Macdonald said on that occasion, although he has been quoted by my hon. friend from Labelle in support of what he said a day or two ago concerning the school law. I may say that this was a most interesting debate, from which I would quote at greater length if time permitted. I could show that upon that vexed question both parties, the moderate men on both sides of the House, came to an agreement, which is incorporated in my amendment. The agreement they came to was incorporated in a resolution finally adopted by the House, which is word for word the amendment I have offered to-day. They came to that agreement considering that the terms of the resolution as they settled it among themselves, men of different race and creed, and different political colour, was a proper settlement of that time of the needs of the Northwest, satisfying no doubt to some extent the local demand, and at the same time—because they all expressed that opinion—maintaining the sacredness of the agreement arrived at in 1870 under the circumstances I have indicated to the House. Mr. Blake suggested the substance of an amendment, but had been obliged to leave the House during the debate. Finally a form was agreed upon for which both Sir John A. Macdonald, my right hon. friend, and leading men on both sides of the House, voted. This is how Sir John A. Macdonald, towards the end of the debate, spoke upon that question:

I go a great way with my hon. friend (Mr. Laurier) in his remarks concerning the principle of this Bill. I sympathize with his very natural feelings of indignation at much of the language that has been used in support of this measure now before the House. I have no accord with the desire expressed in some quarters that by any mode whatever there should be an attempt made to oppress the one language or to render it inferior to the other ; I believe that would be impossible if it were tried, and it would be foolish and wicked if it were possible. The statement that has been made so often that this is a conquered country is 'à propos de rien.' Whether it was conquered or ceded, we have a constitution now under which all British subjects are in a position of absolute equality, having equal rights of every kind—of language, of religion, of property and of person. There is no paramount race in this country ; there is no conquered race in this country ; we are all British subjects, and those who are not English are none the less British subjects on that account. But while I say so much, Mr. Speaker, I must regret that my hon. friend perhaps yielding to the necessity of his position as a party leader, should have commenced his speech with some party attacks against the Tories. My hon. friend felt constrained, I suppose, to make those allusions which, in the circumstances of the case, I think were not altogether generous or altogether politic. The hon. gentleman spoke of the spirit of this Bill being that of Toryism, utter Toryism, oppressive Toryism. Why, Sir, if he looks at the history of England in modern days, I think he will find that most of the Liberal measures passed there have been passed, if not by Tories, by Conservatives. I think also, if he will look at the history of Canada, he will find at all events, that liberality towards the French Canadian race was pretty much confined to the Conservative party. The hon. gentleman had to admit that while this Bill was, as he affirmed, an evidence of utter Toryism, the exclusion of the French language, the injury done to the French people, the insult offered to them, came from a Radical, the Earl of Durham. To be sure, my hon. friend said that Lord Durham was a Radical who did not understand all about liberty. That is quite evident ; and so great a Radical was he that in order to get rid of him the English goverment sent him to this country to show us his liberalism by attempting to deprive half the people of their rights to use their own language.

Further on, speaking more particularly of the point then under consideration, Sir John A. Macdonald said :

The reason why I oppose the Bill of my hon. friend to-day is the same—because that Bill, a small Bill, I might almost call it an insignificant Bill in its enacting clause—is based on the purpose of doing away with the French language, of discarding the French language, at all events, and depriving the French Canadian people of the solace of the language they learned at the feet of their mothers. Why, Mr. Speaker, if there is one act of oppression more than another which would come home to a man's breast, it is that he should be deprived of the consolation of hearing and speaking and reading the language that his mother taught him. It is cruel. It is seething the kid in its mother's milk. The greatest, perhaps, of all the objections to this measure, is that it is a futile measure, it will not succeed, it cannot succeed.

There is further matter, but I will leave that part of the case as it was stated by the great leader of the Conservative party at that time. Speaking in reference to this measure which was then under the consideration of parliament, my friend, Mr. LaRivière, then a member of this House, quoted the 'Electeur,' then the organ of the Liberal party, published in the city of Quebec, which has been succeeded by the 'Soleil' as the governmet organ in that city. I will merely read the advice which the 'Electeur' gave upon that occasion :

Our friends in Ottawa are, unfortunately, on the opposition side, that is to say, powerless to secure the triumph of their broad and liberal ideas, to which the Hon. Mr. Blake, a few days ago, gave voice in eloquent words. But we beseech them to stand firm and to do their duty to the end, and we feel that they shall have, not only the sympathies of our co-religionists and fellow countrymen, but also those of an imposing number of fair-minded English-speaking people who consider as an honour to follow the traditions of the Liberals of old England, and follow the steps of those who, in the old country, defend the cause of home rule and equality of rights for all races and all creeds under the British flag.

I might quote further from Mr. LaRivière who, upon that occasion, in a speech well worthy of perusal, went fully into this question with which he had been familiar