

enormous benefits it will confer on Canada by presenting before, not only the people of the United Kingdom, but people from the Continent of Europe and other countries that will be assembled in England on that occasion, an exhibition that is calculated to make a lasting impression on their minds as to the advance Canada has made in that as well as in other respects. I am quite sure that every hon. member will be only too happy to join in giving the Government the most hearty and cordial support in any measure proposed in connection with this great event calculated to give it that due importance to which it is in my judgment entitled.

Sir, I am obliged to pass rapidly to a less agreeable portion of my duty on the present occasion, and that is to offer some slight criticism in respect to what remains in this Address.

There is much of it to which I am not disposed to take any exception whatever, but I draw the attention of the hon. the First Minister to what I think trenches very nearly upon an unconstitutional attitude on the part of the Government of Canada in relation to the school question. I find it stated in the Address that :

A settlement was reached between the two governments which was the best arrangement possible under the existing conditions.

Now, Sir, who authorized, where is the authority for a settlement being effected by this Government? Within the four corners of the constitution of this country I do not think you will find any authority for the action which the Government here declares it has taken. The Manitoba Act lays down, and the Act of Confederation defines what the position of the Parliament of Canada is, and what the position of the Government of Canada is in relation to the question of education. The constitution of our country declares that this Government has nothing whatever to do with the question of education except under particular circumstances. It provides that when any local legislature withdraws from the minority the rights which are guaranteed by the constitution and by the laws of the country, then, and not till then is this Government clothed with power to interfere in the slightest degree. Why, Sir, when the time came that the highest tribunal in the Empire declared that this condition of things existed, when the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council gave their judgment that the rights and privileges enjoyed under the law and the constitution of the country by the minority in Manitoba had been invaded, and that a grievance existed, and that the time had come when the appeal justly lay to the Government of Canada to redress that wrong; then, acting under that authority the Government of my predecessor, Sir Mackenzie Bowell, addressed a Remedial Order which was strictly in conformity with the

constitution of the country, calling upon the Government of Manitoba to provide by legislation for the restoration of these privileges which they had taken away from the Roman Catholic minority of Manitoba by the Act of 1890. And, Sir, when the Government of Manitoba refused to comply with that Remedial Order, then, and not till then, did the case arrive at such a position as that this Parliament was not only justified, but was called upon in the discharge of its duty to pass a Bill for the restoration of the privileges of which the Roman Catholic minority had been deprived. There is nothing else provided for in the constitution. It was the most natural thing that the Government of Canada should adopt and exhaust, (as its predecessors had done), every means in its power for the purpose of obtaining a satisfactory solution of this question; but in my judgment, there is nothing in the law nor in the constitution—on the contrary, I believe it to be an invasion of the principle laid down in the constitution for this Government to assume that it is in a position to make a settlement with anybody. I draw the attention of the hon. the First Minister to that, because although it may be considered a hypercriticism, I believe that a close examination will prove my suggestion to be well founded, and that there is no warrant in the constitution of our country for the course which the Government declares it has taken with regard to this question.

I have another objection to make to a statement in the Address, and I am bold enough to challenge the accuracy of that statement. The hope is expressed that :

It will prove to be the beginning of a new era to be characterized by generous treatment of one another.

Sir, upon what grounds are these words put into the mouth of His Excellency the Governor General? Where is the authority for declaring that the conditions existing in this country were such, that there was room for hope for a new era of peace and happiness between the two great nationalities of this Dominion? I say, Sir, there is not a country on the face of the globe in which the peoples of two great nationalities living side by side, have lived in greater mutual respect and enjoyment of each other's society than has existed between the English and French people of Canada down to the present hour. Whatever question may have arisen to produce a certain amount of feeling, it is nevertheless a fact known and recognized, and it is a fact greatly to the honour and credit of both our French and English people, that cordial and genuine good feeling and friendly intercourse has never been disturbed for a single moment.

I shall now take the opportunity of drawing the attention of the House briefly to the position which in my judgment this ques-