

that the action of the Lords in rejecting the budget is resented by a very large portion of the people of the United Kingdom. But I have never heard it suggested, even by the most radical of the radicals, that the House of Lords should be done away with and the second Chamber suppressed. Of course, the wish is expressed that there should be a reform of the House of Lords, and, indeed, it is very probable that whichever party succeeds in the present election, whether the Unionists or the Liberals, as a consequence of the elections the House of Lords will in some way be reformed. But I am sure—and I think my hon. friend (Mr. Lancaster) has no doubt either—that there is no suggestion that the House of Lords should be abolished. I think it would be an unfortunate thing if the second Chamber were abolished. The same principle applies here. And now, in going a step further, let me speak more particularly to my hon. friend from South Grey (Mr. Miller) than to my hon. friend from Lincoln (Mr. Lancaster). At the time of confederation the second Chamber was established as a pillar of the constitution; it was established, not only for the general reason for which a second Chamber exists in all countries under constitutional government, but for the additional reason of the protection of minorities. Let me quote on this point to my hon. friend from Grey (Mr. Miller) the very suggestive language of Mr. George Brown, and I know it will be appreciated by my hon. friend:

And first, it is said that Upper Canada should have had in the legislative council a greater number of members than Lower Canada—

Mr. T. C. WALLBRIDGE. Hear, hear.

Hon. Mr. BROWN. The hon. member for North Hastings is of that opinion; but that hon. gentleman is in favour of a legislative union, and had we been forming a legislative union, there might have been some force in the demand. But the very essence of our compact is that the union shall be federal and not legislative. Our Lower Canada friends have agreed to give us representation by population in the lower House, on the express condition they shall have equality in the upper House. On no other condition could we have advanced a step; and, for my part, I am quite willing they should have it. In maintaining the existing sectional boundaries and handing over the control of local matters to local bodies, we recognize, to a certain extent, a diversity of interests; and it was quite natural that the protection of those interests, by equality in the upper Chamber, should be demanded by the less numerous provinces.

So one of the reasons, one of the inducements given to the smaller provinces, to lower Canada, and Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, was that there should be an upper Chamber as well as equality of representation, and this was for the protection

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of minorities. My hon. friend asked with some pertinence: What have the Senate done during the forty years that it has existed for the protection of the minorities? He answered, nothing. Sir, I am glad that my hon. friend from Niagara (Mr. Lancaster) can say that the Senate has done nothing in the forty years of its existence for the protection of minorities. But this is not to the discredit of the Senate, it is rather to the credit of the House of Commons. It means simply that the House of Commons has done nothing to endanger minorities.

Mr. LANCASTER. Then you do not need a second Chamber.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. Pardon me, there is always a possibility of the power being abused. If we could depend upon human nature as we can upon my hon. friend, never to do anything wrong, then there would be no reason at all for keeping the second Chamber. But it is because men are fallible, it is because majorities may abuse their power, that it has been deemed desirable to have a control over the majority for the protection of minorities. Without at all going back to the old condition of things, to the old quarrels which happily have disappeared, and of which we have heard nothing for many years past, I may remind my hon. friend that there was at one time a strong effort made under the old union to disestablish the French language. Now it has been embodied in our constitution that the French language should be an official language. It is sometimes used in this House, hon. members speaking the French language keep it as a sacred thing. They do not abuse the privilege, but they sometimes use it, and I am sure no one will find fault with them if they sometimes speak in the French language, because it is one of their rights. But if the majority should take it upon themselves to abolish the French language, then the Senate would justify its existence for the protection of minorities. So it is with respect to the subject of education. There are special clauses in our constitution safeguarding the privileges of minorities in regard to education; and if the majority in this House attempted to do away or to interfere with anything secured to the minority in this matter, then the Senate would exercise its powers. May the time never come, as it has not come during the forty years, when the power of the Senate may have to be invoked to protect a minority against a majority in this House. But it would be a poor argument to say that because no case has occurred during forty years, it may never occur. Therefore it does not seem to me that my hon. friend's argument on this head is a very strong one. He put forth another argument, that