

## A. SIR CHARLES TUPPER ON REMEDIAL LEGISLATION

. . . If there be any man to be found in Canada who from any narrow, any selfish, any exclusive, any bigoted, or any fanatical sentiment would yield for a single moment to a disposition to advance his own race, religion or sect at the sacrifice of the interest and the conscience of others: if there be any such man, I ask him to look back at the deplorable condition into which Canada had sunk, when she yielded to that sentiment, and when we had in this country a great party fomenting a war of races and a war of creeds. I ask such a one to look back upon Canada at that unhappy period, and I ask him to raise his eyes to the present proud position that our country occupies. I ask him to inquire from himself as to the reason for all this progress, all this prosperity, all this high position that we have obtained throughout the civilized world—for it is not extravagant to use that term in regard to Canada. I ask such an one if he is prepared to re-open a war of races, and a war of creeds, because he wishes to deny to a small and helpless Roman Catholic minority in the province of Manitoba the rights which the Imperial statute and the law under which Manitoba came into the union have guaranteed to them should be preserved.

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He may be acting from the highest and most conscientious principles. He may regard, as many do regard, that this is a question of separate schools, and that he is opposed to separate schools, and consequently he may wish to defeat this measure that is now proposed to the Parliament of Canada. But, Sir, no man who takes the trouble to examine this question can for a single moment consider that the question of separate schools is at issue at all. It is not a question of separate schools, it is a question of the constitution of the country. The progress and the prosperity and the future development of Canada depends upon that constitution being sacredly maintained, and that all the rights that are guaranteed under it, whether to the central or the provincial governments, shall be sacredly guarded. . . .

I put it to any intelligent man who recognizes the fact that within this wide Dominion you have got over 41 per cent of the population Roman Catholics; I put it to gentlemen who may hold—and I think some have without due consideration held—rather narrow views on the subject; I put it to them: whether for any object that was not of the most transcendent importance it would be right for this Government to refuse, or right for this Parliament to refuse, to grant redress in a

case such as is presented on the present occasion, and to leave rankling in the minds of over 41 per cent of the entire population of the Dominion of Canada the sentiment that a Roman Catholic cannot, in the Parliament of this country, obtain the same just consideration that he would obtain if he were a Protestant.

There is no coercion so far as the Dominion Government is concerned. There is not a line of coercion to be found in the Bill from beginning to end. There is a simple, a most easy and natural provision, to meet the interests of these people whose consciences deprive them from the opportunity of making use of such schools in Manitoba as they are now taxed to sustain. Under these circumstances, the Government have been compelled to adopt the policy which they have adopted. I need not say that they have adopted this policy in the face of great difficulty, because it is always an extremely unpleasant thing for any government to find itself in a position in which there is even a single member of their party that does not see eye to eye with them. In the face of even this difficulty, the Government have felt compelled, in justice to their own position, and in regard to their duty to the country as imposed by the Imperial Act, the Government have felt obliged to take the step they have taken. They have taken that step in the most moderate and temperate manner that was possible to be devised, and even down to the present hour they have been open to any suggestion by which the responsibility which is imposed upon them under the circumstances could be removed. They are still open to any suggestion, from any quarter, of any means which will remove the necessity of their being compelled to take action of this kind. . . .