

behalf of the righteous men of the province of Manitoba, and of the whole Dominion. The Government is entitled to the gratitude, not only of the Catholics, but of all the righteous men, whether Catholic or Protestant, Mohammedan or Turk. Notwithstanding the clamourings of the hon. gentlemen opposite, the Government were not afraid to do their full duty from beginning to end. They pledged themselves to render justice, notwithstanding the opposition they met with in every province, notwithstanding the opposition made in this House by the hon. gentlemen opposite. The Government is now rebuked for not disallowing the school law, because they are powerless to upbraid them in any other respect. This is what the Liberals have cried out everywhere in the province of Quebec; the Government, they said, was too slow, it ought to have disallowed the law. Well, I say the Government did their duty to the end. They were bound not to disallow the law, in the first place, because the Catholics of Manitoba had decided to apply to the courts for the rescission of the law of 1890, which was thought unconstitutional. When the Supreme Court delivered its judgment as regards the constitutionality of the law, the time for disallowance had lapsed. I may add that the Government were bound not to disallow the law, because in that they were forbidden by prudence and wisdom. They would not have failed to denounce, in the province of Manitoba, as well as in the other provinces, such an attempt from the Federal power against provincial autonomy. And finally, I say that the Government could not disallow that law because it was constitutional, and the judgment of the Privy Council does not utterly do away with it. Therefore, while there is now an injustice to remedy, it is none the less true that the school law may continue in existence if the Manitoba Government is satisfied with it, provided the injustice complained of by the Catholics be remedied. Therefore, the Government could not disallow that law simply on account of the injustices done to the Catholic minority in Manitoba. As for that, it was the practice adopted and followed by both the political parties in this House not to disallow the local laws with respect to education. As to this, I will quote from the speech delivered by the Hon. Edward Blake in 1890, when he brought before this House his famous motion referred to, a moment ago, by the hon. member for East Simcoe (Mr. Bennett). In the course of his remarks, he said:

Those members who have long been here will well remember the New Brunswick school case, which was agitated for many years, in the course of which agitation I have hoped that some political aspects of that and of analogous questions were finally settled—settled, at all events, for the bulk of the party with which I act, and

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for the humble individual who is now addressing you. I regard it as settled, for myself at any rate, first of all that, as a question of policy, there shall be no disallowance of educational legislation.

This practice having been approved by all parties, it ill-becomes any one now to reproach the Government with not having disallowed that law. But I ask by what right the Liberal party could now reproach the Government with not having exercised the right of disallowance since they are the very party which rendered useless, inefficient and dangerous the exercise of such a right? They are the party which cried out in every province that the disallowance could not be exercised. It is the Liberal party again which, at the interprovincial conference held in Quebec in 1887, included in its platform the wiping out of the right of disallowance from our constitution. Let us see what Mr. Mercier, referring to provincial autonomy, said in 1886, before the Quebec Legislature:

The right of disallowance of local laws granted to the Federal Cabinet, is the negation of provincial autonomy, and it should be abolished, or confederation will disappear. The right of veto should reside not in the Executive power, but in the judicial power as the sole sure refuge against the passions of the political arena.

Later on, in 1887, at the time of the interprovincial conference which was attended by the Prime Ministers of all the provinces, I think, and even several other ministers from these provinces, and at which, if I am not mistaken, every province in the Dominion was represented, all the members of this conference, I say, were agreed on the necessity of drawing up and adopting as one plank of the platform of the Liberal party the following, which is to be found in the report of the proceedings of that conference:

That by the British North America Act exclusive authority is expressly given to the provincial legislatures in relation to subjects enumerated in the 92nd section of the Act; that a previous section of the Act reserves to the Federal Government the legal power of disallowing, at will, all acts passed by a provincial legislature; that this power of disallowance may be exercised so as to give to the Federal Government arbitrary control over the legislation of the provinces within their own sphere; and that the Act should be amended by taking away the power of disallowing provincial statutes, leaving to the people of each province, through their representatives in the provincial legislature, the free exercise of their exclusive right of legislation on the subjects assigned to them, subject only to disallowance by Her Majesty in Council, as before confederation; the power of disallowance to be exercised in regard to the provinces upon the same principle as the same is exercised in the case of Federal Acts.

So it can be seen that they claim the transfer of the power of disallowance to England. And why was this claim made? Because it was considered that the disallow-