

cousins—there is not one of them who wants a separate school. I think that is pretty good evidence that the Catholics do not want separate schools.

Mr. FIELDING. If they do not want them, they will not have them. If the Catholics in the Northwest do not ask for them, there will be no separate schools.

Mr. SCHAFFNER. Of course not. On this point I will read something to my hon. friend from Mr. J. J. Gregor, of Lacombe :

We notice the statement has been made in the House of Commons by the advocates of separate schools for the new provinces that the system now in vogue under the Dominion Act of 1875, has been satisfactory. This, in one sense, is correct, but it has to be borne in mind that with very few exceptions the schools are public or common schools. The portion of the ordinance permitting separate schools, either Protestant or Roman Catholic, is a dead letter.

The Minister of Finance says that if the Catholics do not want separate schools, they will not have them. But that is not the question. What we complain of is that the government are trying to force a system of separate schools upon that country.

Mr. FIELDING. I understand the hon. gentleman to argue that the Roman Catholics of the Northwest do not want separate schools. Then they will not have any separate schools, because this measure provides that they can only get separate schools when they ask for them.

Mr. INGRAM. Then why not leave it to the provinces ?

Mr. FIELDING. That is another question.

Mr. SCHAFFNER. I have great respect for the Minister of Finance, who comes from my native province, and I have great respect for his ability ; but I do not think that the Minister of Finance believes down in his heart that what he has said just now is an argument against my contention.

Mr. FIELDING. I think it is a very plain argument.

Mr. SCHAFFNER. If they do not want separate schools, why do you give them ?

Mr. FIELDING. They will not have them if they do not want them. This Bill gives Roman Catholics the right to have separate schools if they want them. My hon. friend says they do not want them, then they will not exist.

Mr. SCHAFFNER. I say that they do not want them ; but I carry my argument out to a logical conclusion, and I say do not force upon them what they do not want. If they do not want them, why does this government spend weeks and weeks of time, and raise all this turmoil throughout the country by trying to force upon them something they do not want ? Now, I want to

say a little more about the trouble we had in Manitoba :

The local government has undertaken to remedy this state of affairs and the people's representatives who support them deserve the lasting gratitude of the people of Manitoba of every race and creed. It is to be hoped that the electors of this province without distinction of politics will uphold them in this patriotic movement and that the day is not far distant when the children of those who now oppose the national system will bless the government—

That is what the Roman Catholics are doing in the Northwest to-day.

—who has afforded them the benefits of a sound national education, untinctured with sectarianism or bigotry. Let us never forget that national schools more than national banks or national tariffs are the life blood of the nation and that the men who are instrumental in building up a nation's prosperity or cause a nation's woe are the men who are trained in the schools of the nation. Education lies at the foundation of the prosperity of any country.

Now you will remember that in 1895 the member for Brandon came down into the county of Haldimand to help defeat Dr. Montague. Mr. McCarthy, on introducing Mr. Sifton, spoke as follows :

In Canadian history there has been no circumstance of significance as the Attorney General of one province appealing to the electors of another to respect the rights of the country from which he comes.

Mr. Sifton in his opening remarks said that in any remarks he might make regarding his Catholic fellow-citizens and their clergy, there was no personal feeling. No one could do a thing more injurious than to insult another's religion.

I believe that sentiment.

Some sections of the country are so sparsely settled that no school could be formed because the Catholics were not liable for public school taxes or the others for separate school taxes. In others, the efficiency of both schools was destroyed because the grounds were really not enough for one school.

The people of the province wanted to work out their own destiny and make the country one of which they and the whole Dominion might be proud of.

Five years ago the educational system would have been a disgrace to the South Sea Islands. Now it was the only one the certificates of whose teachers were recognized by Ontario. No greater harm could be done to the Roman Catholics of Manitoba than to enforce the remedial order and restore the former conditions.

Now, the hon. member for Brandon tells us there that it was in the interests of the Roman Catholics of Manitoba that he was trying to establish national schools. I do not think he stands on the same platform to-day, in view of the compromise to which he has consented. I cannot understand how any man of his ability can so far depart from what he believes to be in the interests of the people, unless it is, as he says, in order to prevent a crisis.