

and more as I proceed in the course I have announced. I have this to say, no matter what the consequences may be, that my first allegiance is to the principles I have lately adopted, and my second allegiance to the political party I have hitherto supported. (Loud cheers.) I hope they will not come in conflict. I do not wish to dis sever myself from my political friends and political associations, but where they do clash, I see the path of duty for me lies clearly in supporting and maintaining the resolutions which form the basis of the Equal Rights Association. (Prolonged cheers.) Now, sir, why are we here under the auspices of the Equal Rights Association? We all have our political partyisms, and why have we, more or less, separated ourselves from those party alliances? Why do we stand to-night on what may be called a new platform? and why do we join in what may be looked upon as a new departure? I think it is right and proper we should face that question fairly and honestly. If we are not able to give a satisfactory answer to our own consciences; if we are not able to satisfy the common sense of the Dominion; if in very truth we are not right in the course we are taking, our Association and the aims and end of the Association will come to naught. We have to look this question squarely in the face, and I propose to tell you to-night why I believe the programme of the Equal Rights Association is a necessity, why we are called upon to separate ourselves, more or less, from political parties—why I have, to some extent, separated myself from former political associations—and stand by the colors which we hoist as part of that programme. (Applause). A little history may be necessary—perhaps a little tedious history, ladies and gentlemen—in order to fully appreciate the position of Canada to-day. You know from what has been stated to you, that this was at one time New France, an appanage of the kingdom of France. We know that it passed under British rule in the cession of 1763, mainly in consequence of the victory of Wolfe on the Plains of Abraham. We know that at that time there was, so to speak, a handful of French Canadians living in and inhabiting this country. We also know that they were living in a civilized state and under a code of laws which had to be recognized by the conquering power. By that cession certain rights were guaranteed to the French, and by those rights so guaranteed to them by treaty—which is the highest description of human law—we desire to be bound. We desire to be governed by that law, since a rule of international law binds us to give effect to a treaty made by two independent powers; but there