

House. He was a Frenchman and a Catholic, Varennes de la Verendrye? I am not sure whether it has been stated that, some years later, Lord Selkirk, founder of the Red river settlement, requested Monseigneur Plessis, bishop of Quebec, to send French and Catholic missionaries for the purpose of preaching the gospel in these regions, a request which was complied with. I am not sure whether it was stated that there existed in 1818, on the very boundaries of these Territories of the Northwest, two Catholic and French schools? On the other hand, I am aware that the eloquent member for Labelle (Mr. Bourassa), among others, has recalled the statements made at the time of the introduction of the Act of 1875, by the then Prime Minister, the Hon. Alexander Mackenzie, the Hon. Edward Blake and Sir John A. Macdonald, which statements, in express and implicit terms, contained a pledge that the rights of future settlers to have schools of their own liking would never in the future be interfered with. I wonder if those who are not utterly indifferent to the sacredness of vested rights and to the claims of services rendered do not feel some anguish in the bottom of their hearts when they refuse to grant any concessions on behalf of the men who have thus served their country, a country which they have some reason to believe, does not belong exclusively to others. I wonder if any claim of the Doukhobors, who have arrived in this country 350 years after its discovery would meet with such determined opposition as that which is shown to-day against this provision on behalf of the pioneer settlers of this country.

Mr. Speaker, this is not the first time that we are witnesses of a conflict between these two currents of opinion. I shall only remark to-day that we have given in more often than circumstances warranted. However, I may state, not as a matter of gratification from the national or political standpoint, but with a view to claiming our dues, that on three occasions we did not give in: In 1775, in 1812, and in 1861. On the latter occasion some of my generous fellow-citizens of St. Hyacinthe, who are still there personally enlisted. We were foremost on all occasions when it was necessary to repulse the invader sent forth by the neighbouring republic, and to preserve for those who refuse us everything to-day that territory of Canada, wherein we were to be deprived of so many privileges.

We accepted confederation unwillingly, as far as a good many of us are concerned, as if we had foreseen what treatment was to be dealt out to us. On the faith of kindly representations and promises of fair treatment, we went aboard that ship of confederation. If now we are told that a change is to be effected and that the treatment granted to others is not due to us, I appeal to the love of liberty of the Anglo-Saxon race, would it be surprising that people,

Mr. BEAUPARLANT.

under such treatment, should look through the window to see whether there is not in the neighbourhood, or under the skies, some other boat wherein they may hope for more equitable treatment.

Together with some of my fellow-citizens and other broad-minded, fair and just men, such as the hon. Ministers of Justice, of Finance, of Customs, of Militia, of Agriculture, of Public Works, and the Postmaster General, I shall cast my vote with those who think that minorities are worth considering in this country of Canada, which is sometimes praised as a land of freedom. And if later on, owing to the importance, the interest and the sympathy which attaches to legislation of the kind now submitted to us, some one wishes to investigate in the reports of the House the various stages and circumstances of the case, I desire my name to be found amongst those who think that if oneself should be attended to, the other man is also worthy of some consideration.

Mr. E. B. OSLER (West Toronto). Mr. Speaker, it will hardly be expected that I should discuss the constitutional aspect of this question. That phase of the matter has been discussed by eminent lawyers who have differed among themselves in reference to it, and therefore I as a layman may be excused from entering upon such a discussion. I wish to call attention to an extract published in the Toronto 'News' of the other day, from a speech delivered by Sir Wilfrid Laurier, in the House of Commons in 1893. He said:

I am to-day as firm a believer as I ever was in the doctrine of provincial rights. I take as much pride as ever I did in belonging to the great party which in the past carried that doctrine to a successful issue; an issue, indeed, so successful that we rank among the advocates of that doctrine to-day the most prominent of the men who opposed it in the past. And when the historian of the future shall refer to the first twenty years of confederation, the brightest page he will have to record will be the page on which he will trace the efforts of the Liberal party to maintain inviolate and intact the liberties and independence of the local legislatures.

I would commend these sentiments of 1893 to the Prime Minister and his followers to-day.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. Hear, hear.

Mr. OSLER. In presenting this Bill the Prime Minister thought it was going to be a very light and simple matter, that there was nothing controversial in this measure. He said:

A great deal has been done, in fact, more has been done than we have to do to-day. We have to take the last step but it is easy and comparatively unimportant in view of and in comparison with what has already been accomplished. The metal has been in the