

which he calls coercion—that is the latest term—there must be a full inquiry, all means of conciliation must be exhausted, and it must be a last resort. Well, Sir, from 1890 to 1896 the minority have rested quiet. They have been knocking at these doors for justice and action. When does the hon. gentleman propose to act? Is there nothing definite? Are hon. gentlemen opposite to go into the next campaign with no limit of time as to his policy? Take his fiscal policy on the trade question. The leader of the Opposition says, that within forty years he proposes to bring it about. That is definite. When does he propose to bring about the rectification of the position of the minority, and give them justice? In the one case it is a matter of time, in the other of eternity; forty years in the case of free trade, but an absolutely indefinite time in regard to justice to the minority in Manitoba, except that it is to be after the general elections. Inquiry? What inquiry does the hon. gentleman seriously ask for? Does he ask, that we shall ascertain by evidence on oath what the prejudices of Roman Catholics are in regard to this question of religion? Did the judges of the Privy Council prove false to their trust and make a great error in what they laid down, without equivocation, as an absolute certainty, which was well known and of common notoriety, in regard to these prejudices? Why, Sir, if we have erred at all, it has been in connection with the careful inquiry, and the careful investigation, and the constant threshing out this case has undergone. If we have erred at all, it is because the delay has been too long. I say, that the position of the minority is in a sense splendid; they have suffered, suffered grievously, and yet all they are asking is, that the law of the land, as interpreted by the highest judicial authority in the Empire, be enforced in the regular and proper manner. Let me run through a chronological statement of the question, a large part of it taken from the book of Mr. Ewart, which will shorten the time. For instance, in July, 1892, the decision in the Barrett case was given. In November, petitions of the Catholic minority to the Governor General were presented. In 1893, on 22nd January, argument was fixed. The Manitoba government refused to appear, and only the representative of the minority addressed the Governor in Council. On 22nd February, the Dominion Order in Council was adopted, and this was a part of it:

The committee therefore advise that a case be prepared on this subject, in accordance with the provisions of the Act, 54-55 Vic., chapter 25, and they recommend that if this report be approved a copy thereof be transmitted by telegraph to His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor of Manitoba, and to John S. Ewart, counsel for the petitioners, in order that if they be so disposed the government of Manitoba, and the said counsel, may offer suggestions as to the prepara-

tion of such a case, and as to the questions which should be embraced therein.

On 8th July, 1893, no reply having been received from the Manitoba government, and no suggestions as to the form of the case to be referred, having been made on its behalf, the draft case was approved:

The Minister recommends that the case as amended, copy of which is herewith submitted, be approved by Your Excellency, and that copies thereof be submitted to the Lieutenant-Governor of Manitoba, and to Mr. Ewart, with the information that the same is the case which it is proposed to refer to the Supreme Court of Canada touching the statutes and memorials above referred to.

In October, the case was argued before the Supreme Court at Ottawa. Mr. Wade appeared as counsel on behalf of the province of Manitoba, but declined to argue the case; and the court requested Mr. Christopher Robinson, Q.C., to argue in the interest of Manitoba. Now, I call particularly the attention of the House to a document that has already been alluded to, but which I venture now to put on record, and that is the Order in Council approved by His Excellency the Governor General, dated 26th July, 1894. It is a communication to the Manitoba government from the Dominion Government on behalf of the Roman Catholic minority of Manitoba, complaining of the law of 1890, and praying for relief. That Order in Council set out with considerable fulness the grievances complained of by the minority, and it was communicated, along with a copy of the memorial itself, by the authorities at Ottawa to those of Manitoba. From the concluding paragraph of that order, I quote the following extract:—

The statements contained in this memorial are matters of the deepest concern and solicitude in the interests of the Dominion at large, and it is a matter of the utmost importance to the people of Canada that the laws which prevail in any portion of the Dominion should not be such as to occasion complaint of oppression or injustice to any class or portion of the people, but should be recognized as establishing perfect freedom and equality, especially in all matters relating to religion and to religious belief and practice, and the committee, therefore, humbly advise that Your Excellency may join with them in expressing the most earnest hope that the legislature of Manitoba may take into consideration at the earliest possible moment, the complaints which are set forth in this petition, and which are said to create dissatisfaction among the Roman Catholics, not only in Manitoba, but likewise throughout Canada, and may take speedy measures to give redress in all the matters in relation to which any well-founded complaint or grievance be ascertained to exist.

That I call an order of conciliation, that I call a request as cordial and kindly as could be made by one government to another, to give full, ample and fair consideration to those representations. How was that treated? We are continually charged with acting harshly; but that document was never,