

gualism simply by passing a resolution in this House. I suggest we really do more to help the cause if we discuss the issue frankly, if we recognize and discuss any mistakes that have been made, with a view to correcting them and with a view to making the implementation of the principles of the legislation fairer and more acceptable.

The Prime Minister has put forward this resolution. I must comment on it very frankly. I speak as a supporter of the principles. I think I might be personal enough to say that I speak as one who, in the course of defending the principles and the policy throughout the country, bears a few scars as a result thereof.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Stanfield: It seems to me that the resolution is put forward with a view to trying to screen some of the failure and mistakes that the government has made in implementing the Official Languages Act. One does not have to be a vigorous anti-government partisan to recognize the dangers of many of the needless strains that the government, by its methods, has caused in connection with the program. Not the least of its sins has been in the area of arousing suspicion, distrust and confusion in the minds of many of those Canadians who are neither French- nor English-speaking in their origin. The government cannot say that it acted in the absence of any advice which was constructive and intended to be helpful.

[*Translation*]

Four years ago, during the debate on the Official Languages Act, I suggested the importance of recognizing and encouraging the various ethnic groups established in Canada. I stated at the time that we had to make those people understand that they should not see in the bill a form of depreciation and even less of negation of their own cultures.

I then suggested that the committee could perhaps draft a preamble to the act underlining that idea.

In addition, we recommended the incorporation into the act of an amendment recognizing the right to speak other languages and the importance of helping the conservation and development of other cultures. This amendment stipulated among other things that it was impossible to recognize the linguistic duality of Canada without in so doing trespassing on the rights of other cultural groups.

[*English*]

The government, Sir, rejected that amendment. Indeed, it took the government until October, 1971, even to get around to doing anything in recognition of these other cultures in Canada. Its failure to do so earlier, particularly two and a half years earlier at the time of the introduction of the Official Languages Act, was a source of profound regret to every Canadian who wanted to see the act operate in the interests of unity in the country. I think parliament at that time created the impression in the minds of a good many Canadians who are neither of French nor British stock that they were being treated as second-class citizens; and I think the move of the government, non-contemporaneously with the act—in fact, a couple of years later—was belated. The government also cannot duck, and I say this very earnestly, its record of generating concern

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in the country about the downgrading of the monarchy and the erosion of symbols and institutions.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Stanfield: Sir, this has nothing to do with bilingualism.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Stanfield: It has nothing to do with bilingualism. I see my hon. friends opposite shaking their heads, but I say very earnestly that in the minds of many people who were concerned about the erosion of these institutions the two became quite erroneously linked.

Mr. Allmand: Let's have some examples.

Mr. Stanfield: My hon. friends can laugh; they can do anything the like. I say we are only going to make progress—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Boulanger): Order. I regret to interrupt the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Stanfield), but it is becoming very hard to follow his speech. I think that this afternoon we had very good order in the House. I must frankly admit that I hear noise on both sides. I hope that hon. members, who know the rules of the House and have respect for them, will listen to the Leader of the Opposition with great attention.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Stanfield: Mr. Speaker, I have no desire to arouse the House. I would be very grateful if everybody would just sit quietly and listen to what I have to say. I just say that this coincidence, in the minds of many people, has been an unfortunate circumstance which has not helped but which has poisoned the atmosphere.

Let us return to the record of the government in relation to the public service. Here again, the government created hostility toward its program, and again the government cannot claim lack of constructive comment at the time the legislation was introduced. During the debate on the Official Languages Act on May 16, 1969, I said, for example, and I hope I will be forgiven for quoting myself:

If this bill is not administered fairly and sensibly it can very easily create more disunity than unity. I say that in all sincerity. We could very easily create more new grievances in trying to remove old grievances . . .

This bill must be administered in such a way that it will not destroy the careers of the many Canadians now in our federal public service who are not bilingual. I suggest the emphasis ought to be on providing bilingual government services to the extent it is practical rather than upon the public servants providing those services being bilingual. This must be done to the fullest extent possible so that both French—and English-speaking persons will feel at home in the federal service. The emphasis should be placed to the fullest extent practical upon the bilingual aspect of the service rather than the bilingual aspect of the servant.

● (2020)

At the time I spoke in the debate the government had already got off to a ham-handed start involving secrecy and lack of frankness on the one hand and a flippant and