

of the CBC must be carried on cable television in Ontario, Saskatchewan and Alberta, just as it must be in Vancouver. If parliament no longer wishes its national policies to apply nationally, then it will be up to parliament to change those policies for the CRTC and for the country. If it wants to make exceptions for certain provinces, then parliament must do so. But the hon. member should be under no illusion that parliament's will can be evaded simply by adding or subtracting members from regulatory bodies such as the CRTC.

Perhaps the hon. member is being somewhat impish tonight. This theory may have merits and may have a certain logic which is being expounded tonight. However, I find it somewhat strange that the hon. member should espouse this theory since, if the parliamentary guide is correct, she was born in Alberta, educated in Manitoba, and also appears to be a late arrival in British Columbia.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. I regret to interrupt the hon. member but his allotted time has expired.

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES—ALLEGED IMPROPER DESIGNATION OF
"BILINGUAL"

Mr. Gordon Ritchie (Dauphin): Mr. Speaker, on December 22 I asked the President of the Treasury Board (Mr. Buchanan) a question regarding Mr. Yalden's report. The question arises over an item in which Mr. Yalden stated that there are many people who are classified officially bilingual but who are not in fact. We have heard a great deal about this problem, and the debate on bilingualism increases. I do not think that this increase in the level of discussion is meant with any malice, but it is a very serious matter, is very divisive, at least in the eyes of most, and it is not getting at the real cause of the problem.

The Commissioner of Official Languages in his statement was critical especially of English-speaking public servants who were declared bilingual and who were receiving salaries commensurate with this classification. It was suggested that some of these people could not discuss last night's hockey game in the second official language.

The news item implied that most offenders were something that they really were not, and they were English-speaking public servants. In fact, anyone who deals with government realizes that many French-speaking civil servants are unable to perform adequately in the second official language. This is not meant on my part as an indictment of any particular person. It is always difficult to work in a second language without long practice and repeated use of that second language. This is perhaps only an illustration of the emotion with which this problem is posed to Canadians.

● (2215)

It is perhaps easy for national politicians to come forward with some solutions, and it is easy to say that if only certain concessions are made to the citizens of Quebec all would be well. The fundamental problem is not one of bilingualism, but what the relationship of Quebec with the rest of Canada might

Adjournment Debate

be. When one observes what has happened in the last ten to 12 years in Quebec I think one can get some indication of how the people in that province feel. Whether they were Union Nationale, Liberals, or now of the Parti Québécois, in the last dozen years they have wanted to preserve their own cultural identity, their customs and language, and to make what they consider is a better place for themselves in their own province. I would not want to disregard their aspirations, but all of these efforts are at the expense of Canada. There is little difference between Bill 22 and Bill 101. While Quebecers wished to have a uniquely French language and culture, they have complained that in the rest of Canada the French language and culture should be maintained for their benefit.

A prominent person on the Ontario educational TV network made it clear that he was talking about language and culture. He wanted to have a language and culture that was French in nature wherever he went in the rest of Canada. For him this was not wrong in itself, and it is understandable, but it creates problems for the rest of Canada which may never be resolved. Indeed, to accede to this person's point of view would mean that other languages and cultures would take a back seat—in effect, a type of melting pot culture.

We have borrowed much from Britain which, over the centuries, has absorbed waves of refugees from Europe. In fact this makes the present British culture. In the last two centuries we have had the American tradition, which again has meant the assimilation of many peoples of different languages and cultures, with a type of English language with its own distinctive Americanism. I think this is an important facet of Canadianism outside the province of Quebec, where the melting-pot function is at work with the fusion of many peoples into one Canadian identity.

Therefore, the aspirations of the people of Quebec in the language and culture idea are diametrically opposed to the assimilation and melding of various peoples. Few of the various races that make up the Canadian mosaic outside the province of Quebec are interested in maintaining their own language and culture to the exclusion of the Canadian identity. Looked at in this light, it seems hardly likely that the present system of bilingualism, which was of necessity present in the civil service long before this legislation was conceived, is the best basis on which the Québécois and the rest of Canada can continue and have a lasting arrangement. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Thomas H. Lefebvre (Parliamentary Secretary to President of the Treasury Board): Mr. Speaker, in reply to the hon. member's first original question, let me say that I think the use of the term "bilingual" by him is as unfortunate as the use of the word "phony" by the Commissioner of Official Languages when describing public servants occupying positions requiring the use of both official languages. Some public servants are very fluent in both languages, others are not. The point is that no definition exists as to what is a true bilingual and what is not.

Official languages policies speak of languages proficiency requirements, but these are not so universal as to represent a