

Ontario and maritime provinces, were separated by long distances. The two groups which were geographically united, Ontario and Quebec, were separated by the deeper cleavage of difference of origin. In all there was a strong sense of local pride, in all there was a strong assertion of self interest, and in all there were peculiar institutions as to the security of which all dreaded to be launched into the unknown. This was particularly true of education in Lower Canada and in Upper Canada. In Lower Canada the Protestant minority had long enjoyed their own system of separate schools. In Upper Canada the Roman Catholic minority had just secured a similar system. These two minorities feared that in the new constitution, under the separation of legislative powers which must ensue, the rights of each might be put in jeopardy by a hostile majority. The minority of Lower Canada felt perfectly secure under the then existing condition of things because those of their own creed and race were in the majority in United Canada. The Roman Catholic minority in Upper Canada feared also the constitution because it would be deprived of the powerful alliance of those of their own origin in another province. Under such circumstances, what was to be done? How could a scheme of confederation be devised so as to ensure the support of all parties and sections of the community? It is useless to speculate as to what might have been done. It is sufficient to say that means were found to insure to the minority in each province, the free exercise of its rights, and that means was to declare that in the provinces of Upper and Lower Canada, the rights of the minority, which were to be entrusted to the respective legislatures of these provinces, were to be above the control of the majority. Let me recall to the House the Quebec resolutions which were adopted and which were the basis and the charter under which the Canadian parliament now lives and the Canadian nation has been formed. Section 93 of the Quebec resolutions states as follows, and I pray you, Sir, mark the language :—

The local legislatures shall have power to make laws respecting the following subjects :—

1. Direct taxation, and in New Brunswick the imposition of duties on the export of timber, logs, masts, spars, deals and sawn lumber ; and in Nova Scotia, of coals and other minerals.
2. Borrowing money on the credit of the province.
3. The establishment and tenure of local offices, and the appointment and payment of local officers.
4. Agriculture.
5. Immigration.
6. Education ; saving the rights and privileges which the Protestant or Catholic minority in both Canadas may possess as to their denominational schools at the time when the union goes into operation.

Again I say, mark the language. The
Sir WILFRID LAURIER.

legislatures of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Quebec and Ontario were given the power to make laws for the following purposes :

- Direct taxation.
- Borrowing money.
- The establishment and tenure of local office.
- Agriculture and colonization.

Upon all these subjects their powers are unlimited and they can do as they please, without any check, except their responsibility to the people of their respective provinces. Then on the subject of education the legislatures of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick can do as they please and are not responsible to any one except to the people. But when we come to the provinces of Ontario and Quebec, we find that the powers of these two provinces are limited as regards education. Neither the legislature of Ontario nor that of Quebec was given power to pass any law which might prejudicially affect the rights of the minority in either province. So long as this constitution endures the schools of the minority in Quebec and Ontario must likewise endure. Yet, remarkable as is this enactment, it is perhaps still more remarkable, if we remember that one of the men who assented to this limitation to the power of the province of Ontario was Mr. George Brown himself—Mr. George Brown who said again and again that he was opposed to separate schools, who had carried on a crusade of years against separate schools in his province. If you look only at the surface of things, without trying to find the inspiration, it is indeed remarkable that Mr. Brown, who, with Sir John Macdonald was the central figure, agreed that the powers of the legislature of his own province should be limited in that respect. We need not marvel if Mr. Brown was attacked and assailed for the action he then took. He was assailed perhaps by some of his own disciples whom he had taught to object to separate schools as strongly as he did himself. Mr. Brown defended his course in the confederation debate, or rather he explained his policy, because he was under no necessity to defend his course ; and I beg on this occasion to commend his language to those who to-day have forgotten confederation, when he came to discuss the 43rd resolution. He spoke as follows :—

The people of Upper Canada will have another legislature for their local matters and will no longer have to betake themselves to Quebec for leave to open a road, to select a county town, or appoint a coroner. But I am told that to this general principle of placing all local matters under local control, an exception has been made in regard to the common schools. (Hear, hear.)

The clause complained of is as follows :—

6. Education, saving the rights and privileges which the Protestant or Catholic minority in both Canadas may possess as to their denominational schools at the time when the union goes into operation.