

right guaranteed them by the Constitution should be maintained so far as this House was concerned. For this reason he hoped the House would reject the bills of hon. gentlemen opposite and address themselves with calmness and deliberation to simplify the machinery of the Act in the manner suggested in his own bill.

Mr. Ross concluded his speech amid the warmest applause, and it being close upon six o'clock the Speaker left the chair.

Mr. Meredith, when he rose after tea to resume the debate on the Separate School question, was greeted with loud cheers by his friends. He said that he proposed to deal with some of the arguments raised by the Minister in his opening address on this subject. The question was one of as grave import as any that had ever engaged the attention of the House. He was pleased that his hon. friend (Mr. Ross) had started the discussion on this subject, because the Opposition had been charged with being demagogues, and with having raised this question with a view to exciting the prejudices of the people. They were charged with an offence against the public weal, and with having started the No-Popery cry. He was glad the hon. member had not reiterated that charge to-night, because he repudiated entirely any sentence in his speeches at London or elsewhere that was calculated to have that effect upon the public mind. He also desired to repudiate the statements recently made by a Roman Catholic Archbishop, and after quoting the remarks made by Archbishop Cleary at a church service about "the diabolical spirit of hatred" and "Satan had raised his weak head," etc., he claimed that they, as public men, had a right to deal with public questions without being attacked as they had been. He strongly protested against the language of the Archbishop and he protested against this method of meeting a discussion of a great and large public question. The Hon. Minister of Education, he thought, had not thoroughly grasped the importance of this question and did not realize how far the people of this Province were interested in it. He desired to call the attention of the House to what he believed to be an imperative duty—to determine what are the rights conferred by the B.N.A. Act and how far the jurisdiction of this legislation extends, and he wished them further to decide how far the position taken by the hierarchy was tenable. He had been found fault with for saying that he was of opinion that it was unfortunate that Separate Schools existed in the Province of Ontario. He did not think, when he made that statement, that he would be accused of being intolerant to the minority in this Province. Surely one had a right to state that, and also to change his opinion concerning this or any other question after more careful consideration. He would ask if there was a member in the House who would not say that it would be eminently in the welfare of the Roman Catholic children of this country if they could be educated side by side with Protestant children in the Common Schools of the country? The speaker, continuing, quoted from Dr. Rycroft, who, he said, protested against the separating of Catholics and of Protestants in the schools of the country. From a Catholic writer the next extract was taken to show that in certain cases in seminaries of learning there was harmony between Protestant and Catholic, the two being educated together. He held that in Canada, when the right of Separate Schools was given it proceeded only upon the supposition that when a Roman Catholic citizen had conscientious objection to the Public School education, a concession was made to his scruples and not to any Church which claimed to represent him. The country should beware lest that foundation be sapped and the basis of the Separate Schools become other than that. The position of Archbishop Duhamel, claiming the right of stating the curriculum, of setting the time for various studies and of selecting schools was then touched on, and Mr. Meredith pointed to the controversy between the Archbishop and Mr. Freschette as to the position of Separate School Trustees. The Church, he said, held the ground that from it rather than from the State the Trustees had their authority. The people of Ontario would never consent to the carrying out of that doctrine. He quoted from Bishop O'Connor, of Peterboro', in regard to a controversy between that prelate and the School Trustees, pointing out that the Bishop contended that he had perfect authority to close the school when he considered such a course necessary in spite of the opposition of the Board. From the pastoral of Archbishop Lynch on the occasion of the election of Hon. Timothy Anglin to the Separate School Board of Toronto the speaker quoted to show that the Church held the election of School Trustees to be a religious affair, in which the Catholics were instructed not to disobey their superiors and pastors. Summing up all these views of various dignitaries of the Church of Rome, he held that they proved that in regard to the Separate Schools the Church claimed that it had been appointed to supervise and manage the instruction of the youth of the country. He desired to know if in the Province of Ontario the Protestant majority would allow that state of affairs to continue. The members of the House were bound to consider that question in the light of the legislation now submitted. To the members of the Opposition, when they drew attention to this, it was said, "You are bigots, you are intolerant." They were neither, nor was this either a Protestant or No-Popery agitation. He claimed that the rights given the Roman Catholic citizens were civil rights, and the Legislature was bound to defend them in the exercise of their rights. Continuing, the speaker treated of the Separate School Act of 1863, and said there was not in that Act anything to justify the assumption that the State abdicated its functions in regard to those schools. Tracing the progress of educational legislation from 1841 onward, he contended that not until 1855 was there any difference made between the management of the Separate and Public Schools. The Act of 1855 made a separate body of laws dealing with the Separate Schools apart from the Common Schools of the country. One of the principal features of the Act of 1853 was to bring Separate Schools more under the same provisions as governed the Common Schools and to make them subject to such regulations as from time to time might be dealt with by the Council of Public Instruction. He was surprised that the Hon. the Attorney-General had held that the power to deal with text-books and to regulate them was not conveyed in that Act.

