

that my hon. friend made the challenge that he did make to hon. members on the other side of the House. As I stated a moment ago, I am loth to discuss a question of this kind. I have no desire whatever to discuss a question which raises distinctions of creed or nationality. I think we ought to be as one people throughout this country and I may say this for the province of Ontario to which I belong that whatever may be the opinions of our hon. friends from the province of Quebec they will find as much liberality and toleration in Ontario as can be found in any part of the world.

Mr. T. S. SPROULE (East Grey). Mr. Speaker, I did not intend to say anything on this subject just now, but for the frequent references to myself by the hon. member for Labelle (Mr. Bourassa). They were very pointed. Whether he considered them offensive or not, to my judgment, they were offensive, and they were uncalled for and nothing on my part, as far as my judgment enables me to determine, would justify the references which the hon. gentleman made to me. He started out by asking a very significant question: Are we like the serfs of Russia that we have not freedom of speech in this House? Are we? The exhibition we had for the following twenty minutes is the best answer I can give to that question, because, if there ever was in any civilized country in the world, a desire to restrict freedom of speech the tirades to which he has treated this House, ought to have induced this House not to have listened to him. Now, the hon. gentleman went on to say that my hon. friend the leader of the opposition (Mr. R. L. Borden) and his party are opposing the Pope. What justification had he for that statement? What word was ever said from this side of the House that would justify that statement? Not a single word that I have heard and none that I am aware of. But, he says that we are opposing his church. Was there anything said in the shape of abuse of his church? There is no desire or intention to abuse his church, but our desire is to give that church its rights the same as every other church in the country and to respect its rights as much as we respect the rights of every other church. Then, the hon. gentleman said: Has not every civilized government in the world its Papal representative, its ambassador? He asks the question which I can answer by telling him that there is not one in France to-day. Diplomatic relations have been broken off. Then, why should the hon. member for Labelle stand up and say that we are worse than France, that we are worse than England and that we are worse than other countries? I could point to many countries, even Italy itself, in which diplomatic relations do not exist between the Pope and the government. Do they exist in the United States? Not at all. There is, it

is true, a Papal representative, but to deal with the church, not to negotiate with the state, and he has no relationship with the government of the United States and does not pretend to exercise any authority over, or to assume the right to dictate or to negotiate with the government in regard to matters of state. So that, in no civilized country that he has mentioned is there a condition known to exist which the hon. gentleman claims is all right in this country. There are a few questions which I think you might reasonably ask. We know that there is a Papal delegate here. That is a self evident fact, but we might ask the question: Who brought him here? Some one has stated that it was the present government. Well, I think that was too wide; I would say that the Reform party brought him here. The right hon. leader of the government (Sir Wilfrid Laurier) does not deny that he was one of the forty who sent an application to the Pope to send a delegate here. We are not objecting to it and do not object to it if he confines his duties to the work that the right hon. gentleman told us was the work for which he was brought here. What was he brought here for? What did he come for? The right hon. gentleman has told us what he came for. There was a difference between us and the bishops of our church and it was to settle disputes between the Roman Catholic people and their clergy. If he confines his operations to that I say we have no reasonable ground for complaint. He has a right to be here and remain in this country just as long as he likes and so far as he can succeed in readjusting the differences between the Roman Catholic people and their bishops it is nothing that concerns us and we do not desire to interfere with him in any way. Has he confined his operations to that line? This is the first time in the history of Canada that we have had such an ablegate. Commencing with Monseigneur Mery Del Val, the hon. member for Labelle stated that we have had several of them before. I believe there was one away back in the eighties but it was scarcely found out he was in the country until he was out of the country. The hon. member for Labelle does not wait to hear any criticism that may be made of his remarks or to answer any questions that may be asked of him. We know that he is a remarkably valiant man and that he displays a great deal of that peculiar grace which is indicative of courage. But he seems always to exemplify the old saying that:

He who fights and runs away  
May live to fight another day,

for every time he finishes speaking he gets up and clears from the House. He has not the moral courage to sit there and listen to the replies to his tirades or answer the questions that may be asked him. Therefore, he ought to be the last one to talk about a lack of courage. But, what are the