

would be engendered by the discussion of a question of this kind, for no matter what our religious views may be, whether we are Roman Catholic or Protestant, the moment you touch a question affecting a man's conscience, you rouse the most stubborn passions in his nature. Desiring to remove that vexed question from the political arena and take from the administration the power to deal with it, he moved the following resolution—

Hon. Mr. SCOTT—I spoke for myself. I think Mr. Blake would admit now, in the light of subsequent events, that he made a mistake when he proposed that resolution. I think the experience of the last five years would convince any one that it was a mistake.

Hon. Sir MACKENZIE BOWELL—It is not for me to vouch for the stability of Mr. Blake's opinion any more than I would for that of the hon. gentleman. We are all apt to change to a greater or less extent. It is only a question of time as to how it may affect us. However, Mr. Blake in his resolution said :

It is expedient to provide means whereby, on solemn occasions touching the exercise of the power of disallowance, or the apparent power as to educational legislation, important questions of law or fact may be referred by the executive to a high judicial tribunal for hearing and consideration in such mode that the authorities and parties interested may be represented, and that a reason or opinion may be obtained for the information of the executive.

Now, that is precisely the course that was followed by the administration on this question. I might quote from Mr. Blake's remarks, in which he proved beyond a doubt what his intentions were, and his great desire to prevent the introduction of those semi-religious or educational questions, and their being dealt with by the executive for the time being. My hon. friend says that in 1871, when the Separate School Act was enacted by the province of Manitoba, they then understood what they were doing. I quite agree with the hon. gentleman on that point, and I quite agree with him that they knew in 1890 what they were doing. It is a matter of satisfaction to me to know that the Conservative party in 1871 were in power in Manitoba, and that they were desirous of maintaining intact the obligations into which they had entered when that province came into the confederation, and it may also be a satisfaction to the hon. gentleman to know that it

was his party that was in power in 1890, when they violated the agreement into which they had entered when Manitoba became a province of the confederation. So it has been from the beginning with that party. If the minority in any province expects to have its rights preserved, whether that minority be Roman Catholic or Protestant, it will have to look to the Conservative party which has controlled the destinies of Canada since confederation, with the exception of five years. Minorities will have to look to the Conservative statesman to maintain those rights. Although I am not an advocate, nor am I in favour *per se* of separate schools, yet I hold that the word of the sovereign, when pledged, whether it is in accord with my particular sentiments or not, should be held inviolate in the governing of the country. The hon. gentleman referred to the debate which took place in 1870, and he stated correctly the opinions held by members of the House of Commons at that time. I remember the discussion well. I took the same position then that I take to-day, and the same position that I maintained in 1863, when I was defeated in my own county. I stated to my constituents then, that if the question was whether we should establish separate schools in this country or not, I should vote against it. But separate schools having been established, I would not be a party to depriving the minority of the rights that they had acquired under the constitution which governed them. I expected that the hon. gentleman would do as Mr. McCarthy did when he argued the question before the Privy Council—point out how I had voted on that question. I remember that debate. Mr. MacDougall stated distinctly that the passing of the Act without amendment would be a perpetuation of the separate schools in Manitoba. Mr. Chauveau, Mr. Cauchon and others took the same line, and it proves to my mind, and it must prove to every reader of that debate, this important fact, that when the resolutions were introduced, admitting Manitoba into the confederation, it was believed at that time that we were granting the same rights and privileges to the Roman Catholics of Manitoba that had been granted to the minority in Quebec and to the minority in Ontario in relation to schools. It was for that reason, believing that we were making that concession to the Roman Catholics to