

Lower Canada—and I call the attention of my hon. friends from Upper Canada to the fact—that there has been any excitement, or movement, or agitation on the part of the English Protestant population of Lower Canada in reference to the common school question. (Hear, hear.) It is the first time in the history of the country that there has been any serious apprehension aroused amongst them regarding the elementary education of their children. I am not aware that there has ever been any attempt in Lower Canada to deprive the minority of their just rights in respect to the education of their youth. I do not state this simply as my own opinion, or as the result of observations which I have made alone. I have received letters from those who have been cognizant of the educational system in Lower Canada for many years, confirmatory of this in the strongest degree. It was also observed and commented upon by the three commissioners who came out from England to this country in 1837, and who in their report said it was one of the most remarkable circumstances that came under their notice, that they found two races, speaking different languages and holding different religious opinions, living together in harmony, and having no difference or ill-feeling in respect to the education of their children. Now we, the English Protestant minority of Lower Canada, cannot forget that whatever right of separate education we have was accorded to us in the most unrestricted way before the union of the provinces, when we were in a minority and entirely in the hands of the French population. We cannot forget that in no way was there any attempt to prevent us educating our children in the manner we saw fit and deemed best; and I would be untrue to what is just if I forgot to state that the distribution of State funds for educational purposes was made in such a way as to cause no complaint on the part of the minority. I believe we have always had our fair share of the public grants in so far as the French element could control them, and not only the liberty, but every facility, for the establishment of separate dissentient schools wherever they were deemed desirable. A single person has the right, under the law, of establishing a dissentient school and obtaining a fair share of the educational grant, if he can gather together fifteen children who desire instruction in it. Now, we cannot forget that in the past this liberality

has been shown to us, and that whatever we desired of the French majority in respect to education, they were, if it was at all reasonable, willing to concede. (Hear, hear.) We have thus, in this also, the guarantee of the past that nothing will be done in the future unduly to interfere with our rights and interests as regards education, and I believe that everything we desire will be as freely given by the Local Legislature as it was before the union of the Canadas. (Hear, hear.) But from whence comes the practical difficulty of dealing with the question at the present moment? We should not forget that it does not come from our French-Canadian brethren in Lower Canada, but that it arises in this way—and I speak as one who has watched the course of events and the opinion of the country upon the subject—that the Protestant majority in Upper Canada are indisposed to disturb the settlement made a couple of years ago, with regard to separate schools, and rather to hope that the French majority in Lower Canada should concede to the English Protestant minority there, nothing more than is given to the minority in the other section of the province. But still it must be conceded that there are certain points where the present educational system demands modification—points in which the English Protestant minority of Lower Canada expect a modification. I would ask my honorable friend the Attorney General East, whether the system of education which is in force in Lower Canada at the time of the proclamation is to remain and be the system of education for all time to come; and that whatever rights are given to either of the religious sections shall continue to be guaranteed to them? We are called upon to vote for the resolutions in ignorance, to some extent, of the guarantees to be given by subsequent legislation, and therefore my honorable friend will not take it amiss if I point out to him where the Protestant minority desire a change, with a view of ascertaining how far the Government is disposed to meet their views by coming down with a measure in which they may be embodied. The first thing I wish to mention has caused a good deal of difficulty in our present system, and that is, whether non-resident proprietors shall have the same right of designating the class of schools to which their taxes shall be given as actual residents. That is one point—whether a person living out of the district or township