

question; as a representative of the city of Toronto, I regret to have heard in this House on more than one occasion references made to that city which I think were highly unfair. I submit, Sir, that the language was unparliamentary, it certainly was untrue, in which Toronto was referred to as being a hot-bed of bigotry and intolerance. This remark was made by the hon. member for Guysborough (Mr. Sinclair) by the hon. member for North Ontario (Mr. Grant) and I think by other hon. gentlemen opposite. I myself stand here in this parliament as a living protest against that statement, being a member of the minority, not only the minority in this country, but the minority in the city of Toronto, where there is a disparity of about five or six to one in the riding which I represent and some ten to one throughout the whole city; and I think it fair to say that that city is not bigoted and intolerant, which elected me in the face of the opposition of two governments, the late Ross government and this government. I am not complaining of that, for we have to face opposition in the political world as in other departments of life; but I am placing on record the fact that in the face of the opposition of these two governments, I a Roman Catholic, was elected by a very substantial majority in a constituency where there were some ten thousand votes on the list, about two thousand of which were Catholic votes; and I attribute that to the fairness, the liberality and the toleration of my non-Catholic brethren, my friends and neighbours in the city of Toronto. I will go further: I will say that hon. gentlemen opposite found the city of Toronto not a bigoted place in 1896. I recollect the hon. Postmaster General (Sir William Mulock) coming there as the representative of the present premier of this country to attend a public meeting, and expressing sentiments and opinions which were then in accord with the public sentiment of that city. He took advantage of that public sentiment, and his government took advantage of it then and have taken advantage of it ever since. I will go further, and will quote an authority. I think no hon. member of this House, either present or past, can be regarded as a more representative exponent of the French Canadian race than the late member for L'Islet, the Hon. Mr. Tarte; and when he on more than one occasion, as one of the ministers of the Crown, visited that city, he was always given a most handsome and cordial reception, and he is on record as saying that there was no place which he had greater pleasure in visiting than the city of Toronto, to make new acquaintances and to renew old ones. And if the hon. member for Labelle (Mr. Bourassa) comes to Toronto, notwithstanding all the heat there may be over the discussion of this question, I will promise him a cordial reception and a fair hearing. He

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can freely address the electors of that city, and I give my pledge in parliament that nothing objectionable will be said to him, but he will be given a courteous hearing, he will receive British fair-play, and he will return to this parliament with a different opinion from what I believe he has to-day of the people of that great city.

I ventured a moment ago to say that the question of the legality of the Bill now before the House was purely a constitutional question. That Bill, as now framed, is, in my opinion, a direct invasion of the provincial prerogative in regard to the matters therein contained, those more especially which are referred to in the amendment of the hon. leader of the opposition. We have to see in what way this parliament is empowered to pass an Act creating two new provinces. These provinces are being created or erected under the Act of 1871. What does that Act say? By section 4 it gives plenary powers to this parliament to administer the affairs of those districts so long as they are territories; but when they are to be created into provinces, we have to look to section 2, which is the authority under which these provinces are now being created. It is unnecessary for me to read that section to the House, which is already familiar with it. I desire to refer for a moment to the correspondence that took place regarding the passing of this imperial Act of 1871, because it is contended by some that the powers vested in the Dominion by this Act are what are called plenary powers and give to this parliament the right to clothe these provinces with any constitution it may deem fit. It is well, therefore, to see what was the intention of the framers of this Act, what was the view they had in mind when it was being framed and put through the imperial House of Commons. When it was found necessary for Canada to pass what is called 'the doubt removing Act,' both with regard to Manitoba and the Territories, an Order in Council was passed by the Canadian government and sent to the home authorities requesting that legislation of this nature be enacted, and I shall read now an extract from the report of the then Minister of Justice of Canada, the late Sir John Macdonald, approved by His Excellency the Governor General in Council on the 27th December, 1870, and which was in effect a petition to the Earl of Kimberly, then Secretary of State for the Colonies, to have the imperial Act of 1871 passed by the British parliament. That Act is entitled 'An Act to empower the Dominion parliament from time to time to establish other provinces in the Northwest Territories,' and it goes on to say:

Provided that no such local legislature shall have greater powers than those conferred on the local governments and legislatures by the British North America Act of 1867.

A little later, when a draft Bill was sent