

person would be more delighted than myself if the First Minister had been able to effect a settlement of this question that would be regarded as a just, fair and honourable settlement of the claim that, under the law and constitution of the country, as declared by the highest tribunal in the Empire, these people were entitled to. But, Sir, that is not the case, as I have shown. A settlement that does not give substantial justice, that does not meet the case, in my judgment ought not to be dignified by the name of a settlement. It may be forced upon the minority, they may be weak, they may be unable to resist, and a variety of causes may be brought into operation that will prevent them from obtaining their rights. But I am now speaking upon the position of the question in the abstract. My predecessor, Sir Mackenzie Bowell, when this judgment of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council was given, felt bound to bring forward a measure that was, in his judgment, calculated to carry out what the law and constitution of the country demanded, as declared by the highest tribunal in the Empire. I need not remind the House that, as representing the Government in this branch of the legislature, I submitted a Bill for that purpose. I need not remind the House that there was no effort I could make that was not made, that I put forth the most strenuous efforts possible, not only on the floor of this House, but with members of the party, individually as well as collectively, for the purpose of carrying that measure to a successful conclusion. The First Minister knows that the measure was not defeated for the want of a majority in this House, for we had an overwhelming majority ready to carry it. The hon. gentleman knows that the great body of his supporters left him on that occasion, and again and again their names are found on the Journals in opposition to the hon. gentleman, and are recorded as opposed to the obstruction by which that Bill was prevented from becoming law. As I say, when I was called upon to form an Administration, believing as I did, whether rightly or wrongly, according to the best light and information I possessed, that a wrong had been done to the minority of Manitoba, and that the Government of the country were bound to right that wrong in accordance with the provisions of the constitution, I went boldly to the country and, notwithstanding the great cleavage, that great division, in the party with which I had the honour to be connected, notwithstanding all the clamour, and agitation, and prejudice that were incited throughout the country on this question, in the faithful discharge of what I conceived to be my duty, I went forward and staked the existence of my Government upon that measure. Well, Sir, as the hon. gentleman knows, I failed, and the hon. gentleman knows how I failed. He knows that the language which he held, standing on this

side of the House as leader of the Opposition, directed to the Protestant portion of the community of this country, was entirely at variance with the language which he held when he came face to face with his own constituents in St. Rochs at Quebec; and the hon. gentleman knows that he there committed himself to the unqualified declaration that if he obtained power he would go further than I had gone. The hon. gentleman knows that he declared that if he failed in obtaining by conciliation the passage of a measure by the Manitoba legislature that would do full justice to his fellow-countrymen, he would fall back upon the law and the constitution, and give them their rights in their entirety. The language is fresh in the hon. gentleman's mind, as well as in my own, but lest he might think that I am giving, perhaps, a strong colouring to the attitude he assumed on that question, I will give him the opinion and declaration publicly made during the campaign, at a meeting at Brockville, by the hon. member for North Simcoe (Mr. McCarthy). Speaking of the then leader of the Opposition (Mr. Laurier), he said:

He, too, is a coercionist in the last resort. He has said that the touch should be gentle but the hand firm. He has said, in effect, that if separate schools are not restored by provincial action, they must be re-established by federal coercion. And I am more alarmed for Mr. Laurier's position because of the Mowat alliance. That alliance, the speech of Mr. Ross at Orangeville, the speeches of Mr. Laurier himself, all point in one direction—if the Liberals come into power an attempt is to be made to conciliate Manitoba in the first instance, and if that effort fails, as fail it must, then the firm hand of coercion is to be applied.

That is the declaration of one of the hon. gentleman's allies, one of his supporters, a gentleman who has contributed very largely to bringing him into power, and I therefore take it that his opinion will not be questioned. But whatever means were taken, the hon. gentleman knows that the support for which I had a right to look, both from a public standpoint and upon the question of principle, from the province of Quebec, I did not receive. The hon. gentleman is perfectly well aware that the question of race, if nothing else, proved stronger than the question of religion. But whatever the cause may be, the fact remains, that the efforts made by the Government of Sir Mackenzie Bowell, and the efforts made by myself, and by those of the Liberal-Conservative party who sustained me on that occasion, to restore the rights which had been taken away from the Roman Catholic minority of Manitoba, were defeated by the votes of the French Roman Catholics in the province of Quebec.

I do not want to raise any unpleasant controversy on this matter, but, without going into particulars, I draw attention to the fact that a large number of the hon. gentleman's supporters made distinct pled-