

of the Province would sympathize with the words of Mr. Hughes. If Separate Schools were a part of the constitution he had no wish to disturb any compact or agreement made with the minority, but he hoped the time would come soon when Roman Catholics would themselves come to see that their children were handicapped by the present arrangement, and that they really got the worst of it by being prevented from associating with the children in attendance at Public Schools.

#### MR. MEREDITH.

Mr. Meredith followed. He regretted he was not in condition to do justice to the subject. He would first speak of Mr. Conmee. He said he seemed to have been set up for the special purpose of introducing a heated debate. While he had been talking about the loyalty of Irishmen to their country and so on he had been in his heart at a Donnybrook fair, and had been desirous of nothing so much as of introducing heat into the debate. Mr. Meredith objected in very emphatic terms to the reference Mr. Conmee had made to his attitude in 1890, and to the quotation made from his speech, in which Mr. Conmee had declared Mr. Meredith had urged both parties to unite against Roman Catholics as against "a common enemy." If Mr. Conmee had read what had preceded this remark which he had quoted he would have seen that he was referring in this speech to something that had been written by a very high dignitary of the Roman Catholic Church, which had practically advocated keeping the Roman Catholic vote apart from the two political parties and giving it to whichever party would give most in return for that vote. This position, he maintained then and maintained now, was one in opposition to which all classes of people should unite. He challenged the member for Algoma to say the expressions he had quoted had been used in any other sense than this. Yet the hon. gentleman had dared to make the false charge against him, that when he was calling upon the people to unite against a common enemy he had asked them to unite against the Roman Catholics. While he said that, he still asserted that he was firm in the policy and principles upon which his party went to the polls at the last election. They were defeated then. They were taunted continually with the majorities which the Government had secured. So long as he had the power to lead the Opposition he did not care whether he was defeated once, twice or three times so long as he was defeated in standing by the principles in which he believed. If the House was to be guided by the arguments of hon. gentlemen opposite, then it would appear that if a word were uttered touching the Separate Schools one would excite the enmity, hatred and hostility of the Roman Catholic body. It might be necessary, in the interests of these schools and of the Roman Catholics themselves, to make these schools more efficient than they are, and this could only be done through the representatives of the people. Yet, if these views were accepted, they would be forbidden from doing so. He wanted to know wherein the church or any other body had the right to dictate what changes should be made in the law. He, as a representative of the people, although he did not worship at the same altar as the Commissioner of Public Works, had precisely the same right as that hon. gentleman to discuss the question without being charged with partizanship or hostility to the Roman Catholic Church. Hon. gentlemen opposite charged him with raising these cries for the purpose of helping himself into office. He did not like speaking about himself personally, but he thought his record showed he was not one who had done much for the sake of office. He had sat for twenty odd years in the House, and during that time he had sat to the left of the Speaker. He believed if his ambition had been what was suggested, simply to get into power, that he could have got office, but he would not sacrifice his principles for the sake of getting office. No office in the Dominion would induce him to forswear what he believed to be his duty. The Commissioner of Public Works had said that the fact that Separate School affairs were in evidence was an indication that a general election was at hand. He supposed the idea was to impute to the Opposition the matter of having brought them in evidence. But he would like to know who introduced the first bill on the subject this session and who had made the first inflammatory speech. The House had hardly met before the hon. member for Algoma introduced his bill. If anybody was responsible for having introduced the apple of discord into the debate it was Mr. Conmee. He had been careful not to raise any question in the House relating to this matter, in view of the way in which discussions upon it proceeded. The subject having been introduced, he had moved to make it a real ballot, and not a sham ballot. He was within his rights in doing so surely. He was charged with inconsistency on this

question. He did not care whether he was consistent or not, so that he was right to-day. The Attorney-General might as well be charged with inconsistency as himself. He had voted against the ballot in 1890 in any form for Separate Schools, and now was prepared to vote for the bill, on the ground that a desire had grown up for it on the part of Roman Catholics. He denied that the Province had ever surrendered the power to control these schools, just as they controlled other schools. Coming down to a practicable question, it seemed to him it would be reasonable, so long as these schools existed, that a fair and reasonable system of text-books should be used in the schools, and that the religion taught in the schools should be taught apart from the matter in the text-books. He denied there was any constitutional reason why the Separate School Trustees should not be elected by ballot, according to his recent resolution. There was nothing in the advocacy of the ballot that conflicted with the B. N. A. act. He was going to vote against this bill. He believed that instead of settling it it would reopen the question. The day was coming when the ballot must be used for all schools. Why not settle it now by making a law for both classes of schools, settling the question once and for all by declaring the ballot must be used? He had said nothing and would say nothing to hurt the feelings of anybody.

He had no sympathy with attacks upon any religious body, Mr. Meredith said. He believed in Roman Catholics having all the religious rights which Protestants enjoy, and he would withdraw none of their rights. He had no sympathy with attempts to ostracize Roman Catholics from office; he would give the same positions to Roman Catholics as to Protestants, but that had not been the practice in the country. He would not give to any man a position to which he was not entitled, and one of the troubles of the country had been that in the formation of the Government sectionalism and sectarianism have had so much influence. It would be a good thing for the country and for civilization if in the administration of the affairs of the country the best men were chosen. These influences of sects and sections were making against the formation of a united Canada.

In conclusion, he apologized to the House if his language had been too strong. At the same time he wished to take back nothing, for he felt that he had been unjustly attacked. He had never insulted by resolution or by word any class of citizens, and had never said anything to give offence to any creed.

#### THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL.

The Attorney-General said Mr. Meredith had made a very furious speech, and he was sure quite nine-tenths of it had been concerning himself, what he had done, and what he wished to do. He said he could have got into office if he had wished to. Well, the hon. gentleman had been in Opposition for twenty years, and was still there. He (the Attorney-General) did not know what he could have done that he had not done to get office. He had not been particular about always taking the same view of things, but still he had been unsuccessful, and he (Sir Oliver) apprehended he would still be unsuccessful at the ensuing elections. The hon. gentleman said he stood by his principles. He (the speaker) did not know what those principles were, and he thought the country did not. They had been changed so often. They had been changed in regard to the very matter that was now under discussion. The Attorney-General read from a speech by Mr. Meredith on the subject of the ballot and Separate Schools, delivered in 1883, first remarking that the issue now between the two sides of the House was whether the ballot, if introduced into Separate Schools, should apply as in the case of Public Schools, or should be compulsory. Mr. Meredith had then taken the view the Government was now taking on this very matter. The speech in question was made on January 23, 1883, and in that speech Mr. Meredith had stated that it was not desirable that the House should force upon the supporters of the Separate Schools a system of voting distasteful to them. (Mr. Meredith—Hear, hear.) The Attorney-General said Mr. Meredith took just the opposite position now. The Roman Catholics of the Province were not prepared to adopt the ballot in the way he now wished to compel them to do; but there were some indications that they were willing to accept it in the same way in which it was applied to Public Schools. Mr. Meredith felt in 1883, as the Liberal members of the House felt it now, that the House should not force upon the Roman Catholics a bill that was distasteful to them. But he now desired to compel Roman Catholics to adopt the ballot system. Did he not see how impossible it was to get Roman Catholics to acquiesce in this when the bill was forced upon them from a Protestant standpoint? Mr. Meredith had referred to some difficulties about school elections that had occurred in two places, and that, too, not in every year, but in one year or two years at the utmost. Cou