

Upon this point I might go further. On a previous occasion I spoke at some length on this point, and I will not go over the same ground again. However, it may not be inopportune on this occasion to inquire what is the history of clause 93 in the British North America Act, how did it become a part of the British North America Act? Sir, we live in an age of such intense excitement, we are moving with such rapidity, our lives are so much engaged in business occupations, that history is very soon forgotten, and what is the event of to-day is forgotten history to-morrow. It may not therefore be inopportune to look into the causes which led to the introduction of this section of 93 into the British North America Act. It was introduced at the suggestion of Mr. Galt, in the interest of the Protestant minority of the province of Quebec, at a time when he was champion and representative of that minority in the old parliament of Canada. I have quoted on a former occasion, and I may be permitted to quote again, the language of the Quebec resolutions which formed the embryo of section 93 of the British North America Act. We find that section 43 of the Quebec resolutions, concludes as follows:

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

That was section 43 which guaranteed separate schools both in Ontario and Quebec, but did not go further. Now, Sir, it is a matter of history that the Protestant minority in Quebec at that time was not altogether satisfied with their condition under the system of separate schools such as it was. They wanted the system extended and improved, and they wanted this to be done before confederation, so that under the new constitution the rights and privileges secured to the Protestant minority could not be interfered with by the new legislature of Quebec. Mr. Galt, who at that time as I said was the champion of the Protestant minority in the province of Quebec, and was also a member of the government of that day, spoke upon that subject at a meeting held in the town of Sherbrooke which he represented in parliament. In the month of October, 1864, just a few months after the Quebec resolutions had been adopted by the conference, Mr. Galt used the following language:

He would now endeavour to speak somewhat fully as to one of the most important questions, perhaps the most important that could be confined to the legislature, the question of education. This was a question in which, in Lower Canada, they must all feel the greatest interest, and in respect to which more misapprehension might be supposed to exist in the minds, at any rate of the Protestant population, than in regard to anything else connected with the whole scheme of confederation.

It must be clear that a measure would not be favourably entertained by the majority of Lower Canada which would place the education of their children and the provision for their schools, wholly in the hands of a majority of a different faith. It was clear that in confiding the general subject to the local legislatures it was absolutely necessary it should be accompanied with such restrictions as would prevent injustice in any respect from being done to the minority.

Now, this applied to Lower Canada, but it also applied, and with equal force, to Upper Canada and the other provinces; for in Lower Canada there was a Protestant minority, and in the other provinces a Roman Catholic minority. The same privileges belong to the one of right here, as belonged to the other of right elsewhere. There could be no greater injustice to a population than to compel them to have their children educated in a manner contrary to their own religious belief.

It had been stipulated that the question was to be made subject to the rights and privileges which the minorities might have as to their separate and denominational schools. There had been grave difficulties surrounding the separate school question in Upper Canada, but they were all settled now, and with regard to the separate school system of Lower Canada, it was the determination of the government to bring down a measure for the amendment of the school laws before the confederation was allowed to go into force. He made this statement, because as the clause was worded in the printed resolution, it would appear that the school law, as it at present existed, was to be continued.

Now, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Galt undertook that the school law would be amended in the following session. In the following session, that was the session of 1865, the resolutions of the Quebec conference were discussed in the legislature of Canada but no school Bill was introduced to amend the law of Lower Canada. Complaint was made to the House by Mr. Holton and others and a measure was promised the following year. In the following year, that was the year before confederation, a school Bill was introduced giving to the Protestant minority much more power than they had then and giving to them the powers which they have now and which have been given them since by the legislature of the province of Quebec. Amongst the dispositions of that measure were the following:

The superior education will comprise the universities and the classical and industrial colleges or seminaries, and the provincial aid thereto, as well as that for academies, shall be annually divided between the Roman Catholic and Protestant institutions in proportion to the respective Roman Catholic and Protestant population according to the then last census.

Another section reads:

Whenever four of the Protestant members of the Council of Public Instruction for Lower Canada shall be of opinion that the management of the Protestant schools should be distinct and separate from that of the Catholic schools, they may make known that opinion under their respective signatures to the government through the Provincial Secretary.