

remain a subject of Denmark. Before 1870 the Sleswick Danes had actually the right of settling in Denmark. The outbreak of the Franco-German War caused about 8,000 men of military age to leave their old home. According to one authority, nearly 40,000 of the Sleswick Danes had become 'optants'—that is, had taken the 'option' of Danish nationality—or had emigrated, by the end of 1880. As Prussia objected to these 'optants' returning to their original home after a short residence in Denmark, a conference was held in 1872 between the two Governments. The result was that most of the 'optants' were allowed by the Prussian authorities to return and remain unmolested, provided that they gave no well-founded cause for complaint, and did not display a hostile spirit towards Prussia.

Thus a final settlement had been made of the question of the 'optants'. They were liable to be expelled at any moment as 'objectionable' characters. To have allowed them to become naturalized would have meant an increase in the majority of Danish electors; and therefore these North Sleswickers who had returned found themselves political outcasts in their own country; and they were debarred from all social intercourse with their friends and relatives if such intercourse was thought to have the slightest political tinge. They were treated as scapegoats by the Prussian authorities, whenever an election resulted unfavourably for the Government. The Danish voters, however, refused to be influenced by the peril to which their 'optant' relatives and neighbours were exposed.

At the elections for the Reichstag in 1886 North Sleswick gained a new leader in Gustav Johansen, a skilful politician who enjoyed great personal popularity, not only among his fellow countrymen but also