

minority language rights. There could be no doubt where I stand. There can be no question as to where the obligation of a national political party lies. It lies today, as it shall tomorrow, in ensuring that our minorities in Canada are treated at all times with dignity and with justice.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Rod Murphy (Churchill): Mr. Speaker, I was born in Manitoba. I have lived all my life there. I grew up in the south; I represent the north. I know that my province is not the domain of bigots. I know that my province is not the domain of racists. Most Manitobans have a tolerance for those with different religious beliefs, those from different language groups, those with different colour skin.

Part of our history has been to welcome people from the Ukraine, to welcome people from Germany, to live with the native population of our province. Louis Riel is the father of Manitoba. We have been tolerant of each other from that day. We have had our problems. We have had unjust laws passed by the Manitoba Legislature. The actions that are taking place in the Province of Manitoba at this time are to restore the rights of those who have been deprived by those unjust laws. It is imperative that we in this House and Canadians throughout this country, regardless of their political beliefs, work for the protection of each and every minority in our country.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

● (1230)

Mr. Murphy: Mr. Speaker, I, too, have watched television and seen the antics of those who have disgraced Manitoba and shamed me personally. Those people do not represent the majority of the people of Manitoba.

There are others who have legitimate concerns about the course of bilingualism. There are people who are legitimately concerned about the employment opportunities of their sons and daughters if bilingualism is entrenched in the Province of Manitoba. It is a legitimate concern which all of us as parents can understand. But it is not the real issue in the Province of Manitoba.

The legislation before that legislature is limited. It limits French language services to areas where the population warrants those services. It limits the use of those services in government offices. I say to all Canadians that it does not provide complete protection and complete use of services to the Francophone minority in Manitoba, but it does recognize the historic right of that population and that where there is a French speaking community, there should be services for those people.

The proposals in Manitoba provide adequate safeguards for both the minority and the majority. That is important for all of us to understand, important for all Manitobans to understand. I am a Manitoban who speaks only English. I am learning French but it is a slow process for me. I represent a riding where there are two official languages, English and Cree. In my riding 30 per cent of the population speak Cree. They are

Official Languages

not affected in a positive way by this legislation, but they are people who can understand that in Canada we are not just English and French; we are not just English, French and Ukrainian; we are not just English, French, Ukrainian and German. We are a mosaic, not a melting pot. In Canada, as in Manitoba, we must respect that fact. We must respect the concerns and the aspirations of the Ukrainian population, the concerns of the Mennonite population, indeed the concerns of all segments of our population. In the Manitoba Legislature that is what is being attempted, and both I and my caucus support it not only on historic grounds but because it is the right thing to do in Canada; it is the right thing to do in the Province of Manitoba.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Murphy: Since 1870 we have had protection in our Constitution in Manitoba for the French and English fact. In 1870 the French-speaking native population was the majority. Louis Riel, as a result of a rebellion, negotiated with the Government of Canada for the protection of both English and French. That is a proud part of our history and we should all recognize that. Now that the English are the majority, now that other cultural and linguistic groups have surpassed the French, we should also show the tolerance of Riel. We should recognize that there are some services, some basic rights, for a group which granted the minority of that day, the English, those rights.

We in this nation are anything but monolithic. But if the majority in our nation ever decides that it is going to use its power as some in the Province of Manitoba are presently trying to do, if they are going to use that power on the French-speaking population of Manitoba with its constitutional guarantee which has been upheld by the Supreme Court of Canada, then, Mr. Speaker, no Canadian is safe; no religious minority is safe, no linguistic minority is safe, no individual or group of individuals with different beliefs from the majority is safe in this country.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Murphy: The Government of Manitoba can stand with pride. They are fighting a difficult fight. They are fighting a fight not only on behalf of the 6 per cent of the population of Manitoba who speak French, but they are fighting a fight on behalf of tolerance throughout this nation. In Manitoba that tolerance is being challenged by a minority party in the legislature. It is being challenged on the streets and in meetings held throughout that province. But we as Members of Parliament, as Canadians, and we as Manitobans, must fight for tolerance throughout this nation. We must fight for tolerance throughout Manitoba, and we must fight for tolerance in the Legislature of Manitoba.

That is what this resolution does. We are saying that we will work to protect the rights of one of our minorities. It is a small minority in Manitoba, a larger minority in other parts of Canada, but nevertheless a minority; and we believe, along with the Manitoba Government, that we must support that