

as leader. But fancy the humiliation of this old political veteran who has to sit as second to a man many years his junior. Let me say that when the hon. member for North Toronto or any man in this country after so long an experience in political life with such a record as this talks as he talks in this House it is not likely that the Protestants of this country will have the slightest faith in the assertions or statements or leadership of a man of that kind. Whom are we asked to follow? We are asked to follow my hon. friend from South York (Mr. W. F. Maclean). We all recognize our friend from South York, the W. R. Hearst of Canadian politics, the gentleman who runs sensational journals. He is a well known advocate of public ownership, and he is so able an advocate—and I am going to give him credit for it—that he was able to foist it on his leader and his party and enabled them to get soundly beaten on it last year. My hon. friend who comes along with all these fetishes of his, according to the eloquent speech of the hon. member for Beauce (Mr. Beland) last night, not so many years ago instead of being a stout advocate of provincial rights, an expression which he rolls as a sweet morsel under his tongue to-day was going up and down this country and in this House demanding a strong central government, and saying that the intention of the fathers of confederation was that power should be centred in the federal government in Ottawa, and that there should not be found in the various centres of Canada little legislatures exercising varied powers but that everything should be done in this great central body. The record of my hon. friend is hardly as inconsistent as that of his coadjutor from North Toronto, but on this question of provincial rights he has not much license to speak in this House or in this country.

Then we are asked to follow the hon. member for East Grey (Mr. Sproule) a gentleman who has had a long career in politics and a gentleman whom I am sure we respect, because I think he is the only one of the four that believes in this talk that he is giving us. I am free to say that I believe that, but I am also free to say that my hon. friend from East Grey is in very strange company. Was he not a follower of old Sir John? In the United States it used to be the proud boast of men who had been through the war that they had fought with Grant and it is only a short time in Canada since the Shibboleth of the Conservatives was that they had been with Sir John. Now what was Sir John's history on this question of provincial rights? He was the great centralist as the hon. member for South York told us. Every one knows that Sir John Macdonald was not a federationist, or a legislative unionist, that he was not an advocate of provincial powers, or of the recognition of

the rights of provincial legislatures to control certain questions, merely conceding to them those questions that could not be kept from them. Why, the day was when the Conservative powers in this country asserted that the King was not present in a provincial legislature, that this parliament was the only power that had the right to pass license laws, and we all recollect the occasion when Sir John Macdonald asserted the right, as a legislative unionist, of this federal parliament to pass a Liquor License Act. We all remember the time when he asserted on a question in relation to the constitution of the courts the right of the federal government to appoint King's Counsel's. And we also remember that in the days when the battle went on in the province of Ontario, the little tyrant, as they called him, manfully withstood the efforts of Sir John Macdonald, the hon. member for East Grey (Mr. Sproule) and some other old veterans on the other side in the House who sought to filch from Ontario her rights, legislatively and territorially, and that the men who are now claiming to represent provincial rights and who speak about them as if they were something sacred are the very men who spent all their lives battling against provincial rights and in favour of the centralization of power. Although we have to respect the hon. member for East Grey because he is sincere, I am sure that when he talks about provincial rights he must feel a twinge of regret that he is departing from the policy of the old leader under whom he entered politics and under whose political aegis he developed in this parliament. There was not an hon. gentleman on the other side of the House who supported Sir John Macdonald who knew anything about provincial rights. The word sits very strangely on their tongues. They were never provincial rights people. They never knew what provincial rights were, and yet they are coming here to-day and talking about a proposition in which they assert that the compact recognized by Sir John Macdonald and by all the fathers of confederation as being the essential element in the formation of this confederacy, namely, that the rights of minorities in all the provinces of this Dominion should be respected, is one which shall not be kept. They come here and in the name of provincial rights go back on their record, go back on the traditions of their old leader who sleeps in Cataraqui cemetery at Kingston, they forget the great position that he once occupied in this parliament, and there are none so poor as do him reverence because they turn to those propositions that were advocated by his traditional opponent, Sir Oliver Mowat. Shall we follow these men to-day upon this question? Or shall those of us, who represent not merely what may be called Protestant constituencies but who represent constituencies, even though they come from smaller provinces,