

... have been more readily blamed by the Roman Catholic minority if they had not displayed this activity. The Roman Catholic minority expected them to do this. They felt, many of them, that their priests had more time at their disposal, and were otherwise better fitted than many laymen were, for taking an active part in defending the privileges that had been given to the Roman Catholic minority. They were expected to devote themselves more particularly than laymen to matters connected with the training and education of the young. He repeated that if the Roman Catholic minority of the Province found their priests not giving attention to the schools and active in their defence, they would be the first to say the priests were wrong in not doing so, and when they do give attention, and carefully day by day, week by week and month by month, the Roman Catholic minority approved their action and applauded them. There was another fact that the intelligent Roman Catholics of the country had to look at. If the hon. gentleman opposite was called upon to form a Government, what sort of a one would it be? There would be, he supposed, his Brother from Owen Sound (Mr. Creighton), and his Brother from Grenville (Mr. French), and his Brother from Toronto (Mr. H. E. Clarke), and his Brother from Muskoka (Mr. Marter). Why, the Grand Lodge would be in session when his Executive was called together! (Loud laughter and applause.)

Mr. French said Mr. Fraser had made a mistake in including him in the Grand Lodge.

Mr. Fraser, continuing, suggested that perhaps one of them would tile the door, and the laughter was renewed. But, he said, he thought the Roman Catholic minority had no desire to be ruled by the Grand Lodge of Ontario. The Conservative party were even now driving the Roman Catholics from them; they were giving them no place in their counsels and did not intend to. That Roman Catholic would be stupid, would be a traitor to his own best interests, and would lose sight of what he ought to do if he lent any influence towards the return of Mr. Meredith. He did not doubt that some of them would do it, some whom his words of advice would not reach. Mr. Clancy, no doubt, would do his best to come back, but if he came back, what influence would he have in such a Government as he had suggested, always supposing it was returned to power, and the hon. gentleman was lucky enough — no doubt he would consider it lucky — to form a member of it? And what other Government than such a one could be formed by the Conservative opposite? Why, if the hon. gentleman entered such a Government and adopted their policy on the Separate Schools question, whom would he represent? Nobody, he would tell him. One after another, said Mr. Fraser in conclusion of his remarks on this point, could be taken the milestones he had pointed out as having been planted by the hon. gentlemen opposite, and looking at these milestones the House would see why to-day there is a majority of the Roman Catholic minority of the Province supporting this Liberal Government.

Although he had, said Mr. Fraser, already detained the House some considerable time, he would now say some few words in respect to some of the provisions of the bill before them.

Mr. Meredith—"Hear, hear."

Mr. Fraser—My hon. friend says "Hear, hear." He did not say "Hear, hear," some time ago when something was being said that it would have become him well to say "Hear, hear" to. (Laughter.) The member for London had denounced the Government, when he made an appeal to the electors of this Province, as having been in league with the Roman Catholic hierarchy and as having given as the price of their support certain concessions in respect of Separate Schools. Nothing could be more untrue, nothing more unjust. He denounced the Government, too, because they had been instrumental in passing legislation that had tended to increase Separate Schools, and he said any man would be a traitor to his country who would pass such legislation. Well, according to his own showing, he and the party to which he belonged must have been traitors to their country, for either they did not know what was going through the House, or else, knowing it, they were, directly or indirectly, instrumental in passing it. He could take whichever horn of the dilemma he liked. (Cheers and laughter.) What he (Mr. Fraser) had to say in reference to the question, as it was proposed to the House, that there should be a change in the laws relating to Separate Schools, was, firstly, this:—That the British North America Act guaranteed to the Roman Catholics all the rights and privileges they enjoyed at the time that we came

privileges that were enjoyed then was the right to maintain Separate Schools under the terms and conditions provided in the Separate Schools Act. This House had no power, as he read the law—no power whatever to pass such legislation as was now before it. In view of what had been said by the gentlemen opposite—in view of their avowed and evident intention to abolish Separate Schools—he proposed to advise, with a full sense of the responsibility that he might be under to the House, the Roman Catholic minority to resist all these proposed amendments—to resist them on the ground that the House had no power to legislate in this direction—to resist them on the further ground that they have reason to believe that they are not proposed in the interests of Separate Schools—to resist them because, in short, they are ultra vires. (Cheers.) There was an old saying amongst the Greeks, that they were to fear their enemies bearing gifts. It was well to remember it here. None of these amendments came from the friends of Separate Schools. There was a time when the gentlemen who are now proposing to amend the Separate Schools Act sought to abolish them altogether, therefore Roman Catholics had reason to regard with suspicion all proposals of this kind emanating from them. "We had the privilege," Mr. Fraser continued, "at the time that the British North America Act was passed; we had the privilege under the law of Ontario of taking the certified teachers that we were entitled to take under the law of Quebec, and I say that there was good reason why we should be so entitled. I say that this House has no right under the British North America Act to oppose this. I venture to say that nothing can be alleged against the capacity of the teachers of our Separate Schools. They are in every way as fit for the duties they are called upon to perform as the teachers of our Public Schools. Here, in the City of Toronto, we are not afraid, so far as our system is concerned, so far as the teachers are concerned, to place them alongside those of the Public Schools and to challenge comparison in the matter of capacity. I say that in the Province of Ontario—and I am not now theorising or making rash assertions, or talking for talking's sake—throughout the whole Province of Ontario, taking the Separate Schools in comparison with the Public Schools, they stand just as high, they rank equally as strong, so far as teaching capacity is concerned. What happened the other day in the City of London, in the constituency of my hon. friend? I think every Public School teacher was dismissed.

Mr. Meredith—Only for the purpose of re-engaging and re-classifying.

Mr. Fraser—The system was not working well then. Whatever may be advanced or alleged against the Separate Schools, you will find that the same complaint can be made against the Public Schools. (Hear, hear.) As was inseparable from any system of public instruction extending over a large tract of country, there are here and there schools that are not free from objection. You hear the same things said even about the churches. Occasionally you hear a complaint that this or that church is not so well served, that there is a lack of efficiency, that there are defects somewhere or other that ought to be remedied, and so there will be in any system of the kind; but although you may occasionally find ground for complaint, you will prove nothing against the system taking it as a whole. Take them as a whole, the pupils brought up at these schools can challenge comparison with those attending the Public Schools, and the results prove that what I have asserted is true. Therefore I say there are two reasons why things should be allowed to remain as they are: First, the system is working well, and second, we have no power to make the change. The hon. gentleman then pointed out that the Separate Schools, having regard to the fact that the Public Schools were supported entirely out of the rates and taxes, were not treated fairly, inasmuch as under the Separate School system it was made compulsory for Roman Catholics to get their teachers at as cheap a rate as possible. He had been told the other day, and his authority was first-class, that in some cases the taxes raised for the Separate Schools went to the Public Schools; but what he wanted to point out was that although there was a power in the statute books that authorized Catholic Trustees where Separate Schools existed to raise a rate for their maintenance, yet it was only a permissive power, and had not been exercised to any extent within the Province. He might be mistaken in making a general assertion, but he was informed that it was a fact. Therefore in a sense they got cheap teaching as compared with the Public Schools. There was no one could over-estimate the advantage it was to