

combination. His friends of P.P.A. proclivities do not desire that sort of thing. If they thought that would be the result of his motion they would not, I assume, have supported it.

The course of the hon. gentleman in introducing the resolution which he did is uncomplimentary to the Catholic people, to say the least of it. He tells them, in effect, "You are a miserable, cowardly lot; it would be no use to make the ballot optional for you. That has worked well with Protestants. They could exercise their rights without a coercive measure, it is true, but just to be consistent for once in my life I am going to coerce them so that you chaps may enjoy freedom. It is the only way the thing can be done. You would never have the courage to use the ballot unless I, William Ralph Meredith, the champion and general in command of the forces now marshalling against 'the common enemy,' stepped in and forced it upon you." Sir, these self-constituted champions of Catholic rights from a hostile standpoint may depend upon it that their interference will serve no good purpose. Catholics are themselves the best judges of their own civil rights, and will not be slow to resent any undue clerical or other interference with those rights.

But, sir, I deny that there is any interference with the rights of the citizen by the Catholic hierarchy or clergy of this Province. A few officious persons may interfere in some matters, or even in politics, but their influence is small—they seldom change a single vote. Protestant clergymen also sometimes interfere in some matters, and even in politics. It is not long since that we had a number of them reading us lessons from their standpoint on the question of equal rights. The new party, the would-be protectors of Canadian liberty for Protestants only, has a clergyman at its head, and the disgruntled McCarthyites, who have several clergymen in their ranks, are Protestants changed from their political allegiance by such interference. The tendencies of both Catholics and Protestants are to resent clerical interference in such matters. If the would-be saviours of Catholics would only content themselves with appealing to their reason, and with setting them a good example in their own conduct, they would, I am sure, have far more chance of getting converts.

While I do not pretend to speak for the Catholic people of the Province—I speak only for myself—yet I believe I voice their sentiments when I say that they will not be trifled with; that they are not going to support any man who aims at their disenfranchisement, at making them aliens in this country, or who is so meek that he cannot raise his voice against such oppression. If he has not now courage to resist this movement by so much as a word of disapproval, what could be expected of him if by any chance he did attain to power? The hon. gentleman has shown no good reason why the ballot should be forced on the Public School supporters. But the hon. gentleman wanted to make political capital out of this school question, because there was some noisy agitation with regard to it in the country; he wanted to catch the P. P. A. breeze, but, as usual, he was behind. He had been taking a long sleep during recess, and when the House assembled he found notice of a bill had been given dealing with the question: and, like Rip Van Winkle, he had wakened up and he wanted to make up for lost time, so we had his resolution. Well, I do not begrudge him all the consolation he got out of it. His movement gives color to the main argument urged against the adoption of the ballot from a Catholic standpoint, namely, that they do not want it forced upon them by the enemies of the Separate Schools and of everything Catholic. I do not say that he is such an enemy, but I do say that, in my humble opinion, it was to catch the votes of just such enemies that he has introduced this resolution, that is the underlying sentiment that has prompted it.

Sir, if I speak of religious sentiments, I do so only because from my point of view the circumstances in which I am placed force it upon me. As a Canadian I much regret this sort of religious agitation. Its tendency is in a wrong direction, it can only serve to draw a sharper line between certain classes of our people. But so long as men will be found having so little regard for their country's welfare as to seize upon every opportunity that offers to stir up and rekindle the smouldering prejudices of the past and to enlarge the misunderstandings of the present merely to gain a passing advantage, and thereby gratify their ambition for political power, just so long will we have this sort of turmoil.

My hon. friend was loud the other day in his protestations against this sort of agitation, yet he has yielded to it on every occasion that has offered, and trimmed his sails to catch the breeze, from whatever quarter it might come; Irish-Catholic electors or P. P. A. conspirators, it is all the same, if only he and his party might attain to political power.

Who will not regret the necessity for Separate Schools? It is a great pity that we are divided in our religious opinions; it would be a great thing if all those professing the Christian religion were united; the occupation of some people would be gone, it is true; but then how much greater headway could be made in converting the world to Christianity, and how much anxiety would be saved the would-be defenders of Canadian liberty who work under an imported Yankee constitution? Well, there are two ways this might be brought about; one would be for all to return to the mother church; another would be for all the Catholics, as well as all the Protestants, to join some one of the sects. But neither of these movements can be brought about by force or by violence. Religion can only be advanced by persuasion, nor can it be defended except by patience. So that we must continue in the future, as in the past, to bear with one another. This will be best accomplished by a strict respect for each other's rights and opinions. It is but a few years since we had the agitation over the so-called Ross Bible. Nothing could more clearly prove the necessity for Separate Schools than the spirit displayed in some quarters with respect to that matter. If there is anything upon which Christians could be able to agree, and which they might, with safety, put in the hands of their children, one would think it would be a selection of readings from the inspired writings of the Apostles.

But, sir, although the leading Protestant clergymen had agreed to certain lessons, the moment it was discovered that a Catholic Bishop had been consulted—although no changes were made by him—it was seized upon by hon. gentlemen opposite, and the cry went out that the Bible was in danger, that it had been excluded from the Public Schools. It was sought to make political capital out of the circumstance so as to enable hon. gentlemen opposite to cross over to this side of the House. Now they have adopted somewhat different tactics, but the spirit of the movement is the same. Catholics in this Province, however, have one consolation, and that is that they cannot be much hurt, happen what will; the share of public patronage they now enjoy is so small they will not miss it much if it be withdrawn; those that would rob them of it will get a very small prize.

The few measures facilitating the working of these Separate Schools, if swept away to-morrow, would not affect them very seriously; they have often put up with greater difficulties and will have the fortitude to bear that should it ever come. There is one thing, however, that cannot happen in this Province: they cannot be compelled to pay for two sets of schools, nor can their property or rights be taken from them, so that they can watch with some indifference the fulmination of those who would if they could deprive them of their schools. I do not mean to say that they can view the agitation now going on in this country except in the most serious sense for other good and sufficient reasons.

HOSTILITY TO CATHOLICS.

Sir, there is a movement of hostility to Catholics seeking to spread itself over the country, having as the leader of its main force a man whose disappointed ambition and wounded pride seeks revenge. His movement was born of conceit and bigotry, nevertheless it is a movement levelled at the rights of Catholics, all the more dangerous because of the ambition of the man that leads it. If I did not regard this movement as dangerous to the future of this country I would not refer to it, but as he has been treacherous to his party, so to his country if it will only serve his purposes. There is no longer any doubt of a common object between the self-constituted champions of Canadian liberty (for themselves only) and the disgruntled McCarthyites. Mr. Stewart of Hamilton clears up that matter when, in his Collingwood speech he declares for Mr. McCarthy's platform, because it is a good, sound Protestant platform, and when he says:—"I object to Separate Schools, I object to dual language, and I object with all my heart to the priest in politics." Yet Mr. Stewart has a priest for his leader. He does seem a little inconsistent in this. While I totally disagree with his objections and with his idea of a religious party in politics I am as much opposed to clerical domination in political matters as he can be, if that be what he means by the priest in politics, but I am as much opposed to the Protestant priest as I am to the Catholic, not that I would wish either to take no interest in political matters, or even to abstain from exercising a legitimate influence as other intelligent citizens so long as they do so as citizens and not as the advocates of the superiority of one religion over that of another or with an assumed authority of a religious character. I quite understand that Mr. Stewart does not represent the views of the great body of Protestants in this country, but he does represent the views of this crusade against Catholics, having for its object their exclusion from all share of influence in the government of the country or employment in the industries