

behalf was by the veteran Whig leader, Earl Russell, though it was brought in by a Conservative administration. These circumstances go far to explain the absence of any elaborate parliamentary criticism of the Bill; and besides, it was somewhat becalmed, by getting under the lee of the great domestic question of the day—the Reform Bill. Although, therefore, the Act was passed without an exciting debate, it certainly was not passed, either in ignorance or indifference, to the present, or future, of these Provinces. Before passing from this point, I hope I may be permitted to render what is due to the two statesmen—the then Colonial Minister, and his predecessor in that office—(Mr. Cardwell and Lord Carnarvon), to whom our delegates when in England were so largely indebted. It was my good fortune though detained behind my colleagues to reach London, as a Delegate, before the introduction of the Bill in the House of Lords, and to have listened to the very full, and clear and convincing statement of Lord Carnarvon. That speech will remain a convincing testimony of his Lordship's great abilities, and his great interest in our future: and perhaps the House will permit me as illustrative of its whole spirit, to read them one passage which occurs towards the close of that speech—

But if the advantages of Union are great in a military, a commercial, a material point of view, they are not, I think, less in the moral and political aspect of the question. When once existing restrictions are removed, and the schools, the law courts, the professions, the industries of these Provinces are thrown open from one end to another, depend upon it a stimulus greater than any that has ever been before in British North America will be applied to every form of mental or moral energy. Nor will it be the main body of the people that will alone feel this. The tone of Parliament, the standard of the Government, will necessarily rise. Colonial institutions are framed upon the model of England. But English institutions, as we all know, need to be of a certain size. Public opinion is the basis of Parliamentary life; and the first condition of public opinion is that it should move in no contracted circle. It would not be difficult to show that almost in proportion to its narrowness Colonial Governments have been subject to disturbing influences. But now, independently of the fact that in these confederated Provinces there will henceforth be a larger material whence an adequate supply of colonial administrations and colonial oppositions can be drawn, it is not, I think, unreasonable to hope that, just as the sphere of action is enlarged, the vestry element will be discarded, large questions will be discussed with the gravity which belongs to them, men will rise to a full sense of their position as members of a great Parliament, and will transmit their own sense of increased responsibility and self-respect through Parliament and the Government to the main body of the people.

[Mr. McGee (Montreal West)]

As to the measure itself I am not going to inflict on the House, an analysis of its 147 clauses; but there are some principal provisions of it, to which I must refer, in justice to the subject itself: such as the guarantee of the educational rights of the minority, in the 93rd clause; and the several clauses which define the Constitution of this House; of the Honourable Senate; of the Judiciary; and the clauses affirming the Sovereignty of Her Majesty and her successors, over British America. So far as I know this is the first Constitution ever given to a mixed people, in which the conscientious rights of the minority, are made a subject of formal guarantee. I shall never cease to remember with pleasure that I was the first proposer of that guarantee in the Quebec Conference; a guarantee by which we have carried the principle of equal and reciprocal toleration a step farther in Canada, than it has yet been carried, in any other free government—American or European. (Hear, hear.) I have no desire to go into the vast question of education at this moment; it is a question on which all men feel free to speak, rather than bound to think; but I hail this 93rd Clause of our Union, as the Magna Charta of the youthhood of this Dominion; as a solemn guarantee that no Christian parent shall ever be obliged in any part of British America to succumb to the heartless, and soulless, and godless doctrine, that religion and education can be justly divorced in a Christian country. (Applause.) As to the Constitution of the two Houses, under this Act, we have adopted here, what Ontario long ago demanded, and Quebec resolutely resisted—"representation by population." I had always declared that principle a just one, as applied to the popular, or taxing branch of the legislature, but I had always voted against its adoption, "unless as part of a general Constitutional Change." Well, Sir, that change at length arrived; Ontario got what she wanted; and the first use she made of her enlarged representation, I am rejoiced to say was to put down her sectional agitators, and to send here a sound Union majority. It cannot be concealed, however, that 81 members for one Province, out of 181, is a formidable preponderance, and it will be for my honourable friends, the leaders of Ontarian public opinion, on both sides of the House, to see that it does not become a dangerous one. I will not venture to speculate at this moment, on the probabilities of future party combinations; but it is plain to any one, that it is most undesirable for the sake of each Province, and of all, that any one should