, in England as well as in Canada, the government, though assailed and bitterly so, faced the situation with courage. I do not wish to worry the House with any lengthy quotations. I will confine myself to a few, emanating from men, who occupy leading positions in the British empire. The Prime Minister, speaking at Manchester, on January 18, 1895, said:

I altogether object to the tone which is sometimes taken up by the controversialists upon this subject. They appear to think that the voluntary school is the relic of an ancient system permitted as a matter of compromise to remain, tolerated by parliament, submitted to by the department, but altogether out of harmony with the needs and requirements of a progressive community—an instrument of edu-