sooner or later, this question had to be settled upon the broad basis of local autonomy.

Referring to Mr. Beausoleil, a former member of this House, he said :

I know he is acting for the best interests of his country, according to his lights, and I am sure he will give me credit that in voting as I shall have to do with the government on this question, I do so not out of any love to the government, but with the conviction that in so doing I am acting in the best interest of my party and my country.

The resolution to which I have referred was followed by legislation in 1891, which practically re-enacted the Act of 1881 which I have just quoted, but added to it the following proviso :

Provided, however, that after the next general election of the legislative assembly, such assembly may, by ordinance or otherwise, regulate its proceedings and the manner of recording and publishing the same and the regulations so made shall be embodied in a proclamation which shall be forthwith made and published by the lieutenant governor in conformity with the law, and thereafter shall have full force and effect.

The result of that was that on the 19th of January, 1892, it was moved in the Northwest assembly by Mr. Haultain, seconded by Mr. Tweed, and resolved :

That it is desirable that the proceedings of the legislative assembly shall be recorded and published hereafter in the English language only.

As I said before, if the Act of 1875 was a solemn compact, why have we not in this Bill some provision for preventing the provinces from abolishing the French language? Why have we not some provision for enforcing the compact made in 1881, which, if we are to regard the Act of 1875 as a compact, is equally binding upon us ? Our position is to apply the constitution and abide loyally by the result. This position is regarded in some quarters as intolerant, but it is infinitely more tolerant than those who rail against it.

It is said by some in this House—not by the Minister of Justice, he would be the last to say it—that the enactment of section 16 in the form in which we have it to-day will prevent any litigation or contest in the courts as to its meaning. Nothing more ridiculous could emanate from the mouth of any hon. gentleman in this House. The constitution has been interpreted by the courts, I suppose, a thousand times since 1867. I am sure it has been interpreted in the courts of my own little province at least a hundred times. It will continue to be interpreted by our courts. The complexity of human, of national affairs, is so great that it is absolutely impossible to make in any written constitution everything so absolutely plain that we shall not have recourse to the courts. The history of the United States for 130 years, the history of our own country for thirty-five years, gives ample proof of what I am saying. Those who speak of preventing recourse to the courts do not understand what they are talking about or they have very little knowledge of the extent to which our courts have been appealed to for the purpose of interpreting the constitution.

As far as I am concerned, I am prepared to stand by every compact. I am reminded by the presence of my hon. friend from Labelle (Mr. Bourassa) that he rather misquoted me in making some observations on my speech on the second reading. He said I referred to a written contract. I did not use the word 'written.' I said I was prepared to stand by any compact. When my hon. friend, the Minister of Inland Revenue (Mr. Brodeur) endeavoured to point out a certain compact by which we were bound I asked him this question :

What I would like to know is whether the hon. gentleman contends that in this compact to which he has just referred, and which was made in London, there is anything which is not also in the British North America Act.

He replied no, there was not. Well, Sir, the position of myself and of those who think as I do in this regard is that the whole compact is in the British North America Act, and that we do full justice to all rights—to the rights of the majority as well as those of the minority—when we apply that Act to the new provinces.

My hon. friend, the Minister of Justice, was good enough, for the purpose of convenience, to place in my hands an opinion prepared, as I understand, by his deputy minister—a very able lawyer, for whose opinion both the Minister of Justice and myself have the highest possible regard—with regard, not to clause No. 16 which we are now discussing, but clause 15, and with regard to certain criticisms which I made upon the language of that section. I observe that my hon. friend, the Deputy Minister of Justice, considered that the criticisms which were made by myself and others on that clause were based on what he regards as a misunderstanding. That may be quite true, but I think there is also a misunderstanding upon the part of the deputy minister. That gentleman failed to realize that when we are dealing with clause 16 or clause 15 or any other clause of this Bill, we must in the end, on this side of the House, direct our criticism towards such amendment as will, according to the views of the law officers of the Crown, bring about the results we desire. We may have our own views as to what the clause is, but in the end the government will insist that the opinion of the law officers of the Crown shall guide them,—and properly so. No government could be administered on any other principle. Therefore the ultimate criticism which we may make upon clause 15 or clause 16 or any other clause, must naturally and necessarily