

Mr. FITZPATRICK. I did not mean to say that my hon. friend (Mr. Sproule) did not know anything about it, but that the Huntingdon 'Gleaner' does not know. And that is a charitable way of putting it on my part, because if they do know and yet state what they do, it will be necessary for me to use another expression.

Mr. FISHER. My hon. friend (Mr. Sproule) takes exception to the Minister of Justice (Mr. Fitzpatrick) saying that he does not know anything about it. Why the hon. gentleman (Mr. Sproule) said so himself—

Mr. SPROULE. I have just said so, and I say so still. I do not pretend to know anything about it, but I drew attention to the fact that the Huntingdon 'Gleaner,' a newspaper printed in the eastern townships stated that Protestants had to pay taxes toward Roman Catholic schools.

Mr. FISHER. If the Huntingdon 'Gleaner' said that—I am not aware that it did, but the hon. gentleman (Mr. Sproule) says it did and I suppose he knows—it stated what is not correct. My hon. friend (Mr. Sproule) the other night was talking of this matter and was asked a question by an hon. gentleman on this side, and his own reply was 'I do not know anything about it.' I acknowledge my hon. friend's frankness and I acknowledge the correctness of his statement. I have no doubt that he does not know about these things. What I object to is that the hon. gentleman says the things he does, yet will not come to the province of Quebec to learn the facts. And I am sorry to say that he is only an example of a large number of people in the country who are discussing these questions without knowing anything about them.

Mr. SPROULE. Will the hon. gentleman (Mr. Fisher) allow me to quote what the Huntingdon 'Gleaner' says?

Another consequence of these sectarian schools should never be lost sight of, and that is that where Protestant farmers are too few to have schools they are taxed to support Catholic schools, which sometimes have as their teachers nuns or Christian brothers.

That is the statement of a newspaper the proprietor of which, I understand is a very prominent and respectable Reformer.

Mr. FISHER. That particular statement has enough truth in it to make it worse than a plain lie. Under the school law of the province of Quebec, in any municipality, the minority, provided there are a certain number of families—I think the number is three or five—can petition to have a dissentient school. They can declare that they do not belong to the religion of the majority. When they so declare, they cannot be taxed for the school of the majority. It may be that in a particular municipality there are two or three Protestants living, all the other residents being Roman Catholics. They

Mr. SPROULE.

may not be able, with the taxes that they themselves pay, to maintain a separate or dissentient school. But, they can be joined, for school purposes to any adjoining municipality where there is another little group of the same kind. And I venture to say that to-day in the province of Quebec there are not a dozen Protestant families who are not in such a position that, if they choose, they can be within reach of a Protestant school and can have their taxes applied to the support of a Protestant school. But all this may be true of Catholics also in the province of Quebec. I have known cases, in days gone by when there were comparatively few Catholics in the eastern townships, when in certain municipalities there would be only one or two families of Catholics,—not enough to support a dissentient school. They had the opportunity to join with the Catholics in adjoining municipalities to support a school to which they could send their children, and, under the school law of Quebec, their taxes were applied to that school. If there were any cases where the Catholics were too few to support a school, they would have to support a Protestant school, just as the Huntingdon 'Gleaner' says Protestants where they are too few to have a school of their own must support a Catholic school. And if their children go to a Protestant school, they would have to hear the teaching of the Protestant religion, just as Protestants under similar circumstances would send their children to a Catholic school to hear the teaching of the Catholic religion. The law puts the Catholics and the Protestants on exactly the same footing and justice is given to all. I have stated that the Protestants constitute about one-eighth of the total population of the province of Quebec, and that the taxes collected for the schools are divided proportionately among the Protestants and the Catholics. In the second place, the provincial government gives large grants in aid of primary or elementary education, and those funds are generally divided according to population. That is the general principle, but I want to say further that there are a great many individual items in those funds which are not divided according to population, but of which the Protestants get a far larger share than they would have a right to expect on that basis. I have here a statement of last year's estimates voted by the Quebec legislature. There is a vote of \$80,000 for superior education. Of this \$4,000 is specifically given to the Laval University and \$2,000 is given as a compensation to Protestant higher education. That is to say of the \$6,000 special vote the Protestants get one-third and the Roman Catholics get two-thirds; but if the division were made according to population, the Protestants would only get one-eighth, instead of one-third. The remaining \$74,000 is divided strictly according to population between the two committees and distributed by them,