Referring to the Confederation Act, he said that by its power was given to the Legislatures to enact laws governing the education of the young, on condition, however, that nothing shall be enacted prejudicially affecting the rights conferred by that Act. The question to be submitted is, Does this prejudicially affect any rights enjoyed by these people? The Hon. Minister had argued under the supposition that these rights could not be interfered with, and yet he had already made changes in the Separate School laws. He (Mr. Meredith) wished to know who was to judge whether these conditions prejudicially affected any persons in this Province. Was it not this House? Where else? Was it by means of the Church? Certainly there was no warrant for that, and he for one would deny it. The Minister himself had repudiated this, and had said that the laws in this respect were not dictated by the Roman Catholic Church. No other position would be possible or tolerable. The points to be decided were:—(1) Was there a right given by the Act of 1867? (2) Was what they were going to do a proposition likely to affect prejudicially that right. As the Minister had pointed out in his speech at Woodstock, there was a right of appeal. It seemed to him that when any amendment was proposed the question was raised, Does it prejudicially affect any rights secured by law? He wished to say a word or two on a question, with regard to which if he kept silent it might be said he was afraid to speak—that was, the question of dealing effectively with the Separate School Act and wiping it out altogether. He did not recede one iota from the position of constitutional rights. He conceded that there was no power to wipe out, except by a change in the Constitution, but he desired to say that if the time should ever come when it was decided that it was against the interests of the people of this country—that that right was prejudicial—it was the right of this House to make its views known on this question. If it was to be taken by the remarks in this chamber that the position of the hierarchy was one on the Separate Schools question, then he would say that the agitation should be kept up until the Act was wiped off the statute book of the Dominion. He then called attention to another statement by Archbishop Cleary, that any Catholic who would withdraw from the support of the Separate Schools was a traitor, and forfeited his right to the last Sacrament

of the Church. Such action as this he thought called for remedial legislation, as it was the duty of the State to protect any citizen in the enjoyment of his rights.

There must be some reason for this desire to change the law. A liberal practical example was better than a great deal of statement. He desired to point out that in Toronto, Hamilton, London and the chief cities of the Province no notice had been given by the Separate School supporters of their desire to become so. From the City Clerk of St. Thomas he had received a letter stating that since 1878 the Roman Catholics of that city were entered as supporters of the Separate Schools. These letters showed that all over the Province the practice of registering Roman Catholics was indulged in. Did the hon. gentleman know that by the working of the Act not one dollar of the moneys contributed by these ratepayers could be applied for the purposes intended? The hon. gentleman objected to his bill, but he desired to point out that it was only a re-affirmation of the principle of the Act of 1863, requiring all persons desirous of supporting Separate Schools to give notice thereof. The hon. gentleman also objected to the bill as giving the ballot to Separate School supporters. It was said that in 1882 he had objected to that course. The hon. gentleman usually did not pay much attention to his objections, but called in his majority and voted him down. He desired to see the proposition discussed on its merits, and not rejected because on a previous occasion he (the speaker) had opposed it. It was said there were no petitions in for the introduction of the ballot. It should be remembered that no petitions had been presented in favor of the greater ballot which the Hon. the Attorney-General took such credit for introducing, nor for the majority of the measures brought before the House. The ballot was a great improvement; no member of the House desired to return to open voting after a trial of it. Why then not extend it to Separate Schools? In the City of Toronto for some years a gallant fight had been waged by a minority in favor of the ballot, and he held that it was the duty of the Government to protect the citizens in the exercise of their rights. Continuing, the speaker dealt with the amendment proposed from that side of the House to prevent members of the Separate School Boards from sitting as delegates at the High School Boards. Now he had no objection to Roman Catholics being placed on these Boards, but he did not desire to see them there as the representatives of the religion to which they belonged. It would be as reasonable to place Roman Catholics upon Township Councils or City Councils because they failed to be elected. The reason why Roman Catholics were not largely represented on High School Boards was from other reasons than the intolerance of the people of Ontario. He strongly endorsed the proposition of the member for Grenville. As to the contention of the Minister of Education that the Legislature had no power to deal with the question of text-books, under the British North America Act, he would have desired that the Minister had taken the position that the Education Department had that night and left the matter to be interfered with by disallowance or otherwise. Why did not the Attorney-General, so zealous in the defence of Provincial rights, take up this matter? The question of school inspection was next touched on, the speaker declaring that there was no reason why the Separate Schools of the country should not be under precisely the same position in that matter as the Public Schools. He wished again to state his position. Every ratepayer should be considered prima facie a supporter of Public Schools, and only by his voluntary act should he become a supporter of the Separate Schools. With regard to the High School Boards, there was no reason for the appointment of any man by reason of his religion. If a remedy for the existing difficulty were to be devised it must be by some other method than that now in use. It was not in the interests of the people of this country that the teachers of Separate Schools should be subject to other examinations than those governing the teachers of the Public Schools. The system of inspection should be the same as