

Mr. BURNHAM: I do not think that is necessary. The Opposition is disposed to joke about this matter. It is not a matter for jocularity, and if the people of this country become impressed with the idea that either side can treat it as a joke, they will find, when they have reported to their constituents, that it is not half the joke they supposed. I am sure on further investigation—and there is plenty of room for investigation—that if it can be shown to this House that the allegations are really made, if it can be shown that there is a *prima facie* case and that it is of such importance as to warrant action, there is not a man in the House who does not say, for the protection of himself, let alone for the protection of the House, that it will be necessary to hold a court of inquiry. There was one thing I was very much surprised at in the language of the hon. gentleman and that was when he said that this Parliament was above the courts.

Mr. OLIVER: Hear, hear.

Mr. BURNHAM: As soon as the people of this country understand that a body of men, 221 in number, are arrogating to themselves superiority over the courts I think they will give themselves up for lost. We have to do with the appointment of the members of the courts and with the making of laws, but those who compose the judiciary are put to one side for the purpose of interpreting those laws fairly, and I think for us to hold the sword over their head and say we are above them, that we control them and that, if necessary, we will chop off their heads, is to say that which is unwarranted and improper.

The allegation has been made indirectly that there is in this country a conspiracy for the extinguishing of the French-Canadian race, a race that has borne itself with all the honour and distinction that we should look for in one of the foremost races of the world. There is at the present time a conspiracy on foot to deprive them of their language, and to deprive them of their language is to deprive them of their customs, their history, their traditions and of their institutions. Whether it is proposed that this shall be accomplished by means of the Government, or in some other way, let me say, representing a large number of English-speaking people who, I know, hold the same opinion, that, much as we have been inclined to differ from them in the past, and often as we have had to meet them in keen debate, nevertheless, bearing in mind their loyalty to the Empire in the past and their loyalty in the present, and their recognition of Imperial needs, we will never even at the sacrifice of the English language go back upon or prove recreant to such a people. As far as I am

concerned I would prefer never to speak another word of English if it meant that the French-Canadians should be deprived by force of the right to speak their language whenever they feel so inclined.

At six o'clock, House took recess.

After Recess.

House resumed at Eight o'clock.

Mr. O. TURGEON (Gloucester): Mr. Speaker, in rising this evening I wish to give thanks to the Prime Minister, as the senior Acadian member representing the people of the Maritime Provinces. I have at various times during the year, entreated him to replace the one Acadian Senator departed from the province of Nova Scotia with one of the same race from that province. We have been waiting for a long time; but knowing, as we all do, that applications for such positions are made by everybody, I had occasion to doubt the success of our application. I wish to express to him the desire of the people, whom I have had the honour to represent in this House for the last twelve years, and, in the absence of the Prime Minister I will ask one of his colleagues, perhaps the Postmaster General, to kindly take my message to him.

I wish also to express some sympathy and gratitude for the few words spoken by the hon. member for Peterborough (Mr. Burnham), in regard to the French teaching in the province of Ontario; more so do I admire his conduct and his expressions, coming as they do from one belonging to the Conservative party, and I trust that the uncomfortableness which may perhaps reign between us will be of short duration. I speak more particularly in behalf of the French people who, as the hon. member for Peterborough has said, like to stand by the spirit of the constitution as well as by the letter.

I wish to draw the attention of the House for a few moments to matters not contained in the Speech from the Throne. In the province of New Brunswick, we are, as hon. gentlemen all know, much interested in the Intercolonial railway. It has been expected for a long time that the Parliament of Canada would acquire the branch lines of that railway which in the Maritime Provinces, and more particularly in the province of New Brunswick, has a large territory to itself. The ex-Minister of Railways and Canals in the session of 1910 brought in a Bill providing for the acquisition of those branches, but owing to the erroneous judgment of the election on the 21st of September, 1911, we were not able to accomplish our project. But we expected from day to day that the present Government would lose no time, and would bring in a similar Bill during last

Mr. MACLEAN (Halifax).