

High Schools, as other supporters were, and had to pay part of the cost of erecting these schools, they were practically ignored in the administration of their affairs. Municipal Councils seldom or never appointed them, and

County Councils passed them by similarly, so that they were generally left unrepresented on the High School Boards. The effect of this was very injurious to those interested in Separate Schools. They regarded it as an intimation that they might have their Separate Schools for elementary educational purposes, but that the High School was not for them, and that they could have no part in its administration. The tax they might pay, but they were not wanted in the management. That was the meaning of Mr. French's amendment—to deprive them of the right of representation on High School Boards—if it meant anything. Roman Catholics had never been represented on the High School Board of Toronto nor on that of London. If they had been, at least he had never heard of it, and it was the same in dozens and dozens of other municipalities over the Province.

The Government took the view that elementary education was good both for Protestant and Roman Catholic, and that higher education should be open to all, irrespective of creed or color, or anything else. If it appeared that those attending Separate Schools were prevented by any distinction on the part of the electors of Trustees to the Board from sending their children to the High Schools, it was right and proper that the law should be changed to remove this difficulty.

Was it not desirable that the House should do all it could to induce Roman Catholics as well as Protestants to avail themselves of opportunities of a higher education? If the matter were discussed from the broad Protestant standpoint it must be admitted that the higher and better the education received by Roman Catholics the better for the country, and if High School pupils could only be multiplied by thousands instead of by hundreds it would be better for the educational and intellectual independence of the country and for its intellectual prosperity. If it appeared that by this amendment to the Separate School Act the attendance at the High Schools had been increased it was shown to be in the public interest. Mr. French's amendment was retrograde instead of being progressive, as they had a right to expect from a gentleman of his experience. The House could not adopt it. The House could not adopt it even if it believed in the views of the leader of the Opposition, that the Separate Schools should be improved, as he had insisted in his manifesto of 1886, where he said that although some might regret that such institutions existed, yet it was the duty of the Government to make them as efficient as possible, and to see that they performed the functions for which they were designed. Now, Separate Schools were designed, first, to prepare for citizenship their young men who could not otherwise receive the advantages of education, and their function was also to prepare the sons of Roman Catholics for the learned professions and the higher walks of life; and how could this be better done than by equipping them for entrance into the High Schools?

Mr. Ross gave figures to show the increases in the number of those who had written at the entrance examinations to the High Schools from 1885-9. In 1885 the number of Separate School pupils who wrote at the High School entrance examination in the Western Division of Ontario was 105. In 1889 170 wrote, an increase of 70 per cent. in five years.

Under the present law supporters of Separate Schools were able to point to the High School as something in the administration of which they had a voice, and this was an incentive to them to push their children forward.

Referring to the Eastern Division, Mr. Ross said that Inspector Donovan reported that the increase between 1885-9 was 95 per cent., an extraordinary but certainly most satisfactory increase. Now that was one test as to the beneficial effect of the amendment which Mr. French proposed to repeal. Last year 58 per cent. of those who wrote from Separate Schools passed the entrance examination for the High Schools. Of those who passed from Public Schools the percentage was only 59 per cent., so that between the two classes of pupils there was a difference of only one per cent. in favor of the Public Schools. Most of these figures could be found in the report of the Department of Education for last year. There was also an increase in the attendance of the High Schools from 14,250 in 1885 to 17,742 in 1889, and he could not say definitely how this increase had been brought about, but no doubt it was partly attributable to the increased interest taken in the High Schools by Separate School supporters. Great advances had been made during the past few years in Separate Schools. The expenditure for all purposes in 1885 was \$204,531, while in 1888 it was \$260,003, an increase of 30 per cent. in the expenditure, although the increase in the attendance amounted to only 12 per cent. But there was another reason why Mr. French's bill should not pass. The House deliberately, in 1836, gave Separate School Boards a right to representation on High School Boards. The House would need very strong evidence that its action then was unwise before it would be justified in repealing the Act. Sometimes it was urged by honorable gentlemen opposite that the Separate School Act was a mistake, and that it was subversive of the unity of spirit that should prevail in the House—a unity such as the people of Ontario were supposed to have. Admitting this to be the case for the moment, the passage of Mr. French's amendment would scarcely be calculated to promote that feeling of unity. Under the present High School system and since the amendment of 1886, Public and Separate School children were both together under one teacher and one system of instruction. If unity existed anywhere, it certainly existed there, and it was unity which the hon. gentleman opposite professed to desire. Yet he deliberately proposed to repeal the amendment which allowed this condition of things to prevail, and to inflict upon the people that disunion which he professed to so heartily lament. Was he perfectly sincere in his proposition? Was his logic perfectly faultless? If they were sincere in the one case and really wished to bring Separate School children and Public School children together in the Public School he did not see how they could object to any machinery of the law which would bring this union about in so far as High Schools were concerned.

