

are practically church schools though called separate schools. What kind of system have they in France?

Mr. LEMIEUX. A very bad system. I stand for the British system.

Mr. SPROULE. They have a system of national schools. France is a great country and I admire it. How long is it since they have taken the schools out of the hands of the church? Only a short time.

Mr. LEMIEUX. Do you approve of that?

Mr. SPROULE. Why did they do it.

An hon. MEMBER. The church got bad.

Mr. SPROULE. That is your statement not mine, and the hon. gentleman knows more about it than I do. But here is the question that appeals to my mind. If for centuries past the education of the French people has been under the wing of the church and the church has directed it and worked into it its religious tenets and dogma, and it has resulted in giving them an uneducated people. I was told by a Frenchman a short time ago that France is a nation of atheists to-day. I was told that by a Frenchman who ought to know. And, if that is what has been accomplished with full control of education in the hands of the church—if it means the turning out of a nation of illiterates and atheists, then surely, it is not amiss to place education wholly beyond the control of the church. Is not that one of the strongest arguments that could be found in favour of that course? And that is the very reason that France is following that course to-day. President Loubet declares that it is proper and right, and that France must do it. And if we try to keep education free from the control of the same church, is it to be said that we are fanatics? I cannot recall all the names that are applied to us—

An hon. MEMBER. Narrow-minded.

Mr. SPROULE. That is one. And we are told that we are bigoted. But there is another word—

Mr. W. F. MACLEAN. Fanatical.

Mr. SPROULE. Yes, we are told that we are fanatics and prejudiced against the church. But if we endeavour to do what France declares is imperative for the maintenance of her national life, are we to be accused of being fanatics?

Mr. LEMIEUX. Will the hon. gentleman (Mr. Sproule) allow me to ask a question?

Mr. SPROULE. Yes.

Mr. LEMIEUX. Leaving aside the case of France, let us, as a British colony, deal with a case nearer home. Would the hon. gentleman say that he is against the sys-

tem now in existence in Great Britain—which is a denominational system?

Mr. SPROULE. There are many features of it to which I am strongly opposed.

Mr. LEMIEUX. I am a Britisher.

Mr. SPROULE. I am glad to know it. I ask are we to be blamed for doing what France has done? Are we to be blamed for doing what Belgium has done? Are we to be blamed for doing what Italy has done,—the very home of the Pope? In that country the schools have been taken out of the hands of the church. Are we to be blamed for advancing a similar course here to that which has been taken in Ireland, establishing and carrying on national schools? Are we to be blamed for doing what has been done in the Australian colonies and in the United States? Above all are we to be blamed for doing what five out of the seven provinces of the confederation are doing to-day, carrying out a national school system? When we take such a course, can this be said to be proof of fanaticism on our part? I do not think it is fanaticism. I do not wish to say a word that would be offensive to our Roman Catholic fellow-subjects. I admire their zeal, their piety and their attachment to their church. No one admires these things more than I do. No one is less disposed to deprive them of their rights than I am. But, because I believe that, forty years ago we discarded a bad system of education and adopted a better one; and because I believe that we ought to carry out in the interests of the rising generation, keeping the system free from the control of any church, am I to be accused of fanaticism? I have just said if you grant church schools at all, to be logical you cannot confine that privilege to the Roman Catholic church; you must grant them to every other denomination as well.

Some hon. MEMBERS. Hear, hear.

Mr. SPROULE. Why should not the Presbyterians have the same right?

Some hon. MEMBERS. Hear, hear.

Mr. SPROULE. And why should not the Methodists have the same right?

Some hon. MEMBERS. Hear, hear.

Mr. SPROULE. And the Baptists—

Some hon. MEMBERS. Hear, hear.

Mr. SPROULE. And the Mormons? Does the hon. gentleman say 'hear, hear' to that?

Mr. LEMIEUX. No, not the Mormons.

Mr. SPROULE. Well I am glad to know that the hon. gentleman (Mr. Lemieux) draws the line somewhere. There are one hundred