

tain rights from a group known as Hutterites. In Ontario there was passed at the recent session of the legislature an act known as the police act, which is a direct threat against the democratic right of every citizen. In Quebec we have seen a religious minority persecuted to some extent because of its views. How can we blame the provinces for violating civil rights when the federal government of Canada has given them the lead? I do not hold them any more responsible than I do the present government. We realize the danger in idly standing by while a minority is oppressed. It has been said in the house frequently and it must be said again that, where a minority in Canada is oppressed, then every minority in Canada is in some danger.

There is in Quebec a sect known as Jehovah's Witnesses. According to the 1941 census, they had 136 members out of a total population in the province of some 3,331,882 persons. Many of those witnesses are today being accused of seditious libel and of being a nuisance. They are a small sect. In all probability, compared with other denominations they are poor. With great certainty I say they have no friends in high places. Some of these witnesses circulated a pamphlet called "Quebec's Burning Hate". Because they did so many were arrested and appeared before the magistrate and, as was their constitutional right, were allowed out on bail. There was a Canadian resident in Montreal, one Roncarelli by name, sympathetic, I assume, to the witnesses, who took up the bail which was authorized by the court; but when he did so he was penalized by the executive of the province for doing so, penalized to such an extent that his living was perhaps placed in jeopardy. Here is an example of interference by the executive with the judiciary, and it is dangerous. I think most of us in this house will disagree with much of what the Witnesses of Jehovah said; we will deplore perhaps the way they say it; and yet I maintain as a democratic citizen that they are entitled to freedom to say it so long as they do not violate the laws of the land.

We in the C.C.F. hold no brief for those who attack the religious faith of another. We have no brief for abuses of freedom. But I recall to your attention, Mr. Speaker, what Benjamin Franklin said, that abuses of freedom of speech perhaps ought to be stopped, but to whom dare we give the power to do so? That is the recurring problem we shall always find in democracy. These abuses which we dislike so much must be stopped, but to whom do we dare give power to stop them?

It may be argued that the witnesses were intemperate in language. That I do not know,

[Mr. Stewart.]

but I think it is a fair comment to say that those who opposed them were equally intemperate. I quote from *Le Temps* of Quebec:

The Witnesses of Jehovah are impostors, scabby sheep, malefactors who must be destroyed before they can corrupt certain of our own people.

I believe that the editor of that paper has forgotten that great responsibilities go along with the great privileges of democracy, and one of the responsibilities is this:—Freedom must be given to those whom we believe to be in error and whose views we abhor, so long as they remain within the laws of the land. We say that in Canada we have freedom of religion. Freedom of religion means that the individual has the right within the law to try to persuade others to come to his way of thinking. Freedom of religion implies the right to proselytize. That freedom has been denied by the provincial authorities of Quebec, and to that extent I say that freedom of religion has been denied.

One magistrate by name, Mercier said, when some of the witnesses were before him:

Any measures are justified in ridding our Christian society of those transgressors of all laws, these enemies of all religions, these witnesses of falsehood.

It may be that they are witnesses of falsehood, but there are other examples, fortunately not many of them, in that province, who are proven witnesses of falsehood. I refer to that small group with no great following in Quebec known as the Union des Electeurs, who publish a periodical known as *Vers Demain*. In recent months this group has been printing extracts from the protocols of Zion. Any normally intelligent person knows that the so-called protocols are arrant forgeries and frauds and anyone who will print them does so only with the intention of stirring up group against group and creed against creed. Let me read what the editor of the *Canadian Register* says in its Quebec edition, and I should like to pay tribute to the editor of that paper. It is the organ of the English-speaking diocese of the Roman Catholic church in Montreal. This paper says:

It is therefore with feelings of shame and horror that we have noted the publication in *Vers Demain*, organ of the Social Credit party in this province, of that spurious calumny of the Jews known as the "Protocols of Zion." This fantastic forgery, long known to all serious students as false, contains all sorts of nonsensical "revelations" of non-existent "plots." It is a vulgar and crude libel of our Jewish brethren which is capable of causing great harm among prejudiced or uncritical readers.

But still the attention of the executive of Quebec is centred on the Witnesses of