

APPENDIX XIII

See p. 690

and territorial rights of Ontario. He had a sure grasp of the letter of the Constitution, and a keen perception of its spirit; and he initiated and directed many of the great legal contests by which its federal character was developed and established. In virtue of the guarantees of the Constitution and the principle of federalism, he resisted those racial and sectarian agitations which more than once threatened to destroy his Government. It was upon these grounds that he defended the separate school system, and persuaded the party which George Brown had created to accept the perpetuation, if not to sanction the extension of separate school privileges in this province. It was upon these grounds that he resisted the attempt of the federal authorities to establish control over liquor licences and provincial railways, and to despoil Ontario of timber, minerals and territory. Nor is it clear that his provincialism was inconsistent with a sincere and tolerant nationalism. He rejoiced in the accomplishment of Confederation.

‘He was thoroughly devoted to British connexion. He had no dearer ambition than that Canada might become the happy and prosperous home of millions of British freemen, united in indissoluble bonds to the mother-country. Here, especially, he was insistent and dominant in fashioning the temper and character of the Liberal party, and in maintaining and strengthening British sentiment in Canada.