

Should he undertake it, the result will be that Canada will be bound together more closely just as the United States has been, since the great civil war, than it ever was before. The Minister of Justice will find that he has not caused the slightest tremour in the hearts or minds of the people by threatening rebellion and the destruction of the constitution, as he did when he said 41 per cent of our people would have their way in this matter or there would be trouble. The hon. the Minister of Finance slid off the rock of the constitution and took to the water, as my hon. friend from Jacques Cartier (Mr. Monk) has pointed out.

Mr. BENNETT. He got thrown in.

Mr. SAM. HUGHES. Yes, he was thrown in but clung to the cabinet, and when he stood up in this House and made the plea he did, he presented the most abject, pitiable spectacle it has ever been my privilege to witness in this parliament, and this is the sixteenth session I have had the honour of occupying a seat in it. Just fancy the man who made the welkin ring from one end of the Dominion to the other in 1896 against any interference with the province of Manitoba, who has been quoted often in this House as against any coercion of any province—just fancy this man, when brought face to face with the issue of his own creation, renouncing every shred of principle he then stood for. Shall I quote his language? I really do not think it necessary, and I do not like to see it any oftener than I can help in the pages of 'Hansard.' But what was the pitiable plea he made? Oh, he said, if we don't accept this clause the First Minister will have to resign and we will be all out in the cold. That was the sum and substance of his remarks. Why, the whale and Jonah were not in it compared with the hon. gentleman and his principles. The whale merely swallowed Jonah, but the Finance Minister swallowed both himself and whatever principles he ever had. He pointed out that in Nova Scotia the Roman Catholics were handsomely used by the Protestant majority, but in the next breath he turned around and said we cannot trust the people of the Northwest to do the Roman Catholic minority in those new provinces what is being done to that same minority in the province of Nova Scotia. That was the result of the hon. gentleman's logic. I might remind him of an old expression taken from the same authority as he quoted from:

The man who sells his freedom in exchange for broth shall make eternal servitude his fate.

Both the Minister of Justice and the Minister of Finance practically threatened civil war when they stated that because 41 per cent of the people of this country wanted to control the schools in a certain way, forsooth we must yield to them. Where would government begin and end if such a principle were to be recognized? It would have

been a thousand times better for the Minister of Finance if he had quietly remained on the ocean until this matter was finally settled, and still kept to the water, rather than have made the exhibition he did in this House. How a minister who has sworn to give advice to His Majesty's representatives according to the dictates of his conscience can remain in the cabinet after publicly enunciating the principles he expressed here, passes my comprehension. Had that hon. gentleman done his duty, the First Minister would very quickly have found a way out of the difficulty. Had he stood to his guns with the solid province of Nova Scotia at his back and supported by the Minister of the Interior (Mr. Sifton) with the solid Northwest behind him, the First Minister would never have dared to resign and go to the country, but would at once have removed the difficulty and left the people of the Northwest free to deal with their own schools. Had he adopted the motto taken from his own favourite author, he would have been by long odds the most popular man in this country. If he had taken the motto:

Freedom sternly said:

I shun no pang,

No strife beneath the sun,

Where human rights are staked and won.

He would have been master of the administration to-day in place of meriting the contempt of every member of the House of Commons. Personally I have always been opposed to the introduction of religion into politics and have always endeavoured to keep the two apart. But at times religious contentions have been forced on us, as I shall point out later in answer to the hon. member for Labelle (Mr. Bourassa). In the province of Ontario we have had, on the question of separate schools, an agitation, prompted by differences, to have the improper amendments made to our school law removed. I stood up in that fight and we won and prevented these improper amendments being perpetuated and put into practice in our province. I remember well pointing out that if every adviser of Sir Oliver Mowat were a member of the Roman Catholic church, it did not matter so long as he was chosen on the ground of fitness and ability, but that no one should be chosen for a cabinet position simply because he happened to be an Irishman or a Scotchman or a Frenchman or an Englishman and a member of a certain church. Let ability be the test, I contended, and there would be no trouble. But on all these matters, there are demagogues who take advantage of national and religious prejudices, men who have no qualifications or fitness for public office other than that they handle the Irish vote in this locality, or the French vote in another locality, or some other votes somewhere else; and these are the men who have gained ascendancy in the Liberal party