

also the act of the increased population. The hon. gentleman from Marquette has laid a good deal of stress upon the fact that we are in a small minority, and he has taken a good deal of trouble in quoting figures to prove the fact.

Hon. Mr. BOULTON—In the west.

Hon. Mr. BERNIER—Well, we admit we are in a minority in the whole province. The hon. gentleman having so established that we are in the minority he has argued from that fact that such minority should not be allowed to have anything to say in the matter.

Hon. Mr. BOULTON—You have got your constitutional privilege the same as I have.

Hon. Mr. BERNIER—But the Privy Council has declared that we are the parties having rights and privileges in this matter. The others having done wrong, you cannot speak of their rights; they have no rights but they have wrongs to talk about. I ask pardon for the expression I am about to use, but there is about this contention a breeze of impertinence that I did not expect on the part of the hon. gentleman, on the fairness of whom I had always relied. We surely do not deny that we are in a small minority, but we resent the idea that because we are in a small minority, because we are weak, no attention is to be paid to our interests or our feelings. The law was passed in anticipation that there would be a minority. It was passed for the protection of that minority. The majority does not need such constitutional protection. It can take care of itself. Here is a law made, here is an agreement entered into, just in anticipation that in after years there might be a discrepancy in the numerical strength of the various elements that were to compose the population of the province. That law was made so as to give comfort and protection to the minority against the possible encroachments of the majority. That is the object of the law, but now the majority come and say, "Oh, you are a minority of no importance, we will do just as it pleases us, and you will have nothing to say. The majority rules. True, there is an agreement. True, there is a constitution construed in favour of the minority by the decision of the Privy Council, but all that does not amount to

anything, you are the minority, and we are the majority, and we need not trouble ourselves for all that." Does it not seem, rather, that the smaller the minority the more appropriate is the law, the smaller the minority the more cogent is the law, the more necessity of it must appear, the greater is the obligation of adhering strictly to the constitution? The smaller the minority, the more should the majority show their generosity in allowing their fellow-citizens to enjoy the rights which they had been told by that very majority they would have for all time to come. I am sure that the doctrine would not be applied to the minority of the province of Quebec. I am at present referring to something existing in the province of Quebec, which I think is an instance that presents about the same feature as our privileges in the west. Apart from the protection that every Protestant in Quebec demanded at the time of confederation, they required some further protection. They asked that a certain number of counties be reserved for them, and that those counties should not be changed only under certain circumstances. The majority in those counties were English Protestants. There are thirteen counties in that position. Since that, however, the complexion of the majority has changed, and the population has also increased. Should now that increase in population be a good reason to do away with the protection that was then promised—to do away with the agreement that was entered into by the province of Quebec, that was entered into in connection with all these thirteen counties? I do not think that such a contention could be sustained.

Hon. Mr. BOULTON—Could the Dominion government interfere in that?

Hon. Mr. KAULBACH—No.

Hon. Mr. ANGERS.—It could only be done by Imperial Act.

Hon. Mr. BERNIER—There is something astounding about the doctrine of the hon. gentleman. True, he says, there was an agreement and that agreement has been embodied in the constitution. That agreement has been relied upon by a large section of the people, that agreement has been ratified by the province itself at various times, that agreement bears the seal of Her