

Committee on the Official Languages Bill, and motion No. 6 (Mr. Baldwin).

Mr. Steven E. Paproski (Edmonton Centre): Mr. Speaker, I wish to refer to page 10509 of *Hansard* for June 20, 1969 at which time I mentioned that General de Gaulle did not make his discovery of Canada until 1967. I regret I cannot find any evidence of any Ukrainian or Polish explorers in Canadian history books. But when I see Chirikov listed as the discoverer of Alaska in 1741 that has a familiar ring. In any case, we are all here now and we must make the best of it. We must make this the best country we possibly can.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Paproski: I say, therefore, that the Canadian people of all races and cultures have a right to have their wishes respected. The constitution that we are dealing with is the constitution of Canada, a federally chartered nation. The constitution is the charter of that nation. It is not, and must not, be a charter for one group or one segment to the exclusion of others. We cannot have a constitution embodying in its structure a principle of discrimination. We cannot have a constitution favouring some to the disadvantage of others. In a free, democratic nation there must be respect for the rights of all and that respect must be embodied in that nation's charter, the constitution.

I think it is a well known principle that Canada is, in effect, a nation with a written constitution, like that of the United States. There is, in fact, no one, all inclusive document. We do have the British North America Act of 1867. But we have a number of other acts, such as the Act of Union of 1841; the Statute of Westminster, the Bill of Rights of 1961 and other similar statutes which can be regarded properly as forming part of Canada's constitutional law. And this bill calling for official language rights will, if passed, become part of the body of constitutional law.

I am rising today in order to put before this house a view of the problem that I feel has been rather neglected. Coming, as I do from a group of Canadians numbering close to one-third of the population—the third force—those neither of English nor French descent, I feel that their views are worthy of consideration for a good many reasons. I feel an obligation as a member of this house to speak on behalf of a very large group among our fellow citizens who, while looking with tolerance and good-will upon the English and

Official Languages

French cultures, are not bound to them by ties of blood or history. I think it is a point of view which needs to be put forward and one which is worth listening to, not because it is my own, but because it is the view of a very large proportion of the people of this country.

We hear a great deal about the English fact and the French fact in this country, but there is another fact, a third fact, which we do not hear so much about; yet it is a very important fact and should not be neglected. It is that there are in this nation nearly 7 million people, or one-third, who are neither English nor French by descent. The figure given by the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism is 26 per cent. I feel that is restricted and comes from a narrow interpretation. When you consider, for example, that the Scots and the Irish are not really English but that they were among the first to be culturally absorbed by Britain as it were, or at least up to a point, you find an interesting picture. Even in this august chamber, it is no problem to find 25 or 30 members who are of neither English nor French descent.

It is not my intention to review at length the statement in the B and B report by Dr. Rudnyckyj on the question of subsidiary or supplementary languages. But I would refer to one or two of his conclusions:

The above considerations led me to the conclusion that there is an objective need to recognize some extra privileges for the languages of ethnic groups in regions where there is a concentration of speakers of a particular mother tongue. I believe that the following languages are spoken by enough people to be considered: Eskimo and Indian in the Northwest Territories and the Yukon; German and Ukrainian in the prairie provinces; Italian in the metropolitan areas of Toronto and Montreal.

• (3:50 p.m.)

Mr. Alexander: And in Hamilton.

Mr. Paproski: And in Hamilton, the hon. member for Hamilton West said.

This statement by Dr. Rudnyckyj is deserving of careful consideration by this chamber. In another place, he makes a statement which I consider extremely significant and deserving of support by the majority of Canadians.

The category of moderately minded Canadians of non-British and non-French origins, however, shows a remarkable degree of agreement and positive support for constitutional recognition, use, and teaching of the two official languages of Canada from coast to coast, and for a greater degree of official bilingualism in the federal and provincial governments as well as in the public services. These people are firmly convinced of the utility and future survival of the French language in