

who should have a sacred regard for provincial rights, they are my friends from the province of Quebec, who of all men, have been in the past most jealous of the liberties of their province. It was in that school that my right hon. friend (Sir Wilfrid Laurier) learned long ago the lesson which he seems to have somewhat forgotten to-day. In the province of Quebec, there is and there is rightly, a strong spirit in favour of provincial rights. And it is because I interpret the constitution in the light of that spirit that I take the stand upon this question which I take to-day. Let me illustrate my meaning by one further statement. If any hon. member of this House or any man in this country should seek to insert in this Bill a provision forbidding the establishment of separate schools in the Northwest, I would combat that proposal to the end, because I would consider it as absolutely in the conflict with the provincial rights which I desire to see maintained. I take this stand because I believe that not only in the light of the constitution, but in the light of the highest wisdom and statesmanship, education should be left absolutely to the control of the people of the new provinces.

Sir, in 1896—to refer again for one moment to the Manitoba school question—the constitution had been interpreted by the highest courts of the land. One decision had declared that Manitoba had absolute jurisdiction over education, except as controlled by section 22 of the Manitoba Act. (And, in referring to the Manitoba Act, let us remember that it has all the force of imperial legislation because it was found necessary, almost immediately to have it validated by imperial statute and it was validated by the British North America Act of 1871.) Another decision declared that parliament had power to enact remedial legislation. A remedial order was made by the Conservative government; and a remedial measure was introduced into this parliament by that government. My right hon. friend (Sir Wilfrid Laurier) fought against it. At his right hand he had Mr. Tarte, who then represented in this House the constituency of L'Islet, who I believe, expressed sincerely the strong views he entertained on this question. At his left, was Mr. Dalton McCarthy, to whom at least the same tribute is due. And between these was the right hon. gentleman (Sir Wilfrid Laurier), willing to accept the support of both. Like the three Romans who went forth to hold the bridge, these gentlemen went forth to hold the breach. Mr. McCarthy had upon his shield the device, 'No coercion; provincial rights.' Mr. Tarte had upon his shield the device 'The rights of minorities; equal justice to all.' The right hon. gentleman had on one side of his shield the device of Mr. McCarthy, and on the other the device of Mr. Tarte.—I do not know which side he called the silvern and which side he called the golden; at all events the shield was thus exhibited. The

general election came on, and, as I have said, the Conservative administration was defeated. In the maritime provinces a strong campaign was made, especially in the province of Nova Scotia, by my hon. friend the Minister of Finance (Mr. Fielding), with the war-cry 'provincial rights; no coercion of Manitoba.' In the west the same campaign was carried on by my hon. friend the ex-Minister of the Interior (Mr. Sifton). In Haldimand, in Winnipeg and in many other places throughout the west, 'No coercion of Manitoba' was the battle cry of that hon. gentleman, the ally and friend of the right hon. Prime Minister (Sir Wilfrid Laurier). And, Sir, what was all the storm about at that time? Had there been any attempt to violate the constitution? No; it was simply a question of policy. The highest court of the realm had declared the right of this government to make a remedial order and of this parliament to enact remedial legislation. Undoubtedly, remedial legislation was within the terms of the constitution. Well, by an overwhelming majority, the people of Canada rendered this verdict, a verdict which has been twice confirmed, if confirmation were needed—in 1900 and in 1904. That verdict declared that even within the terms of the constitution there should be no coercion of a province in respect of its control over educational matters.

Sir, the Conservative party was not unanimous on the question at that time. It was in the very nature of things that it would not be unanimous. Nor was there absolute unanimity among the Liberals of that day. The great majority of the Conservatives believed in the constitutional rights of the minority, and they stood by those rights at great risk and great cost to themselves. Men supported that Remedial Bill who knew that their action in so doing would debar them from future participation in the public life of Canada. The sacrifice was great, but it was not too great for many members who sincerely believed in the wisdom of enacting that legislation, who even went further and believed it to be the absolute duty of parliament to enact that legislation as proposed by the Conservative administration. And there were equally sincere men in the ranks of the Conservative party who combated that proposal, and, in the end, their position was sustained by the verdict of the country, brought about, in very great measure I believe, by the eloquent addresses of my right hon. friend (Sir Wilfrid Laurier) in favour of provincial rights—addresses which were re-echoed in Ontario, in the maritime provinces and in the west by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Fielding) by the Postmaster General (Sir William Mulock), by the ex-Minister of the Interior (Mr. Sifton), by the Minister of Customs (Mr. Paterson) and many other gentlemen on that side of the House.

Well, after the elections my right hon. friend stood forth as the champion of the