

ing that nobody has pleaded in French in the courts of the Northwest Territories for some years. Well, we are not making a temporary law here, nor are we making a law for the few French Canadians that are now there. We are making a law for all time to come, and why not leave the door open so that when the number of French Canadians will be increased there, they will find on the statute-books a provision for the use of their language which they can avail of. Why not give to these few French settlers, poor as they may be, the right to plead before the courts of their country in their own language. In the Yukon Territory, which is under the same law as the Northwest Territories, a year ago an attempt was made by a judge to prevent a man giving his testimony in French, and the judge was obliged to be reminded that the man had that right under the law of the land. Why should we not be protected against the same danger in future? Well, Mr. Chairman, I go further; even if I should be exposed to the danger I have been exposed to during the last few days of being called a French demagogue, I am going to move an amendment to the motion of my hon. friend (Mr. Monk), and it is in these words:

That all the words in the said amendment beginning with the word 'provided' be struck out.

My object is clear and plain. I want the law to be as it was in 1877. I want the law to be as it is in the province of Quebec. I want the law to be as it is for this Dominion parliament. If the parliament of 1890 forgot the intention of the framers of our federal constitution and of the Northwest Territories constitution, that is no reason why now when we are legislating for the future we should not put into the constitution of the provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan the same provision as was inserted in the constitution of the province of Manitoba. I have extended my remarks longer than I intended, because it seems to me that this is a most important matter, for it will have its effect upon the teaching of French in the schools. I have always known that there was no guarantee given us by law with regard to the teaching of French, but there are other guarantees than are to be found in the actual text of the law. If we make the French language one of the official languages of the provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan it will be a further reason why French speaking fathers of families will, especially in separate schools, teach French to their children. In fact, one of the reasons that were given in 1893 against the ordinances of 1892 was, that it was against the spirit of the constitution of these Territories to abolish the teaching of a language which was acknowledged as an official language by the constitution of that country. I therefore say that for the pro-

tection of the children as well as to uphold the principles laid down as the basis of our constitution, we should without restriction and without equivocation make the French language one of the official languages of these provinces, and nobody will suffer by it. Neither the English-speaking majority nor the British Crown will be impaired by that—I will not say by that concession—but by the acknowledgment of that principle which is a basic principle of our constitution.

Mr. SPROULE. I shall occupy but a few moments dealing with this question because it seems to me that in this age of the world it will not be necessary to defend at length the stand which I intend to take. I do not agree with the hon. member (Mr. Bourassa) either in his logic or his conclusions, both of which were much at fault. I happen to find myself to-night—it is a very rare thing indeed—in agreement, with the leader of the government on a question of this kind. We were together in 1896 on the great question of provincial rights, and we are together to-night on this question of the French language. Let me express the hope that before this Bill goes through the right hon. gentleman will come back to his position of 1896 in defence of provincial rights, and then we will be absolutely in accord; but I am afraid he is like the Indian who lost his wigwam. The hon. gentleman (Mr. Monk) who introduced the motion said: That in pursuance of a solemn agreement entered into when Rupert's Land was acquired we should continue the French language in that territory. I have not a very religious regard for these solemn agreements that we have heard so much about for the last few weeks?

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. We have known that for some time.

Mr. SPROULE. Yes, and you agree with me to-night in that regard because you expressed exactly the same sentiments which I express. That sentiment is, that if we are to do what is right we must deal with conditions as we find them, and that although at one time the French people in the Northwest Territories might have been in the majority, they are to-day only four per cent of the population, so that it is absolutely useless and needless to maintain the French language so far as the requirements of the people in that country are concerned. There might be something in favour of the argument that we should give an official language to the Germans or to the Russians because they are increasing more rapidly in proportion to the population, while the French are decreasing in proportion to the increase of other nationalities.

Mr. BOURASSA. The French people are increasing very rapidly in proportion to the population. They were only two per cent