

among French Canadians and English speaking people in Canada, simply because of the barrier of religion, so that those gentlemen who desire to bring about a fusion and pretend it can be done by obliterating the language should really seek to convert them all to Protestantism if they wish to accomplish their purpose. That would be a great task—an impossible task. I do not think legislation can be enacted to say that you shall be a Protestant and not a Roman Catholic. It seems to me the whole matter is an absurdity. In the debate which took place in the Commons in 1890, when I was present, the whole contention of those who introduced the resolution at that time, was that this country could not be British until the French language disappeared. At that time I thought as I do now—do not worry about the French language. If you want to accomplish the object you desire, you must legislate to make them all Protestants, and I do not think any one will undertake that task. Dealing for a moment with the subject of the French language, I may be pardoned, perhaps, if I make a few comments. In my humble opinion, it would be desirable that every Canadian in Canada should be educated not only in English, but also in French.

Hon. Sir MACKENZIE BOWELL—Hear, hear.

Hon. Mr. EDWARDS—That is my opinion, and my hon. friend who has just said "hear, hear," agrees thoroughly in that, because he sent his grandchildren down to Quebec to be educated.

Hon. Sir MACKENZIE BOWELL—And my own too.

Hon. Mr. EDWARDS—He is a broader minded man than some people think, and if he discusses this question, I think he will approach it without animus and will display the largeheartedness which characterizes him. In travelling abroad, how convenient it is to understand the French language. A traveller can go to almost any part of the world if he can speak French. Although I speak French—I am very sorry to say imperfectly—I was thoroughly at home when I travelled through France and Italy. My wife said I would be laughed at, but not one Roman or Frenchman laughed at me. They said I spoke very good French indeed. My view is that not only should there be no embargo on the use of the French language in our schools, but that it should be encouraged in every way. I want to make one contrast—and I do this in all

kindness—between Ontario and Quebec in that respect. In a way the separate school question is not involved in this discussion, yet in the province of Quebec, which is the home of separate schools, established for a Protestant minority and not for the French, there is no question as to what language they shall teach. They teach what they please. They may teach English entirely if they wish. Some gentlemen may say, Yes, that is true, but that is one province, and this is another province, and we are all British subjects and we shall have but one language in this country. Now I do not think that that is British. It does not appeal to me that that is the system of Great Britain, because in Great Britain the greatest liberty in that respect is given. There is no question at all about that. To give you a few illustrations. In Switzerland, French, Italian and German are the languages; in Belgium the Flemish and French are the languages. It does not follow as a consequence there is not a united Belgium, and when you come to Great Britain, the mother of liberty in every respect, what do you find? There is the Gaelic, the Erse, the Welsh, in the Isle of Man, the Manx, and in the Channel Islands the French, and there is no restriction as to the teaching and use of these languages, and it is not pretended for one moment, that Britain is not a united country. Of course it is, and those who think that in order that this country should become perfectly harmonious in every respect the uniform language must be English, cannot call themselves real, true British subjects. They do not believe in British institutions; Great Britain is the great colonizer she is, because she has given to the various colonies she possesses the greatest freedom in all respects, and it is because after the capitulation of Quebec, followed by the Treaty of Paris and the treatment which Great Britain accorded to the French population of Quebec, that ever since that time the French-Canadian subjects in Quebec have been the true British subjects that they are. There are some gentlemen who say, if you are going to encourage and promote the teaching of the French language in Canada, why do you not also claim the same rights for the German and other nationalities which compose this country. Well, if there are any groups of them such as there are in Quebec, and parts of Ontario, I certainly would have no objection whatever. But is there a difference—Yes, or No?