

self-government, so as to make that Government best for the people, by giving expression, in the new constitution of the country, to the desire and ability of the majority of the people to place upon itself those constitutional restraints by which the minority would be assured of receiving justice from the majority.

At the very outset, they were confronted by the special difficulty that these British-American Colonies had been peopled for over a century by two distinct races, whose ancestors for centuries past had been in almost constant conflict, and who were further separated by their traditional adherence to two distinctly different professions of the Christian faith.

By separating the English and French divisions of Canada into provinces, and by reserving to the provincial authority wide powers of legislative and administrative control, the Canadians of French descent in the Province of Quebec, in which then as now they constituted a large majority, were assured of the preservation of the right and privilege of preserving their language, their laws and their religion; while the measure of the concessions, which had theretofore been made by the Protestant majority to the Catholic minority in the English-speaking Province of Ontario, was, by the express provisions of the constitution, made the measure of the concessions which the Protestant minority might require of the Catholic majority in the French-speaking Province of Quebec. "Respect for the rights of the minority," said Sir John Macdonald, "is the great test of constitutional freedom;" and the history of every country, composed of two or more races, or in which two or more religions prevail, affords ample vindication of the truth of his criticism. By respecting the established conventions under which Canada has made such peaceful material and intellectual progress in the past half century, we establish the strongest guarantees of like peaceful progress in the future. Mutual understanding and mutual confidence are naturally more easily established among men of the same race, than among those whose primary instincts are inherited from different antecedent histories; but, while constitutional conventions may not always prevent in Canada misunderstanding and strife, these may usually be obviated by mutual insight and sympathy, by mutual respect and tolerance.

The future development of Canada—material, moral and intellectual—the worth of the contributions, which history shall record