

the two provinces because the same principle applies to both—in a different light from that in which it is viewed by my hon. friends who have spoken here. It seems to me that we are here to continue the great work which was commenced long ago. We are not here to stand on the abstract questions of the constitution. The constitution of Canada was made for men and not Canadians for the constitution. If we read the history of our country, if we start from the commencement and read it with a great deal of care, we must come to the conclusion that the history of the people of this country is a most extraordinary one. We all remember that great event on the Plains of Abraham when the soldiers of two great nations met far from their respective homes and when the two opposing generals fell together and mingled their blood upon the same battlefield. A monument has been erected to perpetuate the memory of that day. There is something significant in that. Why were these two races placed there side by side? Do we not recognize the hand of Providence which ordained that this great northern part of America should be built up by the descendants of the two greatest nations in the world, the English and the French, who, since 1759, have lived happily together, as happily as men can live together and more happily than people of the same race and origin sometimes live together. If we pass by degrees through the history of our country we find other events of almost equal significance to that of which I have spoken. More than that; there was a time when some English politicians, sent out here as governors, tried to crush one of the two partners who were building up the nation on the north shore of the St. Lawrence. What was the result of it? Every man who knows the history of this country has in his mind just now the constitution of 1841. Was it not adopted to crush the French Canadian element? It was. Did it succeed? No, on the contrary, probably the most brilliant and most useful part of our history dates from 1851 and continues until the great coalition of 1854. Talk about the abstract letter of the constitution! Let us rather study the minds of those who framed the constitution of this country, let us go back to 1854, when, after struggling for years and years, two men, prompted by Providence, one from Ontario and one from Quebec, one a French Canadian, having the respect of his compatriots, another an English Canadian having the respect of the people of Ontario, joined hands, regardless of whether they were Conservatives or Liberals, regardless of whatever might have been their past differences or ways of thinking and united like patriots with the object of continuing here the peaceful work of the two races who had stood together in the province of Canada. I refer to Lafontaine and Baldwin whose names will go down to

Mr. BERGERON.

posterity as those of the two great founders of the Dominion of Canada. Then, later on we had the compact which resulted in confederation.

We have heard a great deal said in regard to this question from both sides of the House, but more probably on this side of the House and naturally so because a great many hon. members on the other side of the House do not say openly what they think. They are not obliged to do so. We know what it is to be in power. Our friends on this side of the House are more free to criticise. A great deal has been said about this famous clause 93 of the British North America Act in regard to schools. The province of New Brunswick, of which my hon. friend from Gloucester (Mr. Turgeon) was speaking with so much eloquence last night, and the province of Nova Scotia were not, as he said, bound by section 93 of the British North America Act, and he said that the new provinces should not be bound. There is a great deal of difference there. It is true that Nova Scotia and New Brunswick were not bound by that clause. Quebec and Ontario alone were bound, but if you recall the spirit which animated the men who were at the birth of this country you will find that the promises which were made before the adoption of the British North America Act were made to whom? Not to the people of Quebec, not to the people of Ontario, but they were made to the French Canadians who were found here by the English government in 1759, and these promises formed the basis of the treaty of 1763. Would you allow me in case these things may be forgotten to place before the committee some of the promises which are made.

I do not attach so much importance to the exact words of the constitution, as I do to their spirit and as I do to the indication which they give as to what was in the minds of the pioneers of this country when they were laying the foundation of the basis of our nationality. I interpret the constitution in that light, and I endeavour to find if we are worthy successors of the men who laid the corner stone of the Canadian nation. Promises were made to the French Canadian people. These promises were made by England at first, and afterwards by those in Canada who controlled the destinies of the nation. I have often heard it asked: Why should the all powerful England have made promises when she had crushed the little French Canadian colony on the banks of the St. Lawrence? Well, there is some difference of opinion as to that, but at all events it is true that French Canada was ceded to England. French Canada may have been conquered according to the opinion of some, nevertheless there was a cession. However I shall not quarrel over words; for the sake of argument I will admit that French Canada was conquered by England one of the greatest colonizing nations in