

position of the Catholic and of the Catholic church in this country, the hon. Minister of Finance and the ex-Minister of the Interior get up and say that because they come to this parliament and ask for legislation that is unconstitutional they will withdraw and take no part in governing the country if they do not get it. The statement of the hon. Minister of Justice is the correct one, and I am sure it knocks the legs from under the Minister of Finance and the hon. ex-Minister of the Interior when they make a statement to the contrary. So that the hon. Minister of Finance will not say I have misquoted him, I want to read his statement of what the Bill means. It will be found in 'Hansard,' page 3135:

I am reminded of one point; I have forgotten to state that even with respect to that half hour, it is not a matter of obligation, but if the parents of any child disapprove of that religious instruction for that half hour, the child may withdraw. There is, therefore, liberty of conscience in the highest degree. I do not hesitate to say, Protestant that I am, that I do not think that half hour of religious instruction given by a Roman Catholic teacher will hurt the children.

That is what the hon. Minister of Finance says this Bill means and it is all it means. Now, I challenge the right hon. Prime Minister or the hon. Minister of Justice to say that every word spoken by the hon. Minister of Finance in reference to the Bill is correct, and that all the Bill means is half an hour's religious instruction. I ask any hon. gentleman from the province of Quebec to rise in his place and corroborate the statement made by the hon. Minister of Finance that that is all the Bill means. My hon. friend who sits beside me (Mr. W. F. Maclean) asks me to submit that question to the hon. member for Montmagny (Mr. Lavergne).

Mr. A. LAVERGNE. What is the question?

Mr. TAYLOR. I read just a few minutes ago the statement made by the hon. Minister of Finance that this Bill provides for national schools with the exception of half an hour's religious teaching between half past three and four by a Protestant or Roman Catholic clergyman.

Mr. A. LAVERGNE. That is my opinion of it.

Mr. TAYLOR. And you propose voting against it on that account.

Mr. A. LAVERGNE. I did not say that.

Mr. TAYLOR. I understood my hon. friend to say that when he addressed a meeting in Montreal with the hon. member for Labelle (Mr. Bourassa) a few days ago.

Mr. A. LAVERGNE. I said what?

Mr. TAYLOR. That you would vote against the Bill because it was not strong enough.

Mr. TAYLOR.

Mr. A. LAVERGNE. I never said that and the hon. gentleman is entirely mistaken.

Mr. TAYLOR. We will see when the vote comes.

Mr. A. LAVERGNE. You will see.

Mr. TAYLOR. Then the hon. Minister of Finance went on as follows:

And if the only point of difference between them is that half hour of religious instruction, is there enough in it to quarrel about, and to have public meetings and agitation throughout the length and breadth of this land? I believe that the great mass of the people to-day who are joining in petitions and holding meetings have not had time to understand this question. I believe that they have an erroneous view as to what the condition in the Northwest Territories is and as to what the condition which we propose to perpetuate is. When they discover, as they will, in the light of the debate which will take place in this House now and in the next few days, when the people of Canada shall learn that we have in the west to-day a system which is practically a national school system, and that the only point of difference between us is with respect to that small matter of a half hour of religious instruction, I think the great mass of the Protestant people of Canada will say that they regret that there has been any agitation on the subject.

I would agree with the hon. Minister of Finance if that is all the Bill means, but he knows in his inmost heart that the Bill means a great deal more than that.

Mr. FIELDING. Will my hon. friend kindly tell us what it means?

Mr. TAYLOR. I will take the opinion of able lawyers; take my hon. friend for East Hastings (Mr. Northrup); I ask the hon. Minister of Finance to read his speech and if it does not mean anything more than that it means nothing.

Mr. FIELDING. I want my hon. friend to tell me.

Mr. TAYLOR. The hon. ex-Minister of the Interior made use of the following language:

Now, what are the characteristics of this school system? My hon. friend the Minister of Customs discussed the matter with great clearness last evening, and read from the ordinances to give the House a definite idea of what the condition of affairs was. Let me give what I conceive to be an accurate resumé of the principles which are enforced and carried out by these ordinances. We have one normal school with uniform normal training for all teachers, and when I say all teachers, I mean teachers of all schools, separate and public; uniform curricula and courses of study for all schools of the same grade; uniform text books for all schools whatever; uniform qualifications of teachers for all schools whatever; complete and absolute control of all schools as to their government and conduct, by the central school authority set up by the legislature under the ordinances; complete secularization of all schools between 9 o'clock in the morning and 3.30 in the afternoon, except that any school, if