

right hon. leader of the government there was nothing left of that constitutional argument. It was entirely demolished to the extent that his colleague the hon. the Minister of Finance, replying to my hon. friend the leader of the opposition, threw up his hands, abandoned the constitutional argument and stated that he would not shield himself behind the constitution thereby giving a rebuke to his own leader; but, while admitting that there were no legal grounds for forcing these schools on the people of that western country, he asserted that we were morally bound to perpetuate that system. We have had legal authorities quoted in this House. We have heard the opinion of Mr. Christopher Robinson, who backed up the opinion from the legal standpoint which was given by my hon. friend the leader of the opposition. We have had other gentlemen eminent in their profession agreeing with the same opinion. It is only right and proper for me to say that there was another hon. gentleman who particularly laid down a different opinion in his most emphatic manner and with the same assurance that usually characterizes all the utterances of that hon. gentleman in the House. I refer to the hon. member for Alberta (Mr. Oliver). That opinion is deserving of all the respect it is entitled to. In the face of that high legal opinion I imagined that I saw the right hon. leader of the government sitting down and penning a letter like another similar letter written to a political supporter of his within six months after he was called to the premiership. I imagine that I saw the right hon. gentleman writing a letter in these words: My Dear Oliver,—Perhaps the lieutenant governorship of the province of Alberta will be at my disposal by the 1st of July, 1905. If between now and then you are not appointed a judge for giving that constitutional opinion I promise to place the lieutenant governorship at your disposal. (Signed) Wilfrid Laurier. It may not be a judgeship, because I think as a usual thing they require a lawyer for a judgeship, but still there are premierships, lieutenant governorships and several other positions up there at the disposal of the right hon. gentleman and I will venture to say that so long as we have these positions dangling before the eyes of the hon. gentlemen opposite from the west, and especially the vacant portfolio of the Minister of the Interior, the boy who gives this Bill his thorough and emphatic support and swallows every clause that is in it, even at the expense of his convictions, is the one who is the most likely to receive the plum.

This is a Bill which I think cannot be defended on the grounds of public policy. The whole history of such agitations as this is wholly contrary to that contention. It is contrary to the spirit of provincial rights and an unwarrantable interference with matters of purely provincial concern. Where

are the gentlemen who were so loud with the shibboleth 'Hands off Manitoba' in 1896? Where are the gentlemen who were erstwhile defenders of provincial rights then? Are these gentlemen now the defenders of coercion? Where are these gentlemen who even went to the extent of doing away with the system of separate schools in Manitoba, although that system had been in existence for over twenty years, who thought they were doing their duty, who thought they were within their jurisdiction, who denied the right of this government to dictate to the people of Manitoba what their educational policy should be and who held that the people of Manitoba should work out their own salvation as far as educational affairs are concerned? Where are the gentlemen who journeyed from platform to platform stirring up the prejudices of the people in that country not only against the Dominion government, but also against the principle of separate schools as being antediluvian and contrary to western ideas? Where are those who even journeyed beyond the confines of the province of Manitoba? The hon. member for Lisgar (Mr. Greenway) was premier of the province of Manitoba and it was under his government that these schools were wiped out of existence, though to do him justice I must say that it was a stronger man who dictated this policy to him—the Hon. Joseph Martin, attorney general at that time—but still he followed the hon. Joseph's lead and the schools were abolished. Where is the hon. ex-Minister of the Interior, for he it was who journeyed to the constituency of Haldimand, travelling some 1,500 miles not only to gain the sympathy and support of the people of Haldimand in Manitoba's fight for provincial rights, but also to try and induce the electors of the constituency of Haldimand to cast their votes against the then government and its representative, Dr. Montague, who was seeking re-election at a by-election as Minister of Agriculture? The hon. ex-Minister of the Interior went into the constituency of Haldimand and put before the people our separate school policy and our National School Act, much to the detriment of the former, and asked their sympathy and support and votes for the then candidate who was opposing the government. Let their followers from Manitoba explain, for several of them occupy seats in this House today who occupied seats in the local legislature at that time and who then sought to maintain the right of the province to control their educational affairs. What evil days must these hon. gentlemen have fallen upon that they are now joining hands in forcing upon the people of the western country a school policy that may not be acceptable in the years that are to come.

Now, Mr. Speaker, there are some extracts that I have culled, some choice gems from some of the speeches delivered by the hon. ex-Minister of the Interior on that