

true, it is said, that Manitoba can deal with it only within certain limits. I admit, there is a proviso in that, but it has been the generally-accepted principle heretofore, that every province had the uncontrolled right to deal with education, and every province had used that right according to its will, and there has been no interference with it up to the present time. This is the first time in Canadian history that we have been asked to interfere with that right of a province. We are asked now to endorse a principle, the very opposite of the principle we stood by, when the province of Quebec was making a fight for her rights. We stood by the province of Quebec then on a question which was very unpopular with us, which, in the judgment of many, was wrong; but we stood by the principle, believing that we stood up for the rights of a province. If that rule is applied to the province of Quebec, then, why should it not be applied to the province of Manitoba to-day? The same that applies to one should apply to the other; the same rights the one province has, the other province ought to enjoy. Sir, I oppose this Bill because it prevents the will of the majority from being carried out. The invariable principle is, that majorities must rule. Some say, that majorities should not always rule, but they do rule in every walk of life. If you go into a business corporation, the majority rules; if you go to a church meeting, the majority rules; if you go to a township council, the majority rules.

Mr. DEVLIN. If you go to Turkey, the majority rules, too.

Mr. MILLS (Annapolis). And the majority in heathen countries rules.

Mr. SPROULE. I am talking about civilized life, as we understand it in the British Empire. I say that in every part of the British Empire it is regarded as the correct principle that the majority shall rule, and whatever decision the majority comes to, it is generally recognized to be right. Now, it does not matter whether you apply the principle to a township council, or to a municipal corporation, the principle that the majority rules is the principle that holds good. Why should a rule the reverse of this be applied to the province of Manitoba? In the provincial legislature there, the majority rules. In this very House the majority rules by their voice. Whether the minority acquiesces in the principles promulgated or not, it does not matter; the majority rules. The province of Manitoba has rights, or she thinks she has rights, which she was entitled to enjoy, and, according to her understanding of her rights, she is dealing with a question in which she is vitally interested. A large majority of her people have come to the solemn conclusion, that it is in their interests and the interests of their province, that they shall in future have a different system of education from what they had

had up to the year 1890. And yet to-day we are trying to prevent that majority from ruling in the province of Manitoba. We are told, that this is something embodied in the constitution, and that, therefore, it should be held sacred, and we should not disturb it. There is no doubt there is some show of argument for those who hold that view, and I will deal with it later on. I have here the debates which took place in 1865 and 1866, when they were trying to bring about confederation, and I have looked at the discussions which took place upon the resolutions on which the British North America Act was founded. I see here one of the eminent men of that day, forecasting what might be the dangerous result, if you insist on taking away the rights from majorities. And to-day, in the light of experience, it seems to me to be verified to the letter. John Sandfield Macdonald, who was a Roman Catholic, was speaking against that provision of this resolution, which was intended to place upon provinces rights for minorities which never could be changed, no matter what the changed condition of the country or the character of the people. He moved a resolution in opposition to that, and, in supporting his resolution, he said:

I rise, Sir, to propose another amendment. I can assure the House that I never knew a measure of anything like this importance go through with so few attempts to amend it. Nor do I rise for the mere purpose of putting my amendment on record, for I do feel that the views I am about to express, and which I have ever held since I have been a member of this House may not commend themselves to any considerable number of the members. I have no desire that the rights of the Roman Catholic minority of Upper Canada should be abridged.

He had no desire that they should be abridged, but he refused to endorse the principle that the resolution granting them should be perpetual.

I have no desire that the rights and privileges of any other denomination shall be interfered with in any respect; but I wish hon. members to bear in mind that the experience we have had in this country, not to allude to that of the neighbouring state, proves that a denial of the right of the majority to legislate on any given matter has always led to grave consequences. I need only mention the Clergy Reserve question. This, it must be recollected, was forbidden to be legislated upon by the Union Act; yet it was the cause of fierce strife and legislation for many years. The original constitution of the United States prohibited the question of slavery from being interfered with by Congress; yet an agitation for its suppression was early commenced, and has at last terminated in civil war. The agitation of the Clergy Reserve question produced a rebellion in Upper Canada. I say, Sir, that by making a constitutional restriction in respect to the schools of the minority, we are sowing the seeds from which will in the end arise a serious conflict, unless the constitution be amended. The minority will be quite safe on a question relating to their faith and their education in a colony under the sway of the British Crown; but if you expressly withdraw that ques-