

Yes, I think there is a vast difference. As is well known by every one, the Province of Quebec was first settled by Frenchmen, who of course became French Canadians. After the capitulation how many English were there in Canada? There were just the Scotchmen that were disbanded from a few regiments and settled on the St. Lawrence. What became of them? They all became converted to the Roman Catholic religion. They inter-married with the French and became Frenchmen with Scotch names and you can find the Macs of all kinds down on the lower St. Lawrence, and the Ross' and the Warrens, and in fact all Scotch names are found there. That assimilation arose when those people settled in among the French Canadian population, took on their habits, their language and their religion, and simply became French Canadians. Some might say in answer to that, that the same thing will be applicable to French Canadians because there is an English majority in Canada. I do not think that is possible. The province of Quebec is a large and populous province and it is going to become a much more populous province. The French language predominates, and I think will always predominate there; and I do not think it possible that it can be Anglicized. I am not going to say that I think it is desirable, because I think perfect unity, perfect good feeling and a perfect understanding between the two great races which compose the nationalities of this country, will make it a much greater Dominion than if they were all one. An Englishman who lives in a community that is largely composed of Frenchmen is a man of broader views, of more liberal ideas than a man who is housed by himself and knows nothing of the outside.

Several hon. GENTLEMEN—Hear, hear.

Hon. Mr. EDWARDS—The British language is truly the language of commerce, but the French language is the language of diplomacy and it is just as necessary to know the one as to know the other. In Great Britain or Europe a man is not considered equipped unless he is familiar with both languages, and the same should apply to Canadians. I want to give you a little contrast, if I may, as applied to this honourable Chamber and the Commons. Let an hon. gentleman make a French speech here, and how many hon. gentlemen will understand him, apart from the French Canadian members of the Chamber. Let the same thing occur in the Commons and

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how many will understand him? Very few; I think you could count them on less than the fingers of one hand. But go down to the Legislature of Quebec and contrast the difference; every single man will understand an English speech that is made there, and there are few if any men there who will not speak as fluently in English as in French; showing clearly and conclusively that the French Canadians do not resist in any respect the acquisition of the English language.

Several hon. GENTLEMEN—Hear, hear.

Hon. Mr. EDWARDS—The French people are most desirous of learning the English language, and what they do say is, "We desire to learn the English language but we desire to preserve for ourselves the language of our forefathers." And can you find fault with that? I for one do not. Now I will give you another illustration that may surprise hon. gentlemen here. I have been 45 years in the lumber business on my own account, manufacturing lumber on a somewhat large scale. The bulk of my Canadian business has always been with the City of Montreal. I said a while ago that the English language was the language of commerce, and I am going to prove it now absolutely. I have yet to receive the first letter written in the French language from one of my many customers in the city of Montreal.

Several hon. GENTLEMEN—Hear, hear.

Hon. Mr. EDWARDS—And in all fairness to the gentlemen of that race I wish here to pay them a compliment. Nineteenths of the business which I have done in Montreal was with French-Canadians, but I never attended a meeting of creditors in the City of Montreal in my life, and never had any difficulty whatever.

Several hon. GENTLEMEN—Hear, hear.

Hon. Mr. EDWARDS—Those gentlemen not only do their correspondence in English but they keep their books in English. That spirit of resistance to the English language does not pertain in any part of the Province of Quebec. If you go to Montreal or Quebec tomorrow and enter any store you like, or mingle with any French-Canadian you like, you will find that almost universally they speak freely and fluently the English language. There is no resistance to English, nothing of the kind. They cultivate, and desire to cultivate the English language. It may be said, "Oh yes, that is true but those people, who have moved into the Province of