

the part of others than to snatch at popular favour at the expense of the better judgment of the country—I say that perhaps through the turmoil, passions and prejudices we have been passing through for the last month, too many Canadian citizens and Canadian representatives have unfortunately forgotten the important duty they have to perform, and what will be the result of that duty. Sir, we should not forget that those Territories for which we are now legislating will probably contain within half a century or a century, one-half the population of Canada; therefore if we have any interest in what is going to be the future of our common land, we should be very careful of all the articles of this piece of legislation, as well as of the comments we make upon them.

It is not my intention to discuss at any length, or even to discuss at all, the other features of this Bill, but this one clause so much commented upon—I mean the school question. However, I may say in passing that I thoroughly agree with the position that was taken by the government on the land question. Starting from the same point of view I have just stated, namely, that we must put the stamp of Canadian nationality on these Territories, I think it was the duty of the federal government to retain within their powers the right to legislate over the granting of the lands upon which one half of the population of Canada will be called upon at no distant period to live and to prosper. Although I have the greatest confidence in the public spirit and patriotism of the men who are now at the head of public affairs in the Northwest Territories, I say that before long the time may come when they will not be powerful enough to resist the pressure of the newcomers into that country, men that have perhaps no interest in the unity of Canada, who are not attached to the soil of Canada, who have had no part in the past history of Canada, and who, therefore, by numerical strength, may try to force some obnoxious legislation on the government of these Territories. I say, therefore, that for the protection of the Northwest, for the protection of the present representatives of the Northwest, for the protection of the statesmanship of the men who are now at the head of affairs there, it was good policy on the part of the government to retain the control and administration of the public lands in the Northwest.

Now, coming to the question that has occupied the field of discussion for the last month, I may say that I intend to discuss it from a threefold point of view: from the constitutional point of view, from the religious point of view and from the national point of view. In doing so I shall, as it is my custom, express frankly and clearly what I believe to be true, and in doing so I hope that I shall not offend any man in this House, because every man who is attached to his convictions will understand that in this free parliament of ours every true con-

viction should be frankly and sincerely expressed. I may say at once that if there is a regrettable feature in all this discussion, it is not that passions have been aroused, it is not that prejudices have been raised. I entirely agree with the Prime Minister when he says that many of the passions that are now aroused spring from one of the noblest feelings in humanity, they come from an exaggeration, or from a perversion, of that which constitutes the most stable basis of a nation, namely, attachment to religious creed and attachment to national feeling. The men who are committing a crime against this nation are those who, having opinions of their own, are trying to shelter themselves under a constitutional pretense. The great argument which is being used by the opponents of this measure is, I may say, the shibboleth of provincial rights. Now, Sir, there is no man in this parliament who is more attached to provincial rights than I am. I am the descendant of a race that has claimed provincial rights for many years, and just because I am a sincere adherent of provincial rights, I say that if provincial rights are going to be maintained in this country, they cannot be maintained on any sham basis, they can only be maintained on a basis of equal justice to every part of our population and every section, from the Atlantic to the Pacific. What are provincial rights as they relate to the school question? I am not going into an acute analysis of every word and every letter in the text of the law, though I am not afraid to take up the study of the constitutional question with any man. But I think that once in a while when lawyers get into a muddle about small points of law, sometimes a cool and common sense outsider may throw a little light upon common truths that are too much forgotten by lawyers.

A few days ago the Prime Minister gave to this House a short history of one clause contained in our national constitution, that clause relating to school matters. But to my mind, if I may be permitted to say so, when a motion was made in this House in 1893 by the late Minister of Public Works, then the member for L'Islet, the Prime Minister gave a still clearer and more complete history of the educational policy of Canada, he gave us the true origin of clause 93 of the British North America Act. What was that origin? That although for a century the Protestant minority in the province of Quebec had been treated, not only in the most just, but also in the most generous manner, still that minority was averse to joining the confederation compact unless their privileges and rights in the province of Quebec were made absolutely secure. Thereupon it was proposed that the same measure of guarantee which was asked by the Protestant minority of Quebec should be given to the Catholic minority in the province of Ontario and the other provinces. Now, Sir, I am bound to say that there was at that