

der a constitutional pretence. The great argument which is being used by the opponents of this measure is, I may say, the shibboleth of provincial rights.

I would commend to my hon. friend from Labelle if he were here, the argument of his own leader both on the 21st of February and the 22nd of March, in which he proceeded solely upon the constitutional standpoint; the right hon. gentleman stood, as he said, upon the rock of the constitution. My hon. friend from Labelle, as I will show from a later portion of his speech, has an intense regard for those who stand upon the rock of the constitution when they happen to coincide with his own views, but he has a particular desire to criticise and to impute motives to those who think they stand upon the rock of the constitution if their interpretation of the constitution happens to be a little different from his own. I would commend my hon. friend from Labelle to the speeches of certain gentlemen on his own side of the House in addition to those of the Prime Minister, I would commend to him the language of one of his own leaders, the Solicitor General (Mr. Lemieux). My hon. friend the Solicitor General was deprecating any display of passion or prejudice—and in that I absolutely concur with him—he made a very moderate and a very courteous speech; he made a very good argument although I did not agree with all his conclusions; he certainly made a speech to which no hon. gentleman on this side of the House could object in the slightest degree by reason of the tone he adopted; he was, as he is on all occasions, courteous to gentlemen on this side of the House from whom he differs. But, the Solicitor General made one observation which I commend to my hon. friend from Labelle and to my hon. friend from Colchester, and to certain minor legal lights from the province of Nova Scotia who have been dealing with this question from a constitutional standpoint. The Solicitor General said: ('Hansard,' page 5315):

And yet, Sir, that matter, or rather this difficulty is purely a constitutional one. It is in the light of our constitution that the question must be examined. To look at it from any other point of view is to err and to quibble.

I specially commend these remarks to my hon. friend from Labelle and to my hon. friend from Colchester. My hon. friend from Montmagny (Mr. Lavergne) took the same ground, that we must look to the provisions of the constitution in order to determine what rights shall be granted to the new provinces; my hon. friend from Gloucester (Mr. Turgeon), my hon. friend from North Simcoe (Mr. McCarthy) and my hon. friend from North Ontario (Mr. Grant), all took the view that it was after all a constitutional question. But, my hon. friend from Labelle can be

confronted with an authority which is more eminent in his opinion I am sure, than any I have referred to. It was very well to attack those who at least thought they had the right to make a constitutional argument and it was very well to say that they, and not those who were raising cries of passion and prejudice, were to be found fault with; but a little later on, the hon. gentleman himself, in this House used this language which I commend to my hon. friend (Mr. Bourassa) as a cool and common sense outsider:

I took an active part in two elections in the province of Ontario; I was but a boy at the time, but I was proud to stand by Sir Oliver Mowat and help in his campaign for justice and equality. I was living on the borders of the province of Ontario and I crossed the river of my own free will without being asked by anybody, without being known by anybody, to do what I could in support of the old statesman. What was the argument used by Sir Oliver Mowat? He was prudent and he knew of the power of the appeals made by such men as the member for East Grey. When the system of separate schools was attacked in Ontario, Sir Oliver Mowat said: 'I shall not discuss the relative merits of separate schools and public schools; I am not any partisan of separate schools; but separate schools have been established in this province under law, and therefore it is useless to agitate against the law of the land.'

It is all very well for Sir Oliver Mowat to stand upon the rock of the constitution when he agrees with the member for Labelle, but it is a very undesirable thing for one to stand by the provisions of the constitution if his views do not happen to agree with those of the hon. gentleman (Mr. Bourassa). That gives to the hon. gentleman an opportunity to impute motives and to use language, which, to say the least, is not very courteous to those on this side of the House. Then the hon. gentleman goes on to commend the wisdom of Sir Oliver Mowat and the high character of the stand he took in that regard, which was exactly the same as I take with regard to this measure, which has attracted so much unfavourable comment from my hon. friend from Labelle. I would venture to think that, although he has classed himself in the first instance, as a cool and common sense outsider, in view of his declaration in regard to myself in one part of his speech and his declaration in regard to Sir Oliver Mowat in another part, he cannot be regarded as a very consistent or sincere outsider.

With the gracious permission of my hon. friend from Colchester (Mr. Laurence) and my hon. friend from Labelle (Mr. Bourassa), I shall proceed to deal once more with this question from a constitutional standpoint, for the purpose of obtaining some information from my hon. friend the Minister of Justice. I understand that a great many hon. gentlemen on the other side of the House