

man of great kindness of spirit as well. He was kind to all of us, opponents as well as friends; and I cannot omit mentioning here the marked kindness and generosity of feeling with which, during many years, he treated myself who am now addressing you. More than once it has happened to me to receive from him, sitting on these opposite benches, before he came to sit near my hon. friend from Montreal East (Mr. Coursol)—I have received from him a little note, after I had said something that pleased him, expressing satisfaction with the way it was said, though not always concurring in the sentiments I uttered. Such was the spirit in which he treated his opponents, and the manliness he exhibited towards them I am sure was exhibited in a redoubled spirit towards his friends. How would he, who has gone from amongst us, have rejoiced at the late decision in this case, the last of his efforts; how would he have rejoiced to see that by the unanimous decision of the Supreme Court the view which he took as to the law was sustained in this case. Now we have no reference to that, and yet it was an important transaction. Parliament, by a Bill, decided that there should be a reference of this subject to the Supreme Court. It was thought important enough to do so, and a reference was made. The Provinces were called upon to take part in the proceedings, and five, I think, did take part—the Province of Ontario, the Province of Quebec, the Province of Nova Scotia, the Province of New Brunswick and the Province of British Columbia. From the Province of Manitoba, as we are aware by public documents, there had proceeded a protest against this license measure of the Government, although I do not observe that they took part in the case. I am not aware what was the attitude of the Province of Prince Edward Island. But we find most of the Provinces taking part in this transaction on one side, and the Dominion on the other; yet a transaction of that description, taking place under authority of that Act of Parliament, resulting, as it has resulted, is not thought worthy of being admitted into the Speech from the Throne. Why? Because the result is unpleasant to the hon. gentlemen, I suppose. Now, I ask the House, is it too late to retrace our steps? Remember that we meddled in this matter for one reason, and for one reason only, because it was said by the hon. gentleman that the local laws were waste paper, and that it was absolutely necessary that we should intervene. Remember that that was the ground upon which he invited his supporters to sustain him in passing his Bill. Remember that that alleged necessity was wholly disproved by the decision in the case of the *Queen vs. Hodge*; that since that time the insistence of the hon. gentleman that the local license laws were waste paper, has been by him withdrawn; that it was admitted they were valid, and therefore the pretence upon which Parliament was induced to interfere has disappeared and disappeared forever. Remember that from that time out it was only as an expedient and not as a necessity that we were told we should interfere; that it was admitted to be true that the local laws, which had been in force for seventeen years, were good and valid laws, and it was only because it was thought better in the interests of the whole Dominion that we should interfere, and if we could supersede them, invalidate them—submerge them, as the hon. member for Glengarry (Mr. Macmaster), I think, said—by federal legislation, we should interfere. Remember that in this policy of interference, of abstraction from the Provinces of that which it was decided by the Committee of the Privy Council is their right, we, in this Parliament, are engaged in a conflict with each one of six out of seven Provinces; and I have no reason to suppose that the attitude of the Province of Prince Edward Island differs from the attitude of the other Provinces. Now, remember that we are engaged in an effort to take away, against the will of the Provinces of Canada, a right which they have been exercising—validly,

as decided by the court of last resort—ever since Confederation. Remember, again, that since last Session, the Supreme Court has decided unanimously, not that the local laws are waste paper, as the hon. gentleman alleged, but that his Act is waste paper, that the Act which he passed because the local laws were waste paper is itself waste paper; and consider for yourselves whether it is useful, in the interests of this Confederation, to continue this struggle; whether it is calculated to strengthen the bonds of union, to strengthen our confidence in the federal system, to proceed into this Parliament further in a controversy in order to take away from the several Provinces a right which is theirs under the laws of those Provinces, that you may be able, by legislation of your own, to do the same things which they are doing, according to your fashion, and by that means, as the hon. gentleman stated, submerge their legislation. I do think we ought to retrace our steps, that we ought not to prolong this controversy, that we ought to repeal the objectionable parts of the Act which the hon. gentleman passed, and leave the Local Legislatures, according to the wants and wishes and the condition of public sentiment and opinion in each locality, to deal with the license question. I do trust that wiser counsels will prevail. I know full well that it would be a humiliating act for the First Minister. He made great pretensions. On the stump and elsewhere he declared himself infallible. He declared he had never been mistaken, but had always been sustained. It was a foolish action. It was not necessary to have done it, and he should have allowed his followers to have sounded his praises in that regard rather than have sounded them himself, because just so soon as he began to do so defeat after defeat took place. Once he began boasting of his infallibility, day after day the hon. gentleman found that he was mortal and fallible like the rest of us. Is it not much better that we should acknowledge that we are all fallible, even if some are immortal, and decide that we will not continue this struggle to save the hon. gentleman's *amour propre*, but we will leave the matter where it was for seventeen years, whence the hon. gentleman himself said he would never have dragged it, except under the belief that it was necessary in the public good, because the local laws were only waste paper? Let the local laws remain. If I could hope that my words have any weight I would pray the House to recognise, though it may be late, our true position; to apprehend the fact that we are, by our general policy, and have been for some time, rather weakening than strengthening the true bonds of union; that our centralising policy, our tariff policy, our policy of high and sectional taxation, our policy of extravagant expenditure, has been and is alienating important elements in Canada from sympathy with the union itself; that it is our duty to recall the promises that were made to the various Provinces which were induced to enter into this union, the promises of economical government and of low taxation, the promises with respect to trade, the promises with respect to a fiscal policy, the promises with respect to expenditure, which were made, particularly by the leaders in the Maritime Provinces, at the time the union measure was brought before them; and that we ought to set about the initiation, I might almost call it so, of a true federal policy, including that of a reduction of expenditure and such a reduction of taxation as the past extravagance permits—a policy suitable to our actual circumstances, instead of one based on hollow dreams already proved untrue, and which will, too late, if persisted in, end in a disastrous awakening.

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. Mr. Speaker, I can join, in the first place, most cordially in the commendation passed by the hon. gentleman opposite upon the mover and seconder of these resolutions in their maiden efforts. The hon. gentleman could not well do otherwise, and he has shown the sincerity of his belief in the ability with which those hon. members addressed the House by making as the basis