

Mr. FIELDING. It is so stated?

Mr. SPROULE. Yes, in a letter to me and which I have in my possession. I do not wish to take up the time of the House longer on this subject, but I want to refer to one or two quotations which may have been used before but which I now want to give for the benefit of my right hon. friend the leader of the government. The present Prime Minister, as will be found in 'Hansard' of March 3, 1896, said:

In a community with a free government, in a free country like this, upon any question involving different conceptions of what is right or wrong, different standards of what is just or unjust, it is the part of statesmanship not to force the views of any section, but to endeavour to bring them all to a uniform standard and a uniform conception of what is right.

Not to force the views of any section! I ask him if he is doing that to-day in connection with this Bill. Is he not forcing the views of one section of the community upon there who do not think that it is right to compel them to accept what they do not believe to be suitable to the conditions there? Then, speaking on the same day of the different agitations which have from time to time arisen in Canada over provincial rights and defending himself for having stood up in support of provincial rights, he said:

Sir, if the hon. gentleman, while he was tracing the history of confederation, had recalled that page—

Referring to the various disputes that had taken place in Canada—

—it might, perhaps, have struck him and these around him that coercive methods never yet led any people to good and wise action.

Will he apply the coercive methods he is adopting to-day to these new provinces? If he does to what wise action or good purpose will it lead?

But I would recall the history to the hon. gentleman, not only of his own province, but of the Dominion of Canada at large.

Later on he said:

These frequent recurrences of agitations and commotion are a severe strain, and a very severe strain upon the tie which binds these provinces together; and the danger is all the more to be apprehended, if, searching further on for the causes which have brought about this commotion, you find that on every occasion there was only one cause, always the same, and that was the feature of our constitution which abridges the independence, the sovereignty of the provincial legislatures. In one form or the other, such was the cause of these agitations.

What is the cause of the agitation to-day? Is it not exactly that very same thing, that you are endeavouring to interfere with and abridge the rights of these legislatures? The right hon. gentleman is to-day doing

Mr. SPROULE.

what he then declared it unwise to do when he said that all these agitations were traceable to one source and to one cause, and when he advised parliament that it would be wise to avoid such a danger. It is wise therefore to avoid interference with provincial rights. Then, speaking of the right of the provinces to legislate in regard to education he said:

This division of legislative powers is absolutely essential to the federal form of government.

He was referring to the British North America Act where it divides the powers of the provincial legislatures from the powers of the federal parliament and he said that this division of legislative powers is absolutely essential to the federal form of government. We gave the power to legislate in regard to education to the provincial legislatures. Then, speaking as to the question: Who should rule?—he made a further statement. We heard it stated last night that the Roman Catholics numbered about 41 per cent of the population and the Protestants 60 per cent and the question was asked: Are we going to disregard the rights of this large minority? I say no, we never intended to disregard them, nor infringe upon them, nor do any injustice to them, but I do hold that the principle which I have stated before that the majority must govern applies as much to the electors of a province as it does to the electors in Canada in an election to this parliament. Then, in reply to the question: Who should rule?—he said:

Indeed, it must be accepted, and accepted as a truism, that under popular government the majority must rule.

The majority of the people of Manitoba desired a certain thing and the Remedial Bill proposed to compel them to do something that they did not desire to do, and therefore the right hon. gentleman held that the majority must rule. It would be a doubly improper thing, I think, to adopt a measure which would not only interfere with provincial rights, but which would prevent the majority from ruling in a country in which the right hon. gentleman declared it to be a truism that the majority must rule. He continued:

I do not mean to say, Sir, that the majority will always be right. No, Sir, the majority may err, the majority may prevaricate. But I am not prepared to say that the majority will always do wrong, will always prevaricate and will always wantonly and wickedly do injustice to the minority.

I think you can safely trust to the intention of the majority to do what is right, and the rule of the majority is the only principle that we can apply to the government of the country. Then, he asks: