

there. Mr. Balfour read several quotations from the pamphlet issued by Mr. Meredith, showing, amongst other things, that the Catholics were then free to vote for whom they pleased. There was no dictation then but the reason now alleged for introducing the ballot was that the Irish electors were subject to clerical domination. The leader of the Opposition said something about an independent stand being taken in the House, but he (Mr. Balfour) thought that the time had arrived when the independent men should unite together in fighting the common enemy who had entered into an unholy crusade under a wave of sectarian feeling. (Cheers.)

Mr. H. E. Clarke took the floor on behalf of the Opposition, observing at the outset that the present subject of debate would have considerable weight in deciding the forthcoming elections, and no doubt the hon. gentleman who had preceded him had, in view of this, thought it better to throw in his lot with the powers that be rather than run any unnecessary risk. The discussion had already run along the lines of the whole of the bills introduced on his side of the House, and of the bill introduced by the Minister for Education. He could look upon the measure introduced by the Minister as nothing more than a sort of interpretation Act, as something introduced for the purpose of bolstering up the position that was taken by the Government, in regard to a certain clause introduced into the Education Act some years ago. He unhesitatingly declared himself an opponent of Separate Schools, and said he believed the time was coming when there would be no Separate Schools in the Province of Ontario. He was speaking on his own responsibility, but, while he was giving expression to his own sentiments, he believed he was expressing the sentiments of a large number of the people of Ontario. This change would not come to-day nor to-morrow, but still the to-morrow would be here. (Laughter). He yielded, he said, to no man in liberality of sentiment, but he thought they might carry liberality to excess. Now, the Protestants of Ontario outnumbered Roman Catholics by five to one. But, although so much stronger than the Roman Catholics, the Protestants were about equally divided between the two great parties and the Roman Catholics held the balance of power. On the strength of this assertion Mr. Clarke told a story which was not particularly clear, but the effect of which was to compare the Roman Catholic vote with the boy in the middle, in a game of seek, or something of that kind. The strength of the Government, Mr. Clarke contended, lay not so much in the numerical value of the Roman Catholic vote as in the moral weakness of the Liberal party, which kept itself in power by contriving to keep a majority of that vote. This paradoxical statement so excited an enthusiastic friend or relative of Mr. Clarke's in the gallery that he effervesced and clapped his hands, which extraordinary and unseemly exhibition of approbation was promptly rebuked by the Sergeant-at-Arms, who sat upon the young man in question as severely as the appurtenances of his office would permit. Mr. Clarke then went on to enlarge upon his objections to the Separate School system. He thought that, although the schools existed, the Government ought not to go one step out of its way to allow the establishment of a school system in opposition to the system of Public Schools. He believed the law was all wrong. Separate Schools ought not to be tolerated at all. Perhaps that was too strong a term—so he would say these schools ought never to have been established. Other denominations would not be allowed such a privilege.

The Attorney-General pointed out to Mr. Clarke that there is a provision in the statute for the establishment of Separate Schools.

Mr. Clarke said that applied to Protestants generally, not to a particular denomination, such as Methodism.

Hon. Mr. Fraser said the Government had never had to consider an application for Separate Schools from a particular Protestant denomination. The Opposition had no right to assume that such an application would be necessarily refused if made.

Mr. Clarke continued by reiterating the charge that Separate Schools were inferior to Public Schools, so far as their general character was concerned. This, he said, he repeated in the face of the denials made by hon. gentlemen on the Government side of the House. The reports of the Inspectors in the report of the Department of Education even, he insisted, would prove this statement. He thought Roman Catholics could not be so enamored as they were represented to be of Separate Schools, or they would find a larger portion of them attending such schools than was actually the case. Mr. Clarke referred to an Act

Legislature, which proposes to prevent intimidation of pupils attending Public Schools, and said such a law might be found necessary in Ontario before long. He hinted, too, that a further secularisation of Public Schools might follow upon the abolition of Separate Schools. As to the revision of the Public Schools that would be necessary to secure the power to abolish these schools, he thought one party had as good a right as the other to ask for such a revision, and the Liberal party had been asking for a revision of the Constitution in respect to the veto ever since Canada had had a Constitution. It was to the excitement that the Liberal party had raised one the question of Provincial rights that the failure of the Dominion Government to veto such an Act as the Jesuit's Estate's Bill was largely due. Therefore the Conservative party had a right to ask for such a revision. Mr. Clarke then proceeded to discuss the bill introduced by Mr. Ross, which he disapproved of, and the Ballot Bill of Mr. Meredith's which he did approve of.

Mr. Awrey, who followed on the Ministerial side, said the hon. gentleman had been less careful than his leader—more pronounced than his leader. He had told them that from this time out he would advocate the abolition of Separate Schools. He had told them as well that the next election was to be fought upon these lines. He had told them that the great party led by the hon. member for London, able as he was, astute politician as he had always professed to be, proposed to appeal to the electors of Ontario, not upon the financial record of the Government, not upon their executive acts, in a very small degree upon their legislative work, but upon the questions that were being discussed to-night. He knew now what the battle was to be like. He must congratulate his hon. friend on being at least candid, on being at least fair enough to inform the House that the wonderful leader of the Conservative party in the Ontario Parliament intended from this time out to advocate the abolition of Separate Schools. The hon. member for West Kent, sitting beside him, had said earlier in the afternoon that if the time ever came when an attempt would be made by the Conservative party to abolish Separate Schools he would separate himself from his Conservative friends. His hon. friend (Mr. Clancy) had committed himself, had pledged himself to support Separate Schools wherever they might be assailed. Now his political life was in his own hands, for he had been told by the hon. member for West Toronto that from this time forth the policy of the Conservative party so far as he was concerned would work for the abolition of Separate Schools. This was no varished statement, but an honestly expressed and candid declaration. There was little feeling on the matter in the constituencies of the Province. In all his conversations with his own supporters and opponents in his own electorate he had never heard the matter discussed with any

degree of warmth. The agitation was simply raised in this House for a particular purpose. A few years ago there was a cry raised that the Government had mutilated the Bible—had introduced the Ross Bible, as they called it, and it was raised for the same purpose as was this question now. Mr. Awrey quoted from the famous "Facts for Irish Electors," and showed how the authors of that pamphlet had therein, amongst other things, laid stress on the fact that in the old days of the United Parliament Sir John Macdonald had been one of the foremost in the advocacy of Separate Schools when the Act was being considered there, while the Hon. Oliver Mowat had been found amongst the opponents of that measure. He charged Mr. Meredith with being responsible for that pamphlet.

Mr. Meredith rose and said he had already denied responsibility for the pamphlet. He repeated now that he was not in any way responsible for this pamphlet, that he had not seen it, or heard of it, and had known nothing of it until after the first discussion on the subject in the House.

Mr. Awrey said he could not but accept Mr. Meredith's denial, but his ignorance was strange seeing that the pamphlet had been circulated by the thousand in every constituency in Ontario.

Mr. Clancy said the pamphlet might have been so circulated, but he insisted that he had never seen one except that now in the hands of Mr. Awrey or heard extracts from it except in the House.

Mr. Awrey thought this was stranger still, seeing that so many of the pamphlets had been sent to members of the House—to every member he had thought. They had been presented by the dozen by indignant Roman Catholics to the Liberal members of the House. Continuing, Mr. Awrey compared the Separate School Act, as now found in the Revised Statutes of Ontario, with the Act of 1863,