

not the first insinuation he has made against the Roman Catholic church in this country. And, Sir, although gentlemen on the other side of the House from the province of Quebec cheered and applauded the member for Brandon when he was making his speech in this House, they did not avail of the occasion to repudiate some of the statements which that very gentleman has made in the past. I have the honour to represent the county of Haldimand, and speaking at Caledonia in that county on April the 12th, 1895, Mr. Sifton, then Attorney General of Manitoba, made the following statement :

During the last 100 years wherever you find a constitutional Act prepared of an originating character, you will find that something is drawn that indicates the hand of the clergy is there. The language may be the language of a Canadian politician, but in every case the voice is the voice of the church.

That was the opinion of the member for Brandon expressed in the county of Haldimand in 1895, so that I think I am safe in saying that when the hon. gentleman spoke of the provisions of this clause being the fruit of the draughtsman here referred to the head of the Roman Catholic church in this country. These gentlemen opposite talk to us about intolerance, but I do not believe that an assertion such as that made by the member for Brandon (Mr. Sifton) has ever come from this side of the House during this debate.

When the right hon. the Prime Minister introduced this Bill into the House he told us he was standing on the rock of the constitution, but when the leader of the opposition, that great constitutional lawyer—probably the greatest constitutional lawyer in Canada—got through with his argument on this Bill, I think the right hon. gentleman found himself in deep water, and from that time until now he has been trying to find where the rock of the constitution is. The leader of the opposition completely shattered the arguments of the Prime Minister, and we have had proof of the fact that the government themselves thought that their arguments from a constitutional standpoint were wrong, because when the Minister of Finance addressed the House he told us that he did not advocate the measure from the constitutional standpoint but because it was a measure of equity and justice. He completely deserted the constitutional standpoint taken by his leader. We are told by the new Minister of the Interior (Mr. Oliver) and by others of his supporters here, that the people of the west do not want their lands, but that they would rather the federal government would keep these lands and give the provinces an annuity instead. Can you imagine a son saying to his father who is about to make his last will and testament—I am not insinuating that this government is doing that although it probably will result that way—

Mr. LALOR.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. Some day or other.

Mr. J. D. REID. Very soon.

Mr. LALOR. Imagine a son saying to his father: You have lands, minerals and timber; your estate is a valuable one, which any one might feel proud of owning; but, father, I do not want you to give me that splendid estate that naturally comes to me as an only child; I want you to give it to some trust company or to some gentleman who will give me an annuity of so much per year in lieu of it. Can you imagine a son saying that to his father? Why, the son who would say that would be either a most profligate son, or he must believe that he would wantonly waste the lands and the minerals and the timber if they were given to him. I would ask hon. gentlemen opposite from the province of Ontario, and from the province of Quebec as well, if they would stand up in this House and advocate that the Dominion government take away the lands and the minerals and the timber from those provinces and give them an annuity in return? Neither the province of Ontario nor the province of Quebec would tolerate such a thing, because they think they can handle their own lands and minerals and timber, as they have done in the past, and as they are doing to-day. The position of those two provinces in the Northwest is the same as that of Ontario and Quebec in this respect, and the members who stand up in this House and advocate that measure are not consistent, and are advocating what I do not think they believe themselves; but for some ulterior motive they are willing to keep from those vast provinces the territory which naturally belongs to them.

Hon. gentlemen opposite tell us that there is no feeling in the west in regard to the control of the lands—that the only objection is to the school clauses of this Bill. I have in my hand an account of a meeting held at Medicine Hat. The chairman of that meeting was a very prominent Liberal, and one of the most active gentlemen there was the Liberal member for the district in the provincial House. The meeting passed resolutions most condemnatory of this government and this Bill, especially for the school clauses and the part relating to the lands. I will not weary the House by reading these resolutions, but if any of the hon. members opposite would like to hear them, I would be only too glad to do so.

We are told that the fact that the present Minister of the Interior, the member for Edmonton (Mr. Oliver), has been elected by acclamation is evidence that there is no opposition in the west to this Bill, but that the people there are perfectly satisfied with it. But I think that of all the acts of cowardice on the part of this government, there is none so great as their appointment of the member for Edmonton to the position