

the slightest evidence in support of that statement. However, the fact remains that the makers of the Manitoba constitution have enacted section 23 provided for the official use of the French language in that province; and if they had the right to do so, why should we be debarred from imposing the same terms on the provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan. I shall go further: I contend that not only have the promoters of the Act of 1870 not violated the constitution of 1867, but they have, on the contrary, been inspired by its fundamental principle, in granting to the French language in Manitoba the same rights which the constitution itself grants to the Dominion parliament. And if we wish ourselves to remain faithful to that principle, we should follow their example and provide that the French and English tongues will be for ever, and on an equal footing, official in Alberta and Saskatchewan, two provinces cut out, as was Manitoba, from those vast territories which are the property of the whole Canadian people. What I claim, is the carrying out of the same principle which was applied in connection with the establishment of the Dominion itself. It is the principle which Sir John Macdonald advocated when he proclaimed that there were no longer in Canada victors and vanquished, but two allies whose rights, equal by virtue of the constitution, are not measured by the numbers and riches of the various groups. That is the principle which is embodied in the constitution of Manitoba. That is the principle which I would have recognized and applied to-day. I am not breaking the constitution, but parliament will be breaking it, should they reject my proposal and that of the member for Jacques Cartier.

The hon. member for St. John's has referred to the small numbers of French speaking people in the Territories. The Solicitor General argued on the same lines, when he stated that we had no right to claim the official recognition of the French language in the Northwest Territories, because the French speaking people were not as numerous as the Germans, the Doukhobors or the Mormons. The Prime Minister spoke in a similar strain, when he stated that the French Canadians in Massachusetts have stronger claims to the official recognition of their tongue in that state, than the French speaking people have in our western provinces. Have we really reached that point? Are we, with one stroke of the pen, to blot out 150 years of our history; and on this Canadian soil, which our ancestors opened up to civilization, under the British flag which we twice saved from the savage onslaughts on the part of Anglo-Saxon Protestants from the neighbouring republic, under this constitution which is the mere outcome of the compact entered into by the two great groups of the Canadian nation, are we to be told

that we are entitled to no more consideration than our fellow countrymen who have drifted to a foreign land? Is that really the reward coming to us after a century and a half of unflinching loyalty to British institutions? Is that the result of the compact loyally gone into in 1867 between English and French speaking Canadians?

In order to do away with a proposal resting on the wide and solid foundation which I have mentioned, subterfuges are resorted to. It is argued that the original compact and the rights of the French language in the west have already been interfered with by parliament in 1890. That is only a pretense. I have a higher notion of the duties and responsibilities devolving on the representatives of the Canadian nation. If the parliament of 1890 has made a mistake, that is no reason for us to repeat it and aggravate it. If parliament in 1890 misapprehended the work of the fathers of confederation and of the makers of the Manitoba constitution, it is our bounden duty to correct that mistake. Parliament in 1890 abolished the use of the French language in the legislative assembly; and now that injustice becomes an argument for those who wish to carry through that sinister work and do away with the printing in French of statutes and legal proceedings. An effort is made to palliate that wrong by covering it up with a further crime. To that I answer boldly: Instead of resuming the work initiated by parliament in 1890, let us retrace our footsteps and take the stand taken formerly by the promoters of the Act of 1870.

In this connection there has been some quibbling. It has been contended that we are not doing away with the French language, but that we are simply leaving to the legislature in the new provinces the right to act as they think fit. That is another attempt at hedging. We all know what fate is reserved to the French language if provincial legislatures are granted full sway. Past experience is sufficient to enlighten us in that respect. When, in 1890, Sir John Thompson moved that the legislative assembly of the Northwest Territories be granted the right to decide in what tongue its proceedings would be carried on, the then leader of the opposition, to-day Premier of this Dominion (Sir Wilfrid Laurier) seconded his motion. He drew attention to the fact that there was not at the time a single French Canadian member in the legislative assembly. He added that if the French minority should elect a single representative, the English-speaking majority would, no doubt, refrain from abolishing the use of the French language. What was the outcome? In 1892, Mr. Haultain moved the abolition of the French language. At the time there were two French Canadian representatives in the legislature. One of them, Mr. Prince, spoke on behalf of the rights of the minority, appealed to the spirit