

feelings, and possibly to acrimonious discussion, were it not for the very strong sense which I have of what is due to my own convictions on the subject, as well as to the convictions of those whom I represent in this House, and, I will venture to say, to the convictions of the majority of the people of Canada. Now, Sir, one word with regard to my own position in the matter. Had the resolution or any resolutions by my hon. friend the member for North Victoria (Mr. Barron) come before this House in such a shape as to meet the wishes of those who think as I do on this subject, or had they come at such a period in the Session as to have given reason for the probability of a discussion, I should not have interfered. I wish to say further, Sir, that though I was elected as a supporter of the present Administration, and a supporter of their policy so far as that policy could be known, yet, at the same time, during my election contest, and on several subsequent occasions, I said, with the full approbation of my supporters, and I think with the approbation of a great many who did not support me as well, speaking in anticipation of such an Act as that now under review, and speaking in anticipation—because, as we know, coming events cast their shadows before, and we had had on many occasions indications from various sources and in various quarters, of an attempt to do what I think is inconsistent with the rights and privileges of the people of this country—I said that in my place in Parliament I should, regardless of consequences, and regardless of whom it might make or whom it might mar, I should oppose any attempt on the part of any nationality, or any party, or any race, or any religion, to exercise powers, or claim privileges, not guaranteed by treaty, or not secured by subsequent legislation. I am, therefore, acting perfectly consistently in moving this resolution and in taking this step, and not only so, but I would be recreant to my own principles, and recreant to the pledge I gave to those who sent me here, were I to fail in doing so. This resolution which I am about to place in your hands, Mr. Speaker, is, I think, sufficiently explicit, and sufficiently comprehensive, to leave no doubts in the minds of everyone as to what it means. It declares in, I think, reasonable terms, the limit to which the power of disallowance on the part of the Dominion Government should go, and I think, in view of the history of the last twenty years, it ought to meet the approbation of the House by the declaration that without a full and fearless exercise of the prerogative vested in His Excellency the Governor General, by the British North America Act, it is impossible that this country can maintain anything like a national existence. I contend, Sir, that while it may be possibly true that an Act may even be within the four corners of the British North America Act, and although it may be within the literal interpretation of that Act, yet, that if it

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violates a fundamental principle of the Constitution—a supposition which is quite possible—or if it in any way interferes with the general interests of the Dominion, if it brings a principle to bear upon the public welfare which the majority of the people consider to be detrimental, even though the Act may originate within that Province, then, Sir, I say this Government has a right and ought to interfere. I say that this House has the right, as the grand inquest of the nation, to discuss any question of great, national importance, and especially a question like this which has created a degree of attention on the part of the people of this country, which certainly calls for legislative notice. In the resolution, Sir, I have endeavored, in brief terms, to point out how we consider that Act violates the Constitution, how it interferes with the rights and privileges of the people, and why it justifies interference as being an Act prejudicial to the general interests of the people. Were I not to say a single word in support of the resolution, I think it would stand before the House as a sufficient manifesto of the sentiment which I and others in this House entertain in regard to the Bill which we are now about to discuss. Now, Sir, we shall, of course, be met with the contention that the Act passed by the Legislature of Quebec is one entirely within the purview of that Assembly—one with which neither this Parliament nor the Government of the Dominion has anything to do: Before entering into a consideration of that question, it would be well briefly to review the history of the subject. We find, then, at the time of the Conquest the Society of Jesuits established and carrying on active operations in all that part of the American continent which was under the jurisdiction of His Most Christian Majesty the King of France; and far be it from me to say one word derogatory to the manner in which that society performed those great functions. We found them here in possession of estates derived from three sources—chiefly from grants direct from the Crown, from private individuals, and from purchases by funds out of their own resources; but all were held by them, and necessarily held by them, according to the constitution of the society, for the promotion of the objects they had in hand—these two, I think, mainly: the conversion of the heathen Indians, and the education of the people of New France. Far be it from me, Sir, to say anything derogatory to the manner in which the first, at any rate, of those works were carried on by the Jesuit missionaries; and I pity the man who can read without emotion of the hardships, the trials and the sufferings endured by the Jesuit missionaries in their efforts to Christianise the heathen. It is hard for us in these days of luxury and comfort to realise what hardships and sufferings those men went through—sufferings which too often met their only reward in a crown of martyrdom, and which would only be endured from the highest and noblest sense of duty. After the Conquest, the

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