

ton McCarthy in the ranks of the Conservative party. The hon. gentleman was the Finance Minister under Sir John Thompson when Dalton McCarthy was driven out of their ranks because he dared to express independent views with reference to the French language in the Territories, and separate schools in Manitoba and the Northwest. There ought to be some regard for consistency, for what has gone before. The hon. gentleman has talked about the consistency of other men on one side or the other. I think he had better begin at home to make himself consistent before he criticises anybody else in that regard. Now, the hon. gentleman made a speech in 1896, which was an admirable speech, and I desire to place on record some of the remarks he then made, because they are important:

Sir, the question whether separate schools should, or should not, be established is one which might well have been debated in 1863 when that system was adopted for the province of Ontario; it is one which might well have been debated upon principle in 1867 and 1870 when these schools were being perpetuated under the Confederation Acts. But it is not a principle which is at stake to-day in the least degree; and, for my own part, I believe that I have no right to take my preference on that principle into consideration in the least on this occasion, but that I am now called upon to deal with the question of a clause of the constitution, and a case which arises out of it, in which that principle was settled once and for all in regard to the minority's right by the fathers of confederation and embodied in the constitution itself.

That has reference to Manitoba, which was not in the confederation at that time, but which entered afterwards:

The third point of view, and which seems to me to be the only practical point of view, is to discuss it in the light of a clause in the constitution which is binding, and which, taking all the circumstances of this country into account, is not only binding, but is a wise provision of the constitution as well. . . . Great Britain is a nation which has been distinguished by the tenacity with which she held to every compact and every agreement. She has been distinguished no less by that spirit of generous and broad toleration with which she has treated every religion, every class of nationality which form the components of her great empire. Now, Sir, these two principles of good faith and toleration are the very principles which underlie our constitution, and especially those clauses of the constitution under which the present question arises, and which have to do with the educational rights of minorities in the different provinces of the Dominion.

Remember, he is speaking about Manitoba, and he is applying these words to the different provinces of the Dominion. I do not agree with him, but I would like a little consistency:

Above the compelling powers of the courts of law, and above the compelling powers of superior parliaments, there is a sentiment of justice and fair-play which compels where there

is no legal instrument—which compels by the very force of the appeal which that sentiment carries to the heart and the conscience of a parliament to do justice and to exercise that unrestrained and unrestricted freedom in the interests of a minority or of any class of people plainly aggrieved and asking redress.

Then we had a brilliant peroration:

After six years, sir, we stand here under circumstances such as I have detailed. What is it, then, for this parliament to do? On the one hand, there is a well-founded repugnance to interfere and do what, even though clearly within our right to do, the province can do more easily and far better than ourselves. There is along with that a number of subordinate reasons arising, either from considerations of principle or of personal concern, or of party interest, that tend to induce some to vote against this Bill and against remedial legislation.

On the other hand, what is there? There is the genius and spirit of the constitutional compacts of this country. There is the splendid lesson of toleration and of compromise which has been read to you in that constitution, and which has been evidenced in its harmonious workings, for nearly thirty years. There is the cry of the minority, small in the area of those who directly suffer, but large, let me tell you, in the area of those who sympathize with it in this country from one end to the other. There are the minorities in other provinces demanding of you where they shall stand, and how they shall be treated, if in future years their time of trial comes, and they will have to appeal to this same high court of parliament, and invoke this same jurisdiction. There is this parliament, Sir, invested, knowingly, definitely, positively invested by the fathers of confederation in the constitution with the jurisdiction to maintain these rights and to restore them if they are taken away. This parliament is appealed to. It is watched by Canada, it is watched by the world. On grounds of courage, on grounds of justice, on grounds of good faith, make your answer to those who appeal, make your answer to Canada which is watching you, and to the world which will judge of your actions.

History, Sir, is making itself these eventful days. Shall the chapter be a record of nobleness and adequacy, or a record of weakness and inefficiency? Shall we stamp ourselves as petty and provincial, or shall we be recorded to future ages as magnanimous and imperial? Let us plant our feet in the firm path of constitutional compact and agreement, of good faith, and of honest, fair dealing. Let us take and pass on that gleaming torch of prudent compromise under whose kindly light the fathers of confederation marched safely through in times far more troublous and far less advanced than ours, into an era of harmony and continued peace.

Let us do justice to a weak and patient minority, and thus settle for ever the question of the sufficiency of the guarantees of confederation. Let us follow with cheerful emulation the shining example of our great mother country, whose foundations were laid on the solid granite of good faith; and whose worldwide and wondrous superstructure has been joined together with the cement of a strong and generous toleration.