

all, is that these hon. gentlemen brought it forward in the course of this debate. They reminded the House of what happened during the war of the American revolution, how emissaries came to this country from the revolted Protestant colonies to the south. These emissaries came to the French Canadian priests and the French Canadian people and invited Canadians to throw in their lot with the revolution. These hon. gentlemen reminded us how both the French Canadian priests and the French Canadian people scorned the advances made to them in 1774 to join a rebellion against Great Britain and in 1812 to give sympathy and aid to those who were at war with Great Britain. These people decided to remain British citizens and they were loyal and sincere in the stand they took. I agree with all that and I am proud of the stand taken by the French Canadians on those occasions as are these hon. gentlemen themselves. But I should have been glad had these hon. gentlemen gone further and explained—in order that we might understand the point that they were making—what other position these people could have taken. Had they pursued any other course than the one they did, they would have lost British citizenship, and that they did not want to do. They preferred to be British citizens rather than become citizens of a country in which they could not have maintained the privileges guaranteed by the settlement of 1759. I would like to have had these hon. gentlemen go a little further, and explain to me what object the French Canadians of those days could have had in joining the United States. These hon. gentlemen are protesting against the establishment here of the kind of schools such as they have in the United States. Had the French Canadians joined the United States, would not that race by this time have become assimilated with the Americans? Would not those who joined the United States and their offspring have been educated in the public schools which were spoken of in such a disparaging way by the Prime Minister? Considering these things, I cannot see what point these hon. gentlemen sought to make in referring to these old events in their speeches in this debate.

A good deal has been said about the Quebec minority; and I also propose to deal with that matter, as coming from the province of Ontario. I wish to deal with it in a way that will not be offensive, I am sure, to my fellow-countrymen in that province. I do not propose to criticise the Quebec educational system. In that province, the public school system, which is Catholic, appears to suit our fellow-countrymen of French origin. These schools have been instrumental in preserving the French language, and in keeping the religious observations of the church uppermost in the minds of the people. The schools are practically a part of the church.

And through the devotion of the clergy to the object in view, there is in Quebec a devout people, who have a great reverence for the Christian religion, as it has been taught to them. And I believe that nowhere in Canada does there exist a better living people than the people of the province of Quebec. So far as the Catholics of that province are concerned education is a union of church and state—such a close union as it is not possible to achieve in any other part of Canada.

The Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Fisher) referred at some length to the situation in the province of Quebec. He was well informed on the subject because he not only represents that province as a minister of the Crown, but he has lived in that province probably all his life. But I think, Sir, that the Minister of Agriculture was most unfair in the way he handled this question and in the charges he laid against members on this side of the House and against the Conservative Government throughout the country. Standing in the place and speaking as a representative of the Crown, in which capacity he has charge of an important department of our affairs in every province of the Dominion from the Atlantic to the Pacific, he made the charge that the Conservatives were endeavouring at the present time to do away with separate schools in every province of this country. Here is what this hon. gentleman said:

We find the Tories now wedded to the idea of the right of the majority, the absolute right of that majority, which they say demands that in Canada there shall be no separate schools, and that the Catholic people of this country shall not be given consideration for their cherished principles and cherished feelings. Sir, I do not wonder at this.

Now, Sir, what authority had the Minister of Agriculture to make such a statement in this House, a statement that will be sent broadcast throughout the country? What he has said is utterly without foundation. There has been no attempt in this House, nor have I heard of any movement in this country which would justify any one in coming to the conclusion that we desire to do away with separate schools in Canada. I would like to have the minister furnish even one particle of truth to substantiate this statement. Are the members of the Conservative party trying to do away with separate schools in Ontario or in Quebec where the separate schools are guaranteed under the constitution? Or are they trying to do away with separate schools in any other province? Not a bit of it, and I regret that a minister of the Crown charged with the great responsibilities that the hon. Minister of Agriculture is charged with should have made such a statement and that it should have been spread broadcast in the way it has been over this country.

In discussing this question, as I have said, the situation in the province of Que-