

say is that they may strike at the Prime Minister, their papers may endeavour to inflame the people, as in that article which I have just read—and they confess that it is having its effect on the country, and that some friends of the Liberal party are not in accord with their friends on this Bill, and that may be true, and I shall regret if it continues so—but I want to say that, so far as I know, the Liberal parliamentary party, which ought to know as much about the nature of this Bill as any one, a party who, I believe, are as honest and conscientious as their fellow-men, are not divided, are not disunited on this Bill. And, Sir, when the time comes that this question has to be discussed before the people, as it will come, then it will be discussed in all its bearings, and whatever the verdict may be, the government, and the members who have confidence in the government, will accept the verdict that may be rendered by the people. Prophecies as to what will occur are of no value. We had prophecies before the last election, great prophecies which utterly failed. All I have to say is that I believe the Liberal party stand to-day where they have ever stood. They stood on the principle of ruling this country in such a way as to give equal rights, liberties and privileges to all classes and creeds, and we are here to-day. There has been no departure. There was an attempt made by the Conservative party in 1896 to have this parliament enact a law which would override a law passed by a province which had the power to pass that law. They say that the right hon. gentleman who leads the government threw himself across the path and prevented it. Yes, because he said that the only way to accomplish that was to accomplish it through the action of the local government which had the power under the constitution, as had been declared by the highest court in the empire. But, Sir, is that the case of the Territories? Is that the case of this Bill? Are we seeking to override the law of the Territories, making them take something they do not want? We are simply continuing what the government and the legislature of the Territories enacted as their school law, and which their premier says, if he were a dictator to-morrow, he would not rescind or abrogate. Sir, where is the principle of provincial rights in this? Yes, the attempt was made to have the country believe that the right hon. Prime Minister has gone back on the principles he professed and that he is no longer worthy of the confidence of the people. Well, I say we have confidence in him. They speak about what he did in 1896. They unearthed the documents and read them to-day. What has been the condition of this country since 1896 under, as their papers will say, a French Canadian Prime Minister, or as they put it sometimes, a French Prime Minister? What has been the condition of this country?

Mr. PATERSON.

What was it before 1896?—stagnation, no increase of population, an empty Northwest, as Mr. Blake said at one time, trade almost paralyzed, hope in many breasts gone, divisions among the people like what I am afraid their efforts tending in that direction may produce again. And yes, there were divisions in the government as well and this was the result of it. Yet we find a member of that government standing up to-day and making the speech that the hon. member for North Toronto (Mr. Foster) made, speaking in reference to this matter, belittling this government, or the members of this government, although he was a member of that government during the years of this stagnation and decay. What is the condition of the country to-day under Sir Wilfrid Laurier, French Canadian Premier though he is? We do not put it in that way; French by extraction, French in his ancestry. His ancestors were French and he is proud of it, yours may have been English and you are proud of it, yours may have been Irish and you are proud of it, mine were Scotch and I am proud of it. Still we are Canadians one and all, and Sir Wilfrid Laurier is Canada's Prime Minister. I say to the hon. gentleman opposite and to those whom my words may reach outside of this House who have given us their confidence in the times past that there is no one who will say that Sir Wilfrid Laurier by any unworthy motive can be swerved from what he believes to be the line of duty. Not only do I want to tell these people but I want to tell you younger members of the House who have come in here that I was here when the Liberal party lost the services of Edward Blake. It became a question who was to lead us. We were in opposition and a small minority too. There was one man amongst us who stood preeminent above all others, known and admitted, and of course the choice fell on him. He was asked to accept. He hesitated; no, he refused at first. Pressure was brought to bear upon him. I remember his reply: No, I am one of the minority in race and one of the minority in faith; I think that the party would do better to elect one of the majority. The reply of the Liberal parliamentary party was this: The Liberal parliamentary party do not ask a man what his race or ancestry have been. They do not ask at what altar he kneels. If they know him to have the qualities and the character that mark him out above all others for the position that is the man they want. Reluctantly he accepted it. For years he led us in opposition. Eight years in power under his leadership, eight years of unexampled prosperity under his reign; eight years of national peace.

Some hon. MEMBERS. Oh, oh.

Mr. PATERSON. I do not wonder that some hon. gentlemen opposite laugh. These