

statements made in this House, that the hon. leader of the Opposition proposed to be as good as his word and to make this a non-political question, and to join with the Government of the day in doing justice to the minority in Manitoba, and in voting for the Remedial Bill. I thought that at least he could emulate the example of a great Protestant leader in this country. I refer to Sir John Macdonald. Sir John Macdonald, I dare say, has said, though I do not recollect his saying it, but have heard it from others, that in Canada, perhaps, a Protestant leader could afford to do more even-handed justice to the Roman Catholics than a Roman Catholic leader. And the events to which I have been referring perhaps in some way bring up and justify that statement. But whether or not Sir John Macdonald dared to sacrifice much in the way of Protestant support by advocating the rights and standing by the privileges, not only of the French minority, but of the Roman Catholic minority at large, I have in my hand a proud boast of his on that subject on more than one occasion. Some gentlemen are impatient of these references to the statements of men who have passed away from these scenes. I certainly delight in being able to put my hand on any advice from Conservatives or Liberals in times gone by in reference to these trying subjects. This is my apology for dwelling upon some of these statements. For instance, Sir John Macdonald spoke in Cornwall on August 31st, 1878, and there he did not shirk making the boast before all Canada of what he had done in the direction of peace and conciliation among the creeds and races of this country. He said:

He, who was a Protestant, a Presbyterian, and who had been at 18 years of age an Orangeman, had come down here to ask the electors to vote for him. He had given Catholics fair-play in the matter of public schools and had incurred a good deal of obloquy from unreasonably strong Protestants for doing so. Now the whole country acknowledge that the measure was a good one, and that we had peace and quietness in our neighbourhood since that question was settled. Dr. Ryerson, a Methodist clergyman, and a man of great influence had stated that the Separate School Bill did not injure the common school system but had widened the basis of education. And I lived to hear him make what I consider a very proud and happy boast in the halls of this legislature. In 1890, when the hon. member for North Simcoe (Mr. McCarthy) introduced into this House his policy of discord, his attempt to incite race against race and creed against creed, he evoked the eloquent and brilliant denunciations of the leader of the Opposition. Sir John Macdonald, in resenting some insinuations of the present leader of the Opposition, made what I believe to have been the truthful boast, and one that showed him to be not merely a Protestant, not merely a Canadian, but a statesman for the Empire with Imperial purposes and Imperial instincts. He said:

Sir CHARLES HIBBERT TUPPER.

Again and again have the best and the strongest of our Conservatives been defeated at the polls simply because we would not do injustice to our French fellow-countrymen. Again and again have we been put in a minority because we declined to join in that crusade against the French Canadian, against the Catholic religion and against French institutions.

I did not know that there would be any difference among the leaders; I did not know that it would be only for the Conservative leaders to make that boast. Why, even if I were not given ordinary intelligence in public life, it were impossible to suppose that I could have imagined that a Roman Catholic leader would be behind a Protestant leader in this House in vindicating the claims of that class and of that race to vindicate which the hon. gentleman on that occasion stood forth. But the hon. member for Berthier (Mr. Beausoleil), who perhaps is just as orthodox, sheds some light on the awkward position of the present leader of the Opposition. In a recent letter to the press he says, if this translation is correct:

What I did say at Berthier, and what I am also ready to repeat, is that when closing the proceedings of the conference of Liberal members from Quebec province, in which I had stated my intention of voting for the Remedial Act, Mr. Laurier said that he was the last man willing to do violence to the consciences of any of his friends, but his position as leader of the party was such that he could not accept it.

In some respects not a satisfactory one for me as a Canadian, but that accounts for the sudden change, the unfortunate change, in the position of the leader of the Opposition. Now, Mr. Speaker, what is the issue before this Parliament? There have been many definitions; they vary from year to year; but I like to look back a little and trace the definitions as they have come from one side or the other. We hear a great deal of coercion in 1896, coercion of a majority. The coercion of the minority, in my humble judgment, began long ago, in 1890. That, I believe to be the effect of the judgment of the Queen's Privy Council. But in 1895 we hear that the issue is one of coercion against non-coercion. In 1893—I refer again to the leader of the Opposition—he gave a very different definition. He said the question was the protection of the minority against the independence of Manitoba; and on that issue I am sure this side of the House would have no misgivings as to where they should stand, they would stand for the protection of the minority. My hon. friend the hon. member for Simcoe (Mr. McCarthy), the counsel for the Manitoba government, has defined the issue, and I think correctly, to be a question of separate schools or no separate schools in the province of Manitoba. We cannot get away from that issue, in my humble judgment, and the question is to be decided, as I shall argue in my speech, from the statutes and from the evidence which satisfied the law lords of the Privy Council. But let us notice the