

06
26th
106

was not... existence now to send his child to any particular school, and they could not in this Province enforce any law to compel the parents to do so. Therefore, it was only under this clause that there was any compulsion, and this clause applied only to children between seven and thirteen years of age, and under it the child might be sent to any school whatsoever where elementary instruction was given. The next clause proceeded:—"A child shall not be required to attend a Public School if such child is under sufficient elementary instruction in some other manner, or if such child has been prevented attending school by sickness or other unavoidable cause, or if there is no Public School which such child can attend within two miles, measured according to the nearest road from the residence of such child, if under the age of nine, and within three miles if over that age." So, he said again, that when people talked about abolishing Separate Schools, when it was said that a crusade was to be led by the hon. member for London looking to that end, he told them if the day ever came when that decision would be reached by this Legislature, if they ever put the people of the minority in the same position as they found themselves in the State of New York, where, being compelled to pay towards the Public Schools, they at the same time voluntarily, because of their faith, had established schools of their own—he said to them—ahead of the time, if ever that time did come, if ever such a law was brought into operation, it would be the stealing—for he could not use any other phrase—from the Roman Catholic minority money for the support of schools to which they could not conscientiously send their children. What else could it be? Under a compact, as solemn as compact could be made, assented to by the old Province of Upper Canada, first formulated by conference, then ratified by the people, ratified by the Imperial Parliament and the Parliament of Canada, the pledged faith of the whole people of this country was given that the minority should be allowed to retain these Separate Schools, and why should they be jeopardised when they had done nothing to deserve the jeopardising of them? What had they done? he should like to ask the hon. gentleman. There were those who said the pupils were inferior. Where were they inferior, or how? In what line of life was it? The Separate Schools of this Province were 50 years old. They had been guaranteed to the minority now by the British North America Act for quite a quarter of a century. He would like to ask what class of the graduates were afraid to face the majority of their fellow-men in this Province of Ontario? He thought that was the best test of what their system was doing. They might talk their theories and say the Separate School teachers had not certificates, but he said the practical results of their public opinion was seen in every walk of life, and, comparing their status with that of 25 years ago, their position had distinctly advanced. Take the Bar, take the pulpit, take the Bench, and he would show them men who were the equals of those who professed to be better educated because they came from Public Schools. He did not say they were any better. It was not because they said they were any better that they maintained these schools, but because they believed that their young children growing up should be educated day by day in their religion. What were they doing in the United States? There nearly a million of the Roman Catholic children attended what are called parochial schools, and these were supported out of the pockets of the Roman Catholic ratepayers, who had to pay besides towards supporting what would be the Public Schools of this Province. And these parochial schools were increasing, and only recently there had been a more energetic move in the direction of increasing them in face of the fact that those who supported them had to pay two rates. In the face of that, when they were pledged to that system, when it was doing no harm and educating the pupils just as fairly as the Public School system, when the graduates were in all respects the equals of their fellows, what pretext could there be for the abolition of the Separate School system unless it was to steal and pilfer from the minority? There could be no possible end to gain, and he must be considered correct in what he stated, because if they took the state of facts over the line they had there the proof of it, and because where they had no Separate School law at all they were carrying on their own system of education, and the same thing would occur here. Did they think the Roman Catholic minority were going to be such sneaks, or make of themselves such palpable cowards as they would be if, under every provocation, they agreed with an Act which was contrary to their

concerned, it was sometimes asked by those who claimed to belong to the "Equal Rights" party, "Why should they have any rights which we have not?" He did not read the law as saying Protestants could not establish Separate Schools. He read quite the contrary. As a matter of fact there were nine

SEPARATE PROTESTANT SCHOOLS

in this Province, and, as he read the law, they could be established in every city, town and village to-morrow, and established by far more easy methods as to control, as to the giving of notice and as to all that concerned the machinery of the schools than could Roman Catholic Separate Schools. He would read that Act over again and see if he was wrong, because they had heard it stated that there was no such thing as Protestant Separate Schools being established except under certain exceptional circumstances. Section 1 of this Act said:—"Upon the application in writing of five or more heads of families resident in any township, city, town or incorporated village being Protestants, the Municipal Council of the said township, or the Board of School Trustees of any such city, town or incorporated village, shall authorise the establishment therein of one or more Separate Schools for Protestants; and upon the application of five or more heads of families resident in any township, city, town or incorporated village, being colored people, the Council of such township or the Board of School Trustees of any such city, town or incorporated village, shall authorise the establishment therein of one or more Separate Schools for colored people, and in every such case such Council or Board, as the case may be, shall prescribe the limits of the section or sections of such schools." The hon. gentleman read on to the 6th and 7th sections without interruption. These two clauses provide:—"In any city or town the persons who make application, according to the provisions of section 2 of this Act, may have a Separate School in each ward or in two or more wards united, as the said persons may judge expedient." Then the 7th:—"No Protestant Separate School shall be allowed in any school section, except when the teacher of the Public School in such section is a Roman Catholic." Mr. Fraser remarked that this was the only qualification contained throughout the Act to the general power.

Mr. Meredith—Hear, hear.

Mr. Fraser said his hon. friend said "hear, hear," but he would say this only applied to the case of school sections and not to the case of cities, towns and villages, and therefore there might have been a very good reason in the minds of those regulating these laws why there should not be a second Protestant School in a school section where there was one already taught by a Protestant teacher. Section 8 said:—"In all cities, towns, incorporated villages and township Public School sections, in which Separate Schools exist, every Protestant or colored person (as the case may be) sending children to such school, or supporting the same by subscribing thereto annually an amount equal to the sum at which such person, if such Separate School did not exist, must have been rated in order to obtain the annual Legislative Public School grant, shall be exempt from the payment of all rates imposed for the support of the Public Schools of such city, town, incorporated village and school section respectively, and of all rates imposed for the purpose of obtaining the Public School grant."

Mr. Meredith—That is a condition also. There is no such condition in regard to the Roman Catholic Separate Schools.

Mr. Fraser—No, but this is more liberal. It does not require any notice. I am going

to point out that there is no technicality put in the way of Protestant Separate School supporters. Mr. Fraser re-read the clause together with the next succeeding one, which is as follows:—"The exemption from the payment of school rates, as herein provided, shall not extend beyond the period during which such persons send children to or subscribe as aforesaid for the support of such Separate School; nor shall the exemption extend to school rates or taxes imposed, or to be imposed, to pay for school houses, the erection of which was undertaken or entered into before the establishment of such Separate School." The hon. gentleman asked the House to mark that the word "herein," as used here, should show what was meant by the preceding section. So that under this law, which related to Protestant Separate Schools, there was no necessity for any notice at all, except for the original petition, and thereafter any person might become a supporter, not being bound by any particular date, nor any particular rule; but, so long as he chose to make a contribution,