

member on behalf of provincial autonomy ; such are his tender mercies towards the provinces.

There is also the question of vested rights. In 1875, parliament passed a law granting a temporary constitution to the Northwest Territories, and by that constitution parliament declared that certain rights granted to the minority would be for ever assured to them. The rights of the Catholic minority were recognized by representatives of a different religious belief, and it was Mr. Blake himself who brought up the question. That same policy was confirmed, in 1880, by the Conservative government of the time. It was enacted once more that the Catholic population would have their separate schools, and parliament is to-day bound in honour to continue that system. The government itself through its officers has declared that the Dominion of Canada had guaranteed that right to the minority. I find the proof of this in a pamphlet published by the Department of Agriculture for the information of those who wish to settle in the west. The following is an extract :

THE GREAT CANADIAN WEST.

Information for those who wish to immigrate, published by the Department of Agriculture, Ottawa, 1881.

The settler, before leaving, does not only take into account the material advantages offered by the country wherein he wishes to make are the political and religious institutions of his home. He is also desirous of knowing what the community in whose midst he is to live.

It is in order to satisfy that legitimate curiosity that we propose giving, from that standpoint definite information as regards the position in Manitoba. The institutions which exist in that province will be more or less models to be copied by the other provinces of the great Canadian West when they come to be organized.

EDUCATION.

The school system is copied on that of the province of Quebec, that is to say that Catholics have full control and management of their schools, while Protestants have the same rights, the same privileges.

Such were the assurances given to immigrants in 1881. Not only did the government of Canada assure them of the existence of a good law ; but it pledged itself to maintain these same rights on behalf of the minority when these future provinces would be constituted.

Mr. Speaker, in the course of this debate, we have often heard about provincial rights ; but we have heard very little about other rights of much more value, I mean individual rights. Among those privileges which, in England, Simon de Montfort and the other Norman barons forced King John to grant them in that Magna Charta so dear to the English heart, was not personal liberty the most precious of all ? And why was that personal liberty so dear to the English people ? It was because they, even at that time understood the true principles

which have since prevailed in the government of progressive nations. However, we still find to-day people who are prone to return to the old notions which were current in the days of tyranny. 'I have here a letter published in one of the city newspapers against separate schools, under the signature of a man of some education. In support of his view, he quotes Aristotle, in the following words : 'The state, as regards its citizens, plays the part of an educator. It strives to regulate their actions. The most despicable of states is that which lets each one live according to his fancy. . . . Education should be public and common'. Such, Mr. Speaker, was the tyrannical system of the Ancients. The Spartans, in the interest of the commonwealth, deprived the head of a family of his children when they were seven years old ; a kind of broth was to be the only nourishment of all ; strict regulations were enacted on all subjects. The individual was nothing ; the commonwealth was all. As a result, Sparta ruled over Greece, but left a hateful name in history.

However, there appeared a man in the world's history who changed all these conditions. He abolished slavery ; he declared that personal liberty was a boon of greater value than political rights. Of what use is it to me to have a vote in parliament, if I am not the master in my own house, the master on my own property, if I have not control over my children ? The father of a family is intent in transmitting to his child not only his name and his property, but also, and particularly, his traditions, those beliefs which were imparted to him on his mother's knee. That is the most sacred inheritance. Personal liberty has precedence over provincial rights.

How could a nation be happy if that liberty is not safeguarded ? That principle had been well grasped by the fathers of confederation. Anxious as they were to guarantee the rights of the individual, they chose that system of federal union.

What the fathers of confederation desired, Mr. Speaker, was it not to preserve for each one of us, his tongue, his faith, in a word his individuality ? These great men believed that if Providence had allowed the representatives of the two greatest nationalities in Europe to be partners in the ownership of these lands, it was not for us to pretend to be wiser. They believed that happiness reigns in a country when the individual rights of each citizen are safeguarded. They believed that the Roman wisdom of the Englishman, combined with the Athenian genius of the Frenchman would ensure to this country not only peace and wealth, but also lasting glory when the hour would come for us to take a seat at the banquet of sovereign nations.

Mr. J. G. H. BERGERON (Beauharnois). Mr. Speaker, I have listened with pleasure to the argument of my hon. friend (Mr.