Should it be said that the Legislature of the Protestant Province of Ontario was so unfair as to throw any obstacle in the way of all classes availing themselves of higher education? Look at the Provincial University. All classes were enabled to avail themselves of the advantages which it offered without respect to creed or denomination, and the same with the High Schools. Upwards to the High Schools flowed the two great currents of education—one from the Public Schools and one from the Separate Schools—and by his amendment Mr. French proposes that those streams should be prevented from uniting at this point; where they united he proposed to erect a barrier and to say the union shall not be complete. He would virtually exclude the Roman Catholics from a voice in the administration of Separate Schools. He proposed that Municipal and County Councils should be allowed to ignore them now as formerly. If in the face of these difficulties they had the courage to try and avail themselves of the privileges of the High Schools they were welcome to do so. But they were to have no assistance in the removal of these difficulties. He protested against this amendment. It was not required by the Public Schools, because no wrong had been done the Public Schools; and no wrong had been done the High Schools by the operation of the amendment. The High Schools to-day were more prosperous than ever before. The University to-day was more crowded than ever before. Public Schools were stronger than ever before. More was expended on sites and buildings now than ever before, and the attendance was increasing every day. Yet, without a single fact to justify him in his course, he deliberately proposed to make the law again what it was before the present amendment became law.

Now, urged Mr. Ross, these four or five bills had to be dealt with by the House, and, as he had suggested, dealt with together. He proposed that the House should reject all but the bill which he had himself introduced. Neither of Mr. Meredith's two bills, nor Mr. Creighton's bill, nor Mr. French's bill should be supported. He believed it to be his duty to tell the House that it was its duty just now in unmistakable terms to express its entire confidence in the Confederation Act of 1867, which had guaranteed certain privileges to the minorities of Ontario and Quebec, which certain hon. members would now withdraw. Some of the members of the House could remember much better than he the conflict that had raged around the Act of 1853, and the litigation that had followed it, which was allayed, as had been hoped, for good, and with satisfaction as it was also hoped, to both parties, by the British N. A. Act of 1867. The Liberal party, which was in a majority in this House, was the party most active in promoting the federation of the Provinces by which this question was hoped and was supposed to have been settled. Was it not the duty of the Liberal party which had brought about the Confederation of the Provinces to protest against any invasion of the B. N. A. Act that would disturb the public mind and produce an irritation that was not desirable or productive of any public good? The Liberals of this House had for years past withstood assaults from without on the Confederation Act. They had withstood the attempted invasion of their powers by the Dominion Government. It was within these walls that the battles of Provincial rights had been fought. (Applause.) Now, however, the attack on the Act had come from within the House, had come from honorable gentlemen who avowed themselves at one time the champions of the constitutional rights of Ontario, and of the solidarity of the Dominion. It was they who now assaulted the Act with a view to depriving a certain portion of the people of the rights and privileges which that Act had conferred upon them. The House should resist assaults from within just as it had resisted assaults from without, and should place once more upon record that the rights guaranteed to minorities in Ontario and Quebec, and all other rights guaranteed therein, should be preserved intact and inviolate so far as legislation of this House was concerned. They could not expect to build up a great Dominion or Confederation if they were continually pulling their Constitution to pieces and endeavoring to replace the broken parts. Canadians would never become a homogeneous people if questions of race and creed were

being continually raised. He appealed to hon. gentlemen opposite, in the interests of their common country and of that homogeneity which they all desired, to withdraw these bills, which could have no effect but to create suspicion and distrust in the minds of a large section of the community. He appealed to the House on yet another ground to reject these bills. It was the duty and the prerogative of the House to be just and generous to minorities. That had been the principle upon which all the legislation of the British Empire had been based in its connection with Canada since the days when Colonial Government was first established in this country. The present Constitution of the Dominion had arisen and had been expanded from the magnificent clemency and generosity of the Imperial Parliament in extending protection to minorities. Hence arose in the first place the Constitution of 1791, which was intended to protect the Saxons of Ontario, or Upper Canada, as it then was, from what was supposed to be the domination of the majority of Quebec. This was the first instance of any form of constitutional government in Upper Canada. Then came the Constitution of 1841, which was based on the same principle of generosity to the minority. The minority had been trampled upon by an irresponsible Executive, which was supported by a Family Compact. Wrongs were righted as far as was possible, responsible Government introduced, and the grievances of the minority remedied so far as the statesmen of the day were able. Then, finally, came the B. N. A. Act of 1867, which contained the same principles in its method of dealing with minorities. So, if they were to follow the example of the Imperial Government in legislation of this kind and show to the minority that they could be as just and generous as the Imperial Parliament was, then they would not reopen a question that had been settled at Confederation, and would not take from the minority the privileges that had been given them and guaranteed them then. Let them show the minority that they would not take these rights from them, but that every

103