

friend introduced his Bill twice, and I accept every reason he gave why these measures were not carried out. He carried it once to Committee of the Whole, and then he had to withdraw it; and why? Because, as he said, he could not carry it against members representing the rural constituencies. They are a powerful body, they constitute a majority, the city members are a minority; and so long as the rural members are of that opinion, it is not possible for the hon. gentleman or any one to carry out this scheme of reform. I regret it very much.

Mr. CASGRAIN. I said I could not carry it against the rural lawyers. The rural members, not of the legal profession, generally were in favour of the Bill.

The PRIME MINISTER. I do not know whether they were lawyers, for lawyers have not a very good name. If they acted as a majority they appear to have been able to prevent the hon. gentleman carrying out his views. Let me put the case in another form, with the modifications now made by the hon. gentleman. So long as the lawyers in the local legislature are opposed to the measure, not even the hon. gentleman himself could carry out the reform. So the argument in favour of reform must be decided by the lawyers, and the hon. gentleman would be able to carry out his reform except for the lawyers from the rural constituencies. Let us rather say that so long as the public opinion of the province is not in favour of this reform it cannot be carried out, but when public opinion is in favour of the scheme the lawyers themselves will have to come down and submit. The hon. gentleman says we might have a conference with the local government on this subject. It is strange how hon. gentlemen opposite have suddenly become reformers. Confederation has been in existence about thirty years. During that time the Conservatives have been in office no less than 25 years, and during all that period they never thought of carrying out the scheme of reform that is now being pressed on our attention. Let me say that I hope it will not take so long for the Reform party to take up and carry this reform as was occupied by the Conservatives in considering it. The Conservatives—shall I say what is in my mind—are not much good at anything, but they are not worth anything at reform. The hon. gentlemen are sure to bungle it, for the reason that they are not sincere.

Mr. BERGERON. Still you have taken our policy.

The PRIME MINISTER. We have now a Reform Government in Ottawa, and a Reform Government in the province of Quebec, and a better day has dawned on the future of the Dominion. In the meantime, what is our duty? It is simply to act in consonance with the judgment of the pro-

vince, as expressed by the voice of its legislature. We cannot do anything else. The hon. member for Pictou (Sir Charles Hibbert Tupper) is also a reformer in his way. He has taunted me for what I have done and said I was a Conservative. I may blame myself that I am too much of a Conservative. I am a Conservative to this extent—I want to maintain the constitution of the country such as it is. It is not perfect, but we must endeavour to work it out with all its deficiencies, and one is regarding this very subject, that the body which has to spend the money has not also to devise the manner in which it shall be spent. That is the devise of the constitution. It is a strong defect, and perhaps we may have to apply ourselves to the task of remedying it. In the meantime I say to the hon. member for Pictou that I am so much of a Conservative that I shall endeavour to believe under any circumstances, until it is proved on the floor of this House to the contrary, that the local legislature is sincere and truthful; I shall be willing to take its recommendation and accept the recommendation as the honest expression of the will of the province. When an hon. gentleman who has held the position of Attorney General of the province of Quebec makes such a confession as he has made, I must bow before his word; but at all events so long as that proof is not forthcoming, I shall always believe when a statute is passed by the local legislature that it is the honest expression of the wishes, wants and desires of that legislature. But there may be at some time an attempt made to deceive us. The hon. gentleman has told us that there has been an attempt made to deceive. We would be bound, of course, to act in order to meet those circumstances. The hon. gentleman says we should come into conflict with the local legislature. If we were to follow his opinion we would disregard the act of the legislature; if we did not it was not in accordance with our view and judgment, we would review its legislation, we would assume it was wrong if it was not according to our way of thinking and according to our standard of right. If we adopted such a system, confederation could not be worked. We would have the same conflicts they had in the United States in respect to state rights, and we do not want that state of affairs, but we need, as much as possible, united action between the provincial and the central Governments.

Sir CHARLES HIBBERT TUPPER. The hon. gentleman acted on the opposite principle in 1877 in the case of Leeds and Grenville. At that time Mr. Blake, speaking as Minister of Justice of the Government in which the right hon. Prime Minister was a member, gave as his reason for opposing the action of the provincial legislature that the Government were not convinced of the necessity of the Act.