

liberties of the people, as the defender par excellence of provincial rights, as the conciliator who had dispersed by sunny smiles the mists of passion and prejudice. If he was rightly estimated by the people of Canada at that time, there is grave question in the minds of many whether he has not now abandoned the principles which he then professed. Under what conditions did he present this measure? Without consulting his two ministers best qualified by their knowledge and experience, without really consulting the representatives of the people, the executive government of the Northwest, with regard to this particular clause, and moreover, if we may believe all that we now hear, without consulting the representatives in this House of the people of the Northwest. I have challenged him before to state to this House and to the people of this country the reasons which induced him to bring down that measure without exposing it to the ex-Minister of the Interior, then a member of his cabinet, or to my hon. friend the Minister of Finance. I have thought this involved to some extent the self respect and even the honour of my right hon. friend. He has not so regarded it. He must be the guardian of his own honour, I admit that, and I do not press him further. But I venture to think that it was only due to parliament and to the country to declare to us why he saw fit to adopt that most extraordinary course.

Now I come to the arguments of my right hon. friend when introducing this measure. He put forward constitutional grounds, and he gave two reasons, which I must examine a little in detail, even if in doing so I trespass upon the indulgence of the House. The first reason he gave, so far as I was able to comprehend his argument, was this: That when parliament in 1875 enacted section 11 of the Northwest Territories Act of that year, it imposed permanently upon those territories the provisions therein contained, so that they must necessarily become embodied in the constitution of such territories when created into provinces. To state that proposition seems to me to refute it. Parliament could at any time within the last thirty years have repealed section 11, or any other section of that Act; parliament could repeal that section to-day. Parliament on many occasions during the past thirty years has amended and modified the provisions contained in that Act. In 1890 Sir John Thompson introduced and this House carried an amendment, to a resolution moved by Mr. McCarthy. That resolution so amended conferred upon the people of the Northwest Territories power to deal with the question of dual languages after the next general election. A similar provision could then have been made with regard to education. So that provision contained in section 11 of the Act of 1875 must be

regarded not as a permanent measure, but, as a temporary provision which could at any moment be repealed by parliament so soon as it saw that the legislature of the Northwest might safely be entrusted with larger powers. It was absolutely within the power of parliament at any time during the past thirty years to have given to the people of the Northwest the same authority over education as was given by the measure to which I referred with respect to the use of the dual language. It was absolutely within the power of parliament at any time within the last thirty years to have given to the people of the Northwest Territories exactly the same power over education as that which is enjoyed to-day by the people of Nova Scotia, of New Brunswick and of Prince Edward Island. Now I challenge my right hon. friend the Prime Minister, my hon. friend the Minister of Justice, or any other gentleman on that side of the House to refute that statement, and to do so by any convincing or satisfactory argument.

My right hon. friend has referred to the opinion of the late George Brown. So far as matters of policy in this country are concerned, Mr. Brown's opinion would undoubtedly be of great weight, and should commend itself especially to hon. gentlemen on that side of the House who were brought up in that school of which Mr. Brown was the leader. Therefore when my right hon. friend, upon the first reading of this Bill, was obliged to quote the words of Mr. Brown condemning any attempt to create separate schools in the Northwest of Canada, he was giving to his followers a lesson read to them by the leader of that school in which they were brought up. But he was not content to deal with the opinion of Mr. George Brown upon a question of policy, he rather sought to use Mr. Brown as a constitutional authority. Well, we know that Mr. Brown was not dealing with the question from the standpoint of constitutional obligation; we know he was not well qualified to do so, because he had not the legal training and the constitutional knowledge which would cause him to be recognized as a great authority on a question of that kind. Now if my right hon. friend desired to quote Mr. Brown's views upon the constitution, he might well have read to the House these words from Mr. Brown as a constitutional authority:

The constitution was framed with a view to leaving this question to the settlement of the various provinces, and it would be folly in parliament to violate that arrangement.

But if my right hon. friend really desired constitutional authorities, he might have come down a little later. I will give to the House the authority upon that question of men versed in the law, men whose every word upon the meaning of the constitution must carry weight. In the first place, let