

people who are anxious to cooperate with the government in an effort to solve this problem for the benefit of their own people and for the advantage of the community as a whole.

I have hastily sketched the situation, but I want to say that we consider this is a joint problem of the Dominion and provincial governments. We believe that the time is opportune for action on behalf of the people of the district. Through you, Mr. Chairman, I urge that the Secretary of State bring this matter to the attention of the government. I know the Minister of Justice has some knowledge of it, and on behalf of the people I represent I urge a joint inquiry into the whole Doukhobor situation and problem in an effort to work out a solution which will be satisfactory to all. I think at this time that is possible under the most favourable circumstances that have existed since the community came to Canada. I suggest that inquiry be made into the lawlessness of the small minority and that action be taken to prevent it in the future. Second, I suggest the education of the children of those who refuse to obey Canadian law. There are still some children of the sons of freedom living particularly in the small village of Crestova, and at Gilpin, which is in the riding of the hon. member for Yale, who do not attend schools. I think that is a situation which has to be taken up and corrected. Then there is the question of the ownership of land and the possibilities of satisfactory settlement. While at the present time the land is held by the land settlement board of British Columbia and the Doukhobors have no legal title to it, during the years of mismanagement under Peter Verigin II many of these people paid hundreds of thousands of dollars into the community which was wasted by mismanagement. They feel that they have a moral right to the lands, and they resent being asked, as it were from their point of view, to pay twice for these properties. When we consider the amounts spent in other directions, I think it would be a good investment for British Columbia and the Dominion of Canada to make some arrangement to let these people have some of these lands at a reduced price. It would assist in the solution of the question. They feel keenly in this connection, and I suggest that the matter should be investigated and something done along these lines to meet the situation.

I come now particularly to that branch in which the Secretary of State is interested, especially since the passing of the Citizenship Act, and that is the question of instructions in the principles of citizenship. In that

[Mr. Herridge.]

community the Secretary of State has a splendid opportunity, within one group and by cooperation of many within the group, to instruct these people in the principles of Canadian citizenship.

Then there is the question of the franchise. The Doukhobors were able at one time to vote in provincial elections in British Columbia, but this was changed by law, and then later in the federal field, the Conservative members, led by the Right Hon. Mr. Bennett, argued that the British Columbia act should be extended to dominion elections. I am glad to say that at that time the present Prime Minister, then leader of the opposition, said that he did not think it advisable to go back to Old Testament times and seek to visit the iniquity of the fathers upon their descendants unto the third and fourth generations; and the members of the C.C.F., including the late Mr. J. S. Woodsworth, made a strong protest against taking the franchise away from people in a wholesale manner. Legislation was passed and the Doukhobors were then prevented from exercising the franchise. I am not suggesting that all these people are capable of exercising the franchise at this time, but how can we build them up into Canadian citizens with such a law? What do we offer the hundreds of these people who have gone and purchased properties and are now living as Canadians? What do we offer them under this legislation now existing on the statute books if we continue to prevent them from exercising the franchise and, according to the law, prevent their descendants also from exercising that privilege for all time?

As a matter of fact, we have Doukhobors who served in the Canadian forces and who, by reason of that service, were given the right to exercise the franchise; but the wife, because of this legislation, has not that right. I emphasize again, I am not suggesting that all these people are capable of exercising the franchise at the present time, but I say that the present arrangements are not ethical and do not demonstrate common sense. I suggest that provision should be made whereby all those who wish to live according to Canadian law and by Canadian standards and in support of Canadian institutions, should, after qualifying for citizenship, be granted the franchise.

In conclusion, on behalf of my constituents I urge this government, in cooperation with the provincial government of British Columbia, to give immediate consideration to the wishes of the people I represent with a view to solving this long-standing social problem. I am certain that, if the problem is approached with determination and understanding, the