

some respects, one of the most important that has ever been brought before Parliament. We have in this motion, in the name of toleration, a demand for intolerance, and we have, under the pretext of resisting encroachments upon constituted authority and the maintaining of the supremacy of the Crown, a motion asking for a violation of the Constitution. This motion is, in my opinion, laden with mischief, because it mingles religious prejudices and religious animosities with the consideration of the question. It mingles up stories of wrongs done and wrongs endured, as narrated in history, with fables and romances. I did not know when I heard the speech, especially the latter portion of the speech of the hon. member for North Simcoe (Mr. McCarthy) and the speech of the hon. member for Muskoka (Mr. O'Brien), whether they had derived their information from history or romance. I thought that the hon. gentleman who moved the amendment had studied the "Wandering Jew" more carefully than anything else, and that in all probability the political portion of his speech was derived from "Henry Esmond." In a country where you have 2,000,000 of Roman Catholics, and something less than 3,000,000 of Protestants, it is in the last degree mischievous to invade the political arena with religious discussions, and to endeavor to convert Parliament itself into an ecclesiastical council for the purpose of deciding what religious opinions ought to be encouraged, and what religious opinions ought to be suppressed. We must continue to be one people, or at all events a people of one country, and it is not desirable to make the people of Canada, like the Jews and Samaritans, the two sections of which would have no dealing with each other. There may be questions involving principles so vital to human progress, that the evils arising from undertaking to evade the question, the evils arising from acquiescence, would be greater than those which would flow from converting the country into two hostile camps; but it seems to me, Mr. Speaker, that this is not one of those occasions. In this case no such disagreeable choice is forced upon us. We have in this motion simply the question of the right of local self-government on the one side, and the assertion of a meddlesome interference and oversight on the other. We have in this motion, a proposition to set aside the judgment of a Province upon a question within its own jurisdiction, and to replace that judgment with that of a majority of the people, or a section of the people, in another Province. I do not think we can permit any such course to be adopted. If we were to do so, it would be practically an end to the system of federal government. The hon. member for Muskoka and the hon. member for North Simcoe have quoted history upon this question. But the history or the controversial papers written by men of strong polemical tendencies, the more they are studied the more the readers are likely to be led astray, and especially is history misleading when it relates to a remote period and when the surrounding circumstances and the enviroing influences of our own day are altogether different from that of the age about which they were writing. The past never repeats itself. The hon. gentleman assumes that it does; his speech was based on that assumption. I say the present is always being taken up into the past in the form of permanent results, and the future will differ from the present by all the influences that are to be found in the events of the age immediately preceding. Were it not so you might take a thousand years out of the history of a people, without any change in its subsequent history. The thousand years before and a thousand years afterwards would fit together, for the intervening period would be of no account. That is not the course of historical events, and when an hon. gentleman undertakes to tell us what this and that party believed or did 100 years or 500 years ago, without taking into consideration the circumstances under which those doctrines were laid down, or those principles enunciated or undertaken to be applied, he is giving information which

Mr. MILLS (Bothwell).

is calculated to mislead rather than to enlighten the people of the present day. I have no doubt that this question also is dangerous to public tranquility, from the consideration that it is a religious question. Men always feel they can go a long way when they think they are supporting their religious dogmas, or the religious dogmas of somebody else, and they will employ in the defence and in the promotion of those views, and those religious opinions and preferences, means which they would altogether set aside in the affairs of civil life. In order to consider with profit some of the legal and constitutional features of this question, and some of the legislation to which the hon. member for North Simcoe (Mr. McCarthy) has referred, we have to take into account the limits of government in former periods. We must remember we have largely circumscribed the field of government. There was an age when the Government undertook to control the whole domain of human action, when private domestic relations, the religious and political affairs, were all brought under the control of Government, and when the affairs of life, whether private or public, were regulated by the united authority of Church and State. Sir, in order to fully understand the legislation to which the hon. member for Muskoka (Mr. O'Brien) referred, we must remember that in the rise of the Teutonic kingdoms on the ruins of the Roman Empire, provincial churches were superseded by national churches, ecclesiastical persons were included in the government, and while men came there with spears and shields, there came also bishops and leading men of the church, and they sat in council together, and legislated together, and dealt with ecclesiastical and religious, as well as with civil matters; and so the legislation in a large degree covered everything relating to questions of religion and conscience, as well as to political affairs. Under the circumstances it was as much an act of wrong-doing and as much a violation of the law of the land to dissent from the rites and the polity, the doctrine and the discipline, established by the laws relating to the church, as it was to disregard matters of civil authority. And so every case of dissent was regarded as a case of sedition. Men and churches, whether they were Protestants or whether they were Roman Catholics, under those circumstances, were intolerant. It was a necessary condition of the state of society then; they could not well be otherwise. If a man sought to set up a separate church establishment, it was as much against the law as if he had undertaken to set up a separate political tribunal, or a separate judicial institution; and so, as I have said already, the domain of government was extended over almost the entire field of political and religious opinion and action. This was the condition of things during the Tudor period in England, and it was the condition of things, in a large degree, though not to so great an extent, in the period of the Stuarts. Now, let me call the attention of hon. gentlemen on the opposite side, who have dealt with this Jesuit question to some facts of history—and I am not going to say anything in defence of this order, I am not going to enter upon any such discussion, but I wish to call the attention of the hon. gentlemen to the past, and I would like to ask them, would they be willing that their rights should be governed, and their action controlled and circumscribed, by the intolerant acts of the church or of a religious society of that day, with which they are now connected. Take the reign of Queen Elizabeth, and in her reign there were upwards of 200 Roman Catholics executed for sedition or treason. The charges against them were political charges. I am speaking now of those who were put upon trial, and the records of whose trials exist, and we find that fifteen were executed for denying the Queen's supremacy in ecclesiastical matters, that one hundred and twenty-six of those were executed for undertaking to exercise priestly functions, and that eleven were put to death for the pretended plot of Rheims. Every one of those parties were tried, as Sydney Smith points out, for a political offence; but what was the