

and not of the evening sitting was negatively and not of Mr. White voted against the

House met at 11.15 a.m., and the adjourned debate upon Mr. Conmee's bill was taken up at once. Hon. Mr. Fraser, on rising to continue his speech, was greeted with loud applause. He still looked weak and exhausted, however. He thanked the House, he said, for the kindness which it had extended in allowing the debate to stand over until this forenoon. It was one more of the many kindnesses which he had had extended to him, and for which he hoped he should always be grateful. Mr. Fraser proceeded as follows:—

When I quit speaking yesterday, he said, I was addressing myself to what I called the changed features of the situation, so far as this Separate School ballot question was concerned. I was pointing out that whilst at one time and up until the year 1890 it was possible to say that, so far as the representation of the religious minority in this House was concerned, there was but one view of this question of the ballot as applied to Separate Schools, but since 1890 that feature had changed. I was saying that in 1890 my hon. friend from Kent had voted in favor of a proposition which meant the imposition in a compulsory shape of the ballot with reference to Separate Schools and the election of trustees. I was pointing out that this session not only the hon. member for Kent, but the hon. member for North Essex also, had voted in the same way upon a resolution that the ballot should be made compulsory. I was saying that this had been followed by the introduction of the bill by the hon. member for West Algoma. He favors what may be called an optional proposition. I was saying also that in addition to that it was beginning to be well known that even with the Roman Catholic minority there was a considerable section who, tired by this time of the matter, wanting to be rid of the irritation and annoyance and discussion that was continually going on, wishing to hear no more of reference to this matter and to the Separate School system, or at all events as little as possible, had expressed themselves as indifferent whether or not the optional ballot was given by the Legislature for the election of Separate School trustees. All these three things, I attempted to say yesterday, and repeat to-day, have, in my view, very materially changed the situation, so far as it can be said to affect the opinion of those who are not Separate School supporters, and as such have no interest in them and no sympathy with them, and I use that expression without meaning to say anything at all offensive. I say these things have very materially changed the situation so far as they are concerned, and no doubt have led to many of them, if not all of them, forming new opinions as to whether there should be in any way a ballot applied to this system of Separate School elections. In addition, I think I may say it is regrettable, further, that my hon. friends from Kent and Essex should have voted for the compulsory ballot, and perhaps not less regrettable that my hon. friend from Algoma should have introduced his bill. I think so for this reason: There are ten of us in the House who form part of the religious minority of the Province. Three of that number make nearly a third of that representation. When you find that in one shape or another there is an indication of feeling in favor of a change in the system of election, I think it is to be regretted, because to that extent it would be said to give color and proof to what has been often charged against the hierarchy and clergy of the Roman Catholic Church, namely, that they interfere with and use undue influence in reference to the system of electing trustees, and improperly control their elections, interfering, as the phrase has been put more than once, with the civil rights guaranteed to the minority by the laws of the land. I do not wish to say—I guard myself carefully against saying—that any one of these three gentlemen would himself declare there is any foundation for this charge. What I point out is that their action would be taken, and would be assumed to be, a demand for protection on their part, and a proof put into the hands and power of those who had uttered these things, that there was some foundation for their statements; and, therefore, their attitude is to be regretted. It is said by those who advocate this system that the vote for the election of trustees should be made secret, because thereby the Roman Catholic minority would be free from the unfair influence of the Roman Catholic clergy in regard to the Separate Schools. I utterly deny and repudiate, and I want to be understood as repudiating in the strongest language that it is possible to use—I utterly repudiate that at any time in the history of this Province, even in exceptional cases, has there been any such undue influence used, or any improper conduct on the part of the Roman Catholic clergy or hierarchy, or that they have done anything other than what they might be supposed to do fairly in connection with these schools, in which, if they are not the actual guardians, they are very closely interested. I think I can appeal to every Roman Catholic in this

House to bear me out in this remark. We have each our own views with regard to Separate Schools. The laity has sometimes differed from the clergy in this connection. The priests have sometimes differed from the Bishops with reference to the management of these schools. In what situation of life in Ontario have differences not arisen? We have all our differences of opinion in connection with Separate Schools. Are there not differences of opinion in regard to Public Schools? Has there been no complaint about the management of them? Are there no grievances alleged against the Public School Trustees? Are there no difficulties among the supporters of Public Schools? And so with regard to the colleges and the universities, and through all the grades of educational matters. And are the churches themselves free from that particular offence? There are difficulties occasionally in them all. Is there any reason for saying that because the clergy are brought into them to a certain extent that therefore they are unduly influencing the conduct of those with whom they have to deal? What I say in reference to the religious minority is this: There is no man amongst them in favor of Separate Schools—and I say they are all in favor of Separate Schools—I say this without hesitancy—there is no man amongst them but he expects that the clergy of the church wherever Separate Schools are established should not be merely passive, merely lookers-on, in regard to them. He expects that they should be guarding, guiding and directing the schools. Roman Catholics expect their clergy to do what, if there were Anglican schools established here, the Anglican laity would expect of their clergy. They expect what the laity of the Methodist Church would expect of their clergy under the same circumstances, or any other denomination if there were denominational schools here as there are in England. If they were the congregations of any of these various bodies they would expect that the clergy should not be indifferent to the schools, but should be active in giving their advice, vigilant in their supervision, watchful and careful as to the system generally; that they should be, as it were, always on the watch-towers, not simply taking care of the schools, but guiding and directing them; and whether I am right or not as to what may or may not be the case as to other Separate Schools, I know I am right in regard to my section and am saying only what is founded on absolute fact when I say the Roman Catholics of this Province expect that their clergy should take an active part with reference to these schools. If it were otherwise the supporters of these schools would be complaining that their clergy were indifferent and were not so active or so vigilant as they should be. Therefore there was no reason why the great Protestant majority of this Province should make such an outcry as they have done, because here and there they found the Roman Catholic hierarchy doing their simple duty in the matter of work they ought to do. These schools are valued by us as the minority because our children therein are taught the religion of their fathers and mothers. Who best suited to show that that is properly taught? Who better suited to see that that is properly guarded, that what is done is done well and correctly, than the clergy in charge in the various parishes where the schools exist? And I venture to say again that if the Roman Catholic clergy instead of doing as they have done were indifferent and neglectful, if they left the schools to shift for themselves and to take care of themselves, there would be in this community no class of the people so quick to charge them with a failure of duty as the minority affected. I venture to say also that if any complaint has to be made, if any offence has to be taken, or if any reprimands have to be administered to the clergy of the minority for their interference with the school system, we who form the Roman Catholic minority will be prepared to take care of ourselves in that regard. We have not asked for the protection of another law to be thrust about us to guard us. When we find our rights invaded and our privileges denied to us then you will hear our voices. You will not be left in any doubt about it at all. It is because we have nothing in that regard to complain of, nothing of which to make a matter of reproach against our clergy, that we have remained quiescent; and perhaps in that respect we have been to some extent to blame. For that brings me to the comment that the Roman Catholic minority, the laity, all through this agitation have been very quiet. They have not made themselves heard. They have in a very indifferent way, if at all, save in the House here, expressed their opinions as to this agitation about the ballot with reference to Separate School elections, and in that respect I think they are not wholly without blame. The apathy they have shown, the willingness to allow others to take their places in the agitation, to allow the matter to be discussed by the clergy instead of by the laity themselves, has, I think, to some extent been the occasion of a misunderstanding.

At this point, after having again spoken