

LePage says, to smooth over these difficulties. It is not necessary to know if a man is of French or English or German origin, but to know if he is a Canadian. I do not think the government is acting in the best interest of the country, and I know hundreds of men in British Columbia who consider that this circular is not in the best interest of Canada, and that the sending of it out is a thing much to be regretted.

Mr. BARKER. I would like to ask the hon. minister if he is aware that Mr. Côté has issued another circular, one that is quite as improper, apparently, as the one issued in Ontario, in which he asks that returns be made direct to him as assistant commissioner of matters wholly outside his duty as commissioner? Does the hon. minister know that Mr. Côté has asked to have returns made to him of French Canadians who do not live in this country at all, but who live in the United States?

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE. I will answer the hon. gentleman's (Mr. Barker's) question first. I am not aware of such a circular as the hon. gentleman indicates. But the description is such that I might not be able to recognize it. I shall find out at once whether such a circular has been issued.

Mr. BARKER. The hon. gentleman could see it published in a dozen newspapers within the last two weeks. It is not a secret.

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE. I do not know the circular, and have not seen it. I confess that I do not study the newspapers as closely as hon. gentlemen opposite, or as closely as some hon. gentlemen on this side do. I have not seen the circular he has alluded to.

Mr. BORDEN (Halifax). Might I suggest, before the hon. gentleman proceeds, it might be desirable, for the information of the House, that copies of all circulars sent out be laid on the Table. The hon. gentleman referred to one that was sent out in answer to questions that had been asked—

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE. Instructions sent to the commissioner. It was not in the form of a circular. It was sent to a number of commissioners in the province of Quebec.

Mr. BORDEN (Halifax). Are the instructions comprised in these laid on the Table?

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE. No, it was sent in response to questions sent in by the commissioners.

Mr. BORDEN (Halifax). I think the House, before passing this vote would like to have a copy of the instructions to all census commissioners, enumerators, and so on, or to any of them, and a copy of all

circulars sent out either by Mr. Côté or by any other officer of the department.

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE. I might say that we are receiving every day questions by the commissioners to which we send answers. If the hon. gentleman wants all these questions and answers, I will lay them on the Table, but it will make a pretty big volume, and I do not think that is what he wants. But, of course, all general instructions could be brought down, and this would probably cover what the hon. gentleman wants.

Mr. BORDEN (Halifax). That is all I had in mind.

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE. Now, with regard to the hon. member from Victoria, B.C. (Mr. Prior), and what he says concerning Mr. Côté's circular. In the first place he has read correspondence that I recognize as having read myself. This circular was sent to gentlemen in different parts of the country, whose names were given to Mr. Côté—

Hon. Mr. PRIOR. By whom?

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE. By different people—they were got in any way they could be.

Hon. Mr. PRIOR. Who were they given to?

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE. I really cannot tell. Mr. Côté was instructed to find out who might aid in securing them amongst the population of French origin, who in times gone by have been, to a certain extent, misled as to the census taking. The object is to lead to these people giving correct and full answers to the enumerator's questions. I may say that in large parts of the province of Quebec, some people were told that the questions of the census were to afford a basis for imposing taxation. In another place there was a story of conscription for military service. And in other parts equally absurd statements were circulated. It was with the desire of removing such difficulties from the enumerators' way, that the circular was issued.

Mr. WALLACE. Why should they be sent out 'confidential'?

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE. Because there were the stories circulated amongst the French Canadians. We have not received complaints that the same stories were circulated amongst the English-speaking people. The only object was to secure an enumeration and to prepare for the correct answers to the questions put. My hon. friend from Victoria says he does not see why questions as to origin should be asked.

Hon. Mr. PRIOR. Hear, hear.