

But a strange thing happened in the legislature of Canada. It was at the time when we had a representation from Lower Canada and a representation from Upper Canada. A similar Bill was introduced immediately for the province of Upper Canada. This was strongly resisted and so strongly was it resisted that the two Bills were withdrawn. Thereupon Mr. Galt resigned his position as a member of the government of the day because he had not been able to improve the situation of the minority to which he belonged by legislation before the Act of confederation came into operation. Then what took place? Of course, there was a great deal of commotion at that time and the Protestant minority of Quebec felt disinclined to enter confederation unless their rights were secured as they thought they ought to be secured. Mr. Galt was appointed to go to England with Sir John Macdonald, Sir Geo. Cartier and others in order to frame the Act which was to be the Act of Confederation. At that time the 'Montreal Gazette' was the principal as today it is the most important organ of the Conservative party. It spoke for Mr. Galt and on the 24th October, 1866, the 'Montreal Gazette' contained the following article:

We have much pleasure in announcing that during the recent protracted sittings of the cabinet at Ottawa, the subject of the position of the Lower Canada education question was very fully considered. The ministry were, we understand, desirous that Mr. Galt should be appointed as a delegate to represent the interests of the British population, but that gentleman felt that he could not accept unless he was assured as to the views of the government on the points that so seriously concern his countrymen and co-religionists, and which so deeply roused their feelings. We are informed that the ministry entirely satisfied Mr. Galt of their determination to give practical effect to the pledges given in parliament, and the gentleman has in consequence accepted the appointment of delegate for the express purpose of watching over these important interests, as well as of lending his aid to the consummation of the measure of confederation.

We feel that our Protestant friends may rest assured that the man who resigned the honours and emoluments of office on this question will not, as a delegate, be found wanting to his trust as their representative. And we hail with great satisfaction the approaching settlement of a question which might have been fraught with so much danger to the kindly and cordial relations which have of late so happily subsisted between the people of different races and creeds in Canada.

Mr. Galt went to England as a delegate. We know as a matter of history that he contributed to the drafting of section 93 of the British North America Act, and those of us who have read Mr. Pope's book upon the debates preliminary to confederation know that as a matter of history the 3rd and 4th subsections of section 93, the subsections which give the right of appeal, are

Sir WILFRID LAURIER.

even in his own handwriting. Therefore it is to him that we have section 93 in its present form. As to that let me call the attention of the House to another extract from the 'Montreal Gazette' of March 2nd, 1867. Either that day or the day before the 'Montreal Gazette' had published the whole text of the Bill which afterwards became the Confederation Act and it accompanied this with the following comment:

Few questions have excited a more lively interest in this country than the education of children in public schools, or, perhaps, it would be more accurate to say, the appropriation of taxation for that purpose. We need not repeat the particulars of the agitation on the subject, which commenced with the promulgation of the resolutions of the conference of Quebec, and resulted in Mr. Galt resigning his seat in the cabinet. The short of the story is, all this led to an agreement on the part of the Canadian government to advise Her Majesty's ministers to insert in the Union Bill the provisions with which the public are, undoubtedly, already aware. That was the agreement to which we referred, in October last, as having been satisfactory to Mr. Galt, and on the strength of which he consented to become a delegate to London. The public may find in these provisions in the Bill the proof of the statement made by us, which some of our contemporaries, without any evidence, undertook to call in question.

Before the question of confederation was mooted, the constant cry on the part of a portion of Lower Canada Protestant minority, was: give us the same privileges as those enjoyed by the Upper Canada minority. Well, the Bill as it stands, in terms, provides that the minority in Lower Canada shall have precisely the same privileges as the minority in Upper Canada.

And further, that the minorities in all the provinces shall have the right of appeal to the general parliament.

The Bill, in this form, undoubtedly, in our opinion, will become the fundamental law of the country, forming a part of its political constitution; and that, as such, it must be accepted. It affords essential guarantees as well in immediate practice as in ultimate resort.

Well Sir, Mr. Galt was too great a man not to stipulate for other minorities that which he was stipulating for the minority to which he belonged. Mr. Galt was not satisfied to have these guarantees under the constitution simply for the minority of Quebec, but he put them in the terms which I read a moment ago so that they could apply to any minority in any province under any condition under which a system of separate schools exist. It is in obedience to that order of the constitution that we have inserted the clause which I read a moment ago.

Now, Sir, a word as to the changes we have made in that clause. I stated the other day that we proposed to make a change and we have given notice of an amendment which we intend to move to clause 16. What is the reason of this change? It is a fair question to ask and a question to be answered.