

selves, and I am not afraid to quote the Greek who said before Troy: We indeed boast to be better than our fathers. I take that statement in the sense that we at least are more competent to deal with existing problems, because we are of the century and of the time when the problems arise. We would not be men and we would not be British subjects if we were not competent to solve problems ourselves on the information that is before us and on the conditions that exist. Sir, I am not in favour of written constitutions being stereotyped and cast iron bound. I pay respect to them, but they must bend as everything else in the world has to bend. The interpretation of Holy Scripture has changed and changes almost every year, and so must the interpretation of the constitution.

Mr. MACDONALD. Oh, oh.

Mr. W. F. MACLEAN. The hon gentleman is a good Presbyterian perhaps, but he will not deny that doctrine, and it is nowhere more evident than in his own church.

Mr. MACDONALD. As a good Presbyterian I do deny that doctrine.

Mr. W. F. MACLEAN. I would like to question the hon. gentleman on the shorter catechism after the House adjourns.

Mr. MACDONALD. I can stand any examination the member for South York can put me through on the shorter catechism.

Mr. W. F. MACLEAN. I will meet you later. I come to another phase of the question now, and I suppose I am going to be subject to a great deal of criticism for what I am about to say. I intend to discuss this question of a solid Quebec, I do not want to be charged with saying anything unfriendly towards my fellow-countrymen in that province.

Mr. BELCOURT. You might discuss a solid Nova Scotia at the same time.

Mr. W. F. MACLEAN. Yes—

Mr. D. D. MACKENZIE. Yes, and a solid British Columbia, by the way.

Mr. W. F. MACLEAN. Yes, but it was not a solid British Columbia or a solid Nova Scotia that imposed this legislation on the new provinces in the west. The people of the west as they have a right to do, come to us and say: We want autonomy and our provincial institutions; but the province of Quebec comes along and says: You will not have your institutions as you want them, we will define what institutions you are to have; and Ontario comes along and says to Quebec: Hold on brother, don't do that, leave it to the people of the west. That is the actual situation. Quebec says they will define the institutions of the west and all

Ontario says: Hands off, Quebec, leave the matter to the people of the west.

Mr. A. LAVERGNE. Not all Ontario.

Mr. W. F. MACLEAN. The province of Quebec in doing this has for the first time made itself a solid Quebec.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. For the first time?

Mr. W. F. MACLEAN. Nearly; for the present it has made itself a solid Quebec. It used to divide on the old party issues but at present it is solid on this question.

Mr. MACDONALD. Only one has gone astray.

Mr. W. F. MACLEAN. Only one, I make the remark, that if the province of Quebec wishes to make itself a solid body, in dictating to the west, is it not likely that some day, if this thing is carried too far, there may be a united west beginning at the Ottawa river, which in some way may resent what they consider unjust and unfair interference. To my fellow-countrymen in the province of Quebec I say that their action is not just and is not fair. They themselves have all they want and they should not present themselves before the House and before the people of Canada as a solid block against any other section of the community. It would have been far better for Quebec if it had divided on the old times or on some kind of constitutional interpretation. What a spectacle is presented to the country. If there should be a solid Quebec in anything, should it not have been when Charles Tupper the younger and Charles Tupper the elder, tried to impose remedial legislation upon the province of Manitoba at the request of the province of Quebec? If ever a party tried the province of Quebec it was the Conservative party when in 1896 it tried to carry remedial legislation in this parliament. But there was no solid Quebec then.

Mr. BELCOURT. If there had been it would have been all right.

Mr. W. F. MACLEAN. I do not say that.

Mr. BELCOURT. If it were a Conservative solid Quebec it would have been all right.

Mr. W. F. MACLEAN. Let the hon. gentleman make his speech when I have finished, if he wants to.

Mr. MACDONALD. When Quebec was solid for the Conservative party it was all right.

Mr. W. F. MACLEAN. I do not know whether it was or not, what I am saying is that a solid Quebec is to-day trying to impose conditions on the west which the west resents. They are interfering with the west and they do it without consulting the people of the west.