

I have not received many personal communications in reference to this matter. I have received, I think two letters from political friends who are opposed to the measure. I received one memorial from a body of gentlemen whom I hold in the highest respect. To each of these I returned the answer that I have received their communications, that I would give them every consideration, noting their views. As was my bounden duty I have done so. I might read to the House the terms of the resolution that was forwarded to me from that body of whom, I again repeat, I entertain the highest respect. It was that it—

Desires to enter a vigorous and unqualified protest against the educational clause in the Acts constituting the provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan, and submits that the legislation proposed to be enacted is contrary to the whole spirit of confederation, which for the good of the whole Dominion, leaves to the control of the provinces such domestic problems as education.

I do not want for one moment to seek to state or insinuate that these gentlemen have not given what they believe to be a correct interpretation according to their contention. I simply say that in obedience to what I have stated I have given it every consideration, I have paid more attention to the British North America Act perhaps during the past few weeks than I had done in many years and I am unable to see eye to eye with these gentlemen when they say that—

The whole spirit of confederation, which for the good of the whole Dominion, leaves to the control of the provinces such domestic problems as education.

And that it is contrary to the whole spirit of confederation to take another view. When the constitution was framed under which we exist there were certain subjects which were allotted to the local legislatures in which they have absolute and independent power. Others were reserved to the Dominion parliament in which they have absolute and unrestricted power. The question of education, as rightly stated by these gentlemen, is remitted to the local legislatures, but under the British North America Act, that is not given to them, as many other subjects are given to them to be dealt by them exclusively without any reservation whatever. There is a reservation, but the reservation is in the spirit of preserving to the minorities in the various provinces in the confederation the rights they enjoy at the time they enter confederation. Therefore, I repeat again, while having the highest regard for the honesty, yes, and the intelligence of that body of gentlemen who addressed that resolution to me, I am unable honestly to agree with them. My view is different. The whole spirit of confederation, as I understand it in reference to the edu-

Mr. PATERSON.

cational question, is that the local governments may deal—shall deal—with the education question, but they shall do that subject to the restriction that secures the rights of minorities as it is embodied in the constitution that was given to us. The whole spirit of that, I say, is in the direction of securing the rights of the minorities. It was a confederacy of independent provinces that was being formed. It was necessary to secure unity in order that we might have progress and harmony and in order that we might become a nation. Therefore it was, that, finding that there were deep feelings on the subject in some of the provinces which entered confederation at that time, concessions in reference to the matter of education were given and secured to two of the provinces. More than that it was enacted that as respects other provinces entering the union, minorities having had educational privileges or rights prior to their union should have these conserved to them. What has been the result of that? Why, Sir, the fathers of confederation, or some of them, said it would be impossible to form a confederation under any other conditions or stipulations. The Hon. George Brown, who had always been a consistent opponent of separate schools, waived his objections in order to accomplish what he considered the great good of uniting the various provinces of British North America into a grand confederacy which would become, as it has become, the brightest gem in the British Crown; and it is proper to consider the question before us now in the light of promoting the unity, concord, harmony, peace, prosperity and progress of these united provinces which form the Dominion of Canada.

It has been said that the position taken by the government in this matter is wholly contrary to the position which they took in the year 1894 on the Manitoba school question—that then the Liberal party stood for provincial rights. I think it was the hon. member for North Toronto (Mr. Foster) who, the other night, in that aggressive speech of his, pointed out that the Prime Minister, the Postmaster General, the Minister of Finance, had all gone through the country proclaiming that—strong upon it; yes, and that the Minister of Customs had thundered in that direction. Well, Mr. Speaker, just by way of passing, I call to your attention how a noted orator like even my hon. friend from North Toronto is apt to make an inapt illustration. The idea of treating the Minister of Customs' usually placid, calm utterances as thunderings must seem to everybody as very inappropriate indeed.

Mr. FOSTER. I apologize.

Mr. PATERSON. To suggest that the Minister of Customs had pointed out, in his calm though forcible manner, certain