

think we will all agree with, was this : As a Roman Catholic I do not want any limitation upon the powers of my province. I am willing as a Roman Catholic to allow the province from which I come, and to which I belong, to have full and complete authority in the matter of education, as in every other respect ; and I warn the House—and, Sir, his words are prophetic, and if there was anything required to bear testimony to the foresight of that distinguished statesman, you find it in the passage which I am about, with your permission, to read on this very question. He said :

I need only mention that I have no desire that the rights of the Roman Catholic minority of Upper Canada shall be abridged, nor that the rights and privileges of any other denomination should be interfered with in any respect ; but I wish hon. members to bear in mind that the experience we have had in this country, not to allude to that of the neighbouring states, proves, that a denial of the right of the majority to legislate on any given matter, has always led to grave consequences. I need only mention the Clergy Reserve question. This, it must be recollected, was forbidden to be legislated upon by the Union Act ; yet it was the cause of fierce strife and legislation for many years. The original constitution of the United States prohibited the question of slavery from being interfered with by Congress ; yet an agitation for its suppression was early commenced, and has at last terminated in civil war. The agitation of the Clergy Reserve question produced a rebellion in Upper Canada. I say, that by making a constitutional restriction in respect to the schools of the minority, we are sowing the seeds from which will in the end arise a serious conflict, unless the constitution be amended. The minority will be quite safe on a question relating to their faith and their education in a colony under the sway of the British Crown ; but if you expressly withdraw that question from the control of the majority, the rights of the minority will not be safe in either section of the province if you distrust the action of the majority.

And so on. Then he moved, that the following words be added to the original motion :—

And that it be an instruction to the said committee to consider whether any constitutional restriction which shall exclude from the local legislature of Upper Canada the entire control and direction of education, subject only to the approval or disapproval of the general Parliament is not calculated to create widespread dissatisfaction, and tend to foster and create jealousy and strife between the various religious bodies in that section of the province.

That is what John Sandfield Macdonald was doing : he was expunging the clause which D'Arcy McGee had inserted, which he had inserted for the protection, not of the Protestants of the province of Quebec, but of the Roman Catholic minority in Ontario ; and Mr. Mackenzie, whose speech was also referred to, opposed this resolution ; and why ? He said : You, Sandfield Macdonald, are the very man who, in 1863, to the great injury of your party, caused the separate school law to be enacted, and you are now embarrassing your party friends by bringing

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up this question here : and, although I am not in favour of a separate school system and of limitation on the part of the provinces, yet I prefer to adopt that sooner than the scheme of confederation should come to an end. What he said was in these words :

If the hon. member for Cornwall (Hon. J. S. Macdonald) had shown the same zeal against the separate school system when he had the power to prevent legislation on that subject, he would have saved himself and the party which kept him in power some trouble. It seems curious that he who was so anxious to promote the separate school system then should now be anxious in quite another direction.

Further on, he said :

I formerly stated that I thought the separate school system would not prove very disastrous if it went no further. I do not now think they will do much harm if they remain in the same position as at present, and therefore, though I am against the separate school system, I am willing to accept this confederation even though it perpetuates a small number of separate schools.

Mr. Brown was also referred to. Let us see what Mr. Brown said on the same subject. He was taunted with having consented to the separate school limitation. What was the hon. gentleman's answer :

I admit that, from my point of view, this is a blot on the scheme before the House ; it is, confessedly, one of the concessions from our side that had to be made to secure this great measure of reform. But assuredly, I, for one, have not the slightest hesitation in accepting it as a necessary condition of the scheme of union, and doubly acceptable must it be in the eyes of hon. gentlemen opposite, who were the authors of the Bill of 1863.

So we have the statement here, that, whatever may be the effect of it—and I refer to it, not because, in my judgment, it can have any bearing on the interpretation of the Act, but because I want it to be understood, that these statements, made on the floor of this House, statements calculated to create prejudice and influence people's judgment, are not corroborated by the true historical account we have of the proceedings prior to confederation in 1867. Sir, will it be believed, that, although it has been pleaded, that this was a sine qua non as regards confederation, it was hardly referred to by the great leaders on either side of the House. Sir John Macdonald, in introducing these resolutions, never refers to the educational question. Why, we know what the trouble was. We know that there had been an attempt made under the constitution of 1841 to govern the Old Canadas on the principle of equal representation for Upper and Lower Canada. We know—and I happen to be old enough to remember it—I was not in public life at the time, but I perfectly well remember it, and, no doubt, there are other hon. members whose memory will go as far back as the date prior to 1867—the difficulty was this, that the whole people of Upper