

from the beginning, and concluded in what I would call a very eloquent peroration in favour of the maintenance of those rights. Now, Sir, I will not detain the House unduly, I merely wanted to show what is the basis of the legislation which has existed in Manitoba and the Northwest Territories—which formerly were Rupert's Land—from the very beginning, and what was the cause of that legislation. I would have added more had time permitted. I would have quoted from a book published by a very eminent lawyer, Mr. Ewart, in which this matter, as well as the school question, is gone into at great length, with documents and evidence; indeed, Mr. Chairman, evidence is necessary to show to what a shameful extent, to use the very words of Mr. Ewart, those rights so carefully stipulated for in 1870 and so well safeguarded ever since, have been invaded. It is a painful story of treachery and bad faith, there is no other qualification. Pleading before the Privy Council on behalf of the minority whose lawyer he was, Mr. Ewart stated that he would be ashamed to bear the name of a British subject if the redress which he was then seeking was not granted to the minority.

In truth, when one examines with care what has taken place, one really questions how it will be possible for people, having entered into that agreement, solemnly and carefully, and having maintained it for a time, to break it and explain their conduct. I think, Sir, that is sufficient justification for me to bring this matter before the committee and to ask that that faith which is so essential, which has been claimed as such a characteristic of British fair-play and British government, should be maintained in these Bills. Objections have been urged. Strange to say, I have seen the objection that this was a matter in which needless expense would be caused to the new province. Why, Mr. Chairman, to invoke the question of expense or of convenience where rights have been guaranteed and where it is our duty, here in this parliament, to see that this agreement is maintained is, it seems to me, to raise a pusillanimous objection. It was urged in the debate of 1890 and Sir Hector Langevin, speaking upon that point, stated that from statistics furnished to him the expense as regards the French language during the previous ten years—and he was speaking then at a time when everything had to be translated, when the work was more considerable than it is proposed to make it under this law—had averaged \$400 a year. I submit to this committee that the sum of \$500 or \$600 a year is a small price to pay to maintain the solemn promise which we made in 1890 and to see maintained in the Northwest Territories the language of Bosquet, Fénélon, Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, and of the more modern writers of France, and the language which is used in diploma-

Mr. MONK.

cy throughout the world to-day. It is a small price to pay to maintain this language in those remote provinces that have a future before them and to maintain the traditions of the men who discovered that great western territory and of the first settlers who went up there, of La Verendrye and the other courageous discoverers of the Rocky mountains who were the first settlers in that region, and when their descendants were called upon with the advance of events and with the progress of civilization to give up the control of that country to the Dominion government they stipulated with the Crown of England and stipulated with ourselves that that constitutional provision should remain guaranteed to them, not for a specific time but for all time throughout these Territories. There has been the objection raised also that the vast majority of the people in those Territories speak a different language. I will not answer that objection because it does not seem to me to be an objection which can be urged against the amendment which I have the honour to submit to this committee. People have gone so far as to say that if this particular constitutional guarantee is maintained in favour of the French language we should grant it equally to the Russian settlers, to the Doukhobors and to the Icelanders. But the members of this committee must see that the position of the French language in that country is a very different one from that of the languages of these other people, because these people are modern immigrants who have recently gone into that country. The others were the pioneers of the country and, as I stated before, they obtained that guarantee which to us ought to be sacred. Besides, there are thousands of the descendants of these men in that country, and even if they were fewer, still I consider that that fact has nothing to do with the duty which we have to perform here. From the remarks which were made by my hon. friend the Minister of Justice I inferred that he was of the opinion that this might be considered a local law after the creation of these provinces, and that under section 15 of the Act being a purely local matter, it might legitimately be legislated upon by the new legislature. If there is a danger of other people taking the same view as that of the hon. Minister of Justice I think that is all the more reason for us, if there is any validity in the arguments I have presented to the committee, making the necessary provision to guard against such a contingency. But, is it a local matter? Can it be said that this agreement which covered the whole of Rupert's Land, that this law which has applied for the last thirty years to these two provinces and which also concerned the province of Manitoba, the maintenance of which not only concerns the federal parliament but concerns the Crown of England, can be considered as a purely local matter