

fault, in one Province of the Dominion, that Province swept by a sentiment favorable to an entire separation from this Dominion. We have seen in another Province the Government of the day and all existing things swept away by a spirit of nationalism, that felt in some way injured by the action of the central Government. We have seen the Province of Ontario agitated on account of an alleged infringement of provincial rights, and so also the Province of Manitoba.

Mr. MILLS (Bothwell). A real infringement.

Mr. COLBY. A real or fancied—I am not discussing that question now. All these were serious blows and injurious to the Constitution and to the country, and are to be deeply regretted. Those who desire the perpetuity of our system of Confederation should never make use of such questions for party purposes, except constrained by necessity, because they are not fair party weapons, and they tend to disorganise the country. I say the constitution has stood several strains of a serious kind; but there is one strain it has not been subjected to, and I hope it may never be subjected to it, and it is that where religious strife and altercation, where animosities and feelings of the kind which grow out of exasperated religious sentiment are evoked. We know, and I will not comment upon it, and people outside of this House must realise, that if we pass the resolution proposed it will precipitate a crisis the most dangerous that ever occurred in the history of this country, and the most dangerous that could possibly be imagined. I have no doubt, Mr. Speaker, from the manifestations of feeling which are being expressed in certain parts of the Dominion, that the very zealous Protestants of some sections must have felt that the Protestant minority in the Province of Quebec have been very apathetic in the matter of the passage of this Jesuit Settlement Act. I believe there is nowhere in this Dominion a body of Protestants more willing to vindicate their rights, more willing to make sacrifices for the preservation of their rights than are the Protestants of the Province of Quebec. I do not believe they are disloyal to Protestant ideas. But the Protestants of the Province of Quebec have lived for many years in close relation and in close contact with their fellow-citizens of a different religion, and many prejudices which the one might otherwise feel against the other have been worn away by contact. The Protestants and the Catholics of the Province of Quebec, so far as I know their relations, live together happily upon mutually respecting terms, each respecting the other's rights, each respecting even the other's sensibilities and prejudices, and co-operating together, working together, for what they believe to be for the common interests, without jealousy, without friction, without oversensitiveness, recognising the good things in each other; if they differ, quietly differing, and not making themselves obnoxious to each other. These are the relations which have grown out of long years of personal contact, living together side by side, meeting and knowing each other. That is a happy condition of affairs, but it is an actual condition of affairs in those parts of the Province with which I am personally acquainted. That is not a condition of affairs that the Protestants of Quebec desire to have disturbed. The Protestants of Quebec, and I think I fairly voice their sentiments, acknowledge the fact—if they do not acknowledge it to be so, it is a fact—that there never was a minority in any country treated with more justice, with more liberality, with more generosity than the Protestant minority of the Province of Quebec have been treated, irrespective of political parties. They have always had the control of affairs that most concerned them, those matters connected with education and other matters concerning which the Protestants were most interested as Protestants, and they have had as much control over such questions as if they had had an entire Legislature of Protestants; they

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have not been meddled with, they have simply been permitted to manage their own affairs and they have not felt that they were in a minority in any instance that I recollect. Look at the political sentiment also. The Liberal party of Quebec elected as its leader for many years that noble man whom we all respect, Mr. Joly, a Protestant. They were not jealous, they had no objection on account of his Protestantism to serving under a leader whom they recognised as an able man whose views were in political accord with their own. The Conservative Government were equally liberal. Why, during the Conservative régime in Quebec, perhaps the most important office in the Cabinet had all along been held by a good old orthodox Presbyterian Treasurer, Mr. Robertson, and we were allowed during that régime, perhaps, an undue representation in the Government of the Province. We had two members, able and influential men, in a Cabinet of seven, which is certainly an undue proportion, and they were men of influence and men of character and ability. So that in all these respects we have nothing to complain of, and, perhaps, it is for that reason that we do not wish unnecessarily to provoke an issue which would result in the disturbance of those kindly relations. Then, again—and I know it influenced some men of high standing among the Protestants of that Province—we are finding Protestants and Catholics alike, Protestant and Catholic clergymen, standing on a common platform in the advocacy of matters which both think concern the well-being of the people. It is not very long ago, if I recollect aright, when His Eminence Cardinal Taschereau presided over a meeting held by Catholics and Protestants to consult with regard to the best legislation to be had on the subject of temperance. Leading men of both churches are working together to promote the best ends of the community as viewed from their common standpoint. That is a condition of affairs which had been recognised by many Protestants who are interested in the cause of temperance as one which should be perpetuated. I simply instance these things to illustrate the friendly sentiment, and to show the cordial relations existing between Protestants and Catholics in the Province of Quebec and the desirability from the point of view of either that those relations, friendly co-operative relations as they are, should not be disturbed. Again, let us consider what would have been the result if we had precipitated an agitation, if we had made the attack, or if we had raised this issue in which we were sure to be defeated. I may say here, which is a fact, that there is hardly a constituency in the Province of Quebec in which either the Roman Catholic electors are not in an actual majority, or in which they do not hold the balance of power. It is attributed to an hon. member of this House—I do not know how truly—that he said the other day with regard to the French Roman Catholics that they considered first their religion, second their nationality, and third their party, and I believe that this is truly said of them. We saw in the great change that was made at the last elections in the Province of Quebec what the national feeling when appealed to would exhibit. I think it is true that the religious sentiment is the highest with the French Canadian people, and if it is above nationality, if it is above party, if that sentiment is prepared to ally itself with one party or another party and that the question of party is a minor consideration, then in almost every constituency of the Province of Quebec the Protestants would be deprived of their just representation in the Legislature of the Province. There was nothing to be gained by raising an issue in which the result was a foregone conclusion and which issue could not by any possibility have resulted favorably to the Protestants. For these reasons what course was pursued? The Protestants of Quebec have never acknowledged that the Jesuit body had a legal claim to the restoration of those estates. The press has never acknowledged it, the public men have never acknowledged it, the pulpit has never