

the hon. member for Jacques Cartier laying down a proposition to restrict the rights of these provinces, rights that are evidently recognized as theirs by the British North America Act.

The hon. member stated also that we were abolishing the French language; but we are not doing away with the French language, and it will continue to exist by law. But that is not the issue before us; what we are dealing with now, is whether or not we should place a restriction upon the liberty of the provinces. That is the question. It is now a matter of formulating the principle that this parliament has not the right to enact without any necessity, special provisions, when making a constitution for the new provinces.

Now, the hon. member for Jacques Cartier after having upheld that position and having also supported his leader, even to the school question, was obliged to abandon him. The hon. leader of the opposition had, likewise, followed the hon. member as long as he could do so, he paid him back, he supported him down to the moment of voting exclusively, but there his zeal stopped.

The hon. gentleman having advocated the principle that we had not the power to give the new provinces the constitution we wanted to give them, exclaimed: 'Why, if you restrict the power of the provinces on the school question, why not also do the same as to all their powers'? We made answer to this, that it was necessity alone that could justify the government in defining more clearly clause 93 of the constitution.

Now, the hon. member for Labelle stated that, in his opinion, this motion did not go far enough, and he moved an amendment to the amendment. The hon. member for Jacques Cartier claimed that the legislature should have the power to abolish the French language in its proceedings, as enacted in the motion passed in 1890. He considered that it was a question of policy and that the legislature should be left free to deal with the question as it deemed fit. The hon. member for Labelle wished to take that power away from the legislatures, and yet the hon. member for Jacques Cartier supported the amendment moved by the hon. member for Labelle. But if the hon. gentleman (Mr. Monk) was of the opinion that it was but fair to leave it in the hands of the legislatures to abolish or to maintain the French language, what are the grounds which have compelled him, since he moved his amendment, to change his mind?

In 1890, the hon. member for Beauharnois voted in favour of a proposition similar to that of the hon. member for Jacques Cartier, allowing the legislative assembly of the Territories to abolish the use of the French language in their proceedings, whenever they shall deem it opportune to do so. He voted for that resolution, with all the Conservative members of the day. How,

then, could he vote for the amendment of the hon. member for Labelle, as he did the other day?

Mr. MONK. (Translation.) Does my hon. friend believe that we are not bound by clause 16 of the 'Bill of Rights' submitted by the delegates from the Red River settlement in 1870 to the government of Canada, which provides for the use of the dual language throughout the whole extent of the Northwest? Does not the hon. member believe that the pledge is being now broken by the abolition of the French language.

Mr. DEMERS. (Translation.) I think the hon. the Prime Minister, amongst others, has demonstrated in a most absolute manner that the contention of my hon. friend from Jacques Cartier was indefensible. I do not wish to go now into the merits of that question. This question had been discussed by this parliament in 1900 and this House has allowed the abolition of the French language in the Northwest. The legislature of those Territories had been authorized by a vote of this House to do away with the French language. A most significant fact, that cannot escape the attention of most members is this, that when the Bill was submitted to this House, the vast majority of members approved of it. Take the speeches that were delivered during the debate on the second reading of the Bill, and you will see, Mr. Speaker, that not one of all those who spoke has found fault with the government for not providing for the use of the French language in the legislatures of the new provinces.

I would like to know if among all those members, who then spoke, there was to be found one single speaker who made the slightest reservation in favour of the French language. For my part I did not hear any. Did not my hon. friend the member for Montmagny (Mr. Lavergne), give his unqualified approval of the Bill to the 21st February?

Mr. A. LAVERGNE. (Translation.) On the school question, I did approve of the Bill, but not on the use of the French language.

Mr. DEMERS. (Translation.) I say that there was no question of the French language, that no complaint was made that its use was not prescribed, and I affirm that no member, before voting on the second reading, had made any reservation on that point, nor blamed the government for not having provided for the use of the French language. Moreover, how comes it, that the 'Club Jacques-Cartier' of Montreal, which showed so much zeal in regard to this Bill, that had petitions circulated, did not think of that omission of the government? And the Conservative newspapers, I will say further, the opposition newspapers such as the 'Nationaliste,' for example, did not think of that slip. The correspondent