

Criminal Code

whether these interests lie in giving each part of the country all the prerogatives it needs to develop in harmony. Mr. Speaker, this does not mean hating everybody, but simply to accept an elementary principle of freedom, of brotherly equality, and to realize from the very beginning what we need to create in this country is such a climate that the whole world would be impressed. Mr. Speaker, it is on these principles that we should base our decisions as far as the constitution is concerned.

As a Quebecker, I do not have to wonder how people in British Columbia or in the prairies should solve their problems. They know much better than I do if it is sensible or possible to have trials in French in Vancouver or in Victoria. Mr. Speaker, that is not where the problem lies. It is at the regional level that these rights and privileges must be determined, it is up to each region rather than to the federal government to determine them. That is why even though this piece of legislation would seem to correct certain century-old anomalies, it would have been fairer to ask the provinces to legislate so as to ascertain their requirements in the light of their own needs and capabilities.

So, Mr. Speaker, even though I certainly agree with this action, I disagree that we should blind people to the facts and that the government should use this bill which was railroaded, which was even prepared in a rush, this legislation I repeat, which was drawn up in English in order to protect the rights of the French people.

Mr. Speaker, here we are in 1978, on the eve of the referendum that will determine whether Quebec can go, and therefore Canada, and a timorous effort is being made to solve problems in a way that may not be the right one. Mr. Speaker, like everyone else, I bank of course on the good will of the provinces to implement this proposal, but as others have said before me, nothing will change if it only stays on paper, and nothing will change either if we do not go from those findings to seek out solutions that get to the root of the problem; when time is ripe for a new Canadian constitution, then it should be done by giving the word "constitution" the etymological meaning it can and should have; then, Mr. Speaker, we will have created a new country, a country in which each of its parts can develop without stirring envy, jealousy or hatred. That must be our aim. If this bill only forces individuals to implement something that is more or less logical—as I said before, though I am Francophone and proud of it, I would never dare be senseless enough to the point of ordering a trial in French in Victoria or St. John's Newfoundland. Then it is ridiculous, stupid. So, if an attempt is being made to have us believe that this can be achieved, Mr. Speaker, things will turn out the way did with the policy on bilingualism the right hon. Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) wanted to adopt: it has not progressed one inch. Why? Because the problem in this country is not one of language.

The problem in Canada is a problem of equality, of participation; if French Canadians or Quebeckers felt they were

[Mr. Matte.]

really participating in the progress of their country, Mr. Speaker, there would never have been talk of separatism, of independence or anything else. But as French Canadians have always felt like poor relatives, this is what we have come to. That is why we must now see things as they are, we must not be afraid of seeking and finding solutions that are indicated while respecting the freedom of the individual. Mr. Speaker, I hope my words will not fall upon deaf ears. I hope they reveal the very special concern I have about solving the Canadian problem, but of solving it in its true dimension, that is that of the individual.

Mr. Speaker, if I were to ask the President of the Privy Council (Mr. MacEachen) how many bills are originally drafted in French, I would be curious to know the answer. Over 95 per cent of the bills introduced in the House are the work of people who think exclusively in English.

If the bills introduced in the House are always translated instead of being drafted for the French Canadians from time to time, Mr. Speaker, if I can get a reply to that question it would be easier to understand what goes on in Quebec, because translation is not enough and it is not enough either to grant certain things, because it is done at the United Nations in five languages. That does not turn a Chinese into a Russian or Russian into an American. As I said, It is not a matter of language which is merely a side issue. Irishmen are Irishmen and they resent being told that they are Englishmen. It does not prevent them from speaking English. French Canadians as well could have used English as a means of communication. It is not a linguistic problem, Mr. Speaker. The problem is one of participation. We want to have our share of responsibility and when nearly all activities in this House are conducted in terms of a mentality which is alien to what I am and to what Quebeckers are, that is where the problem lies. And that is why, if we want to correct this situation, we must simply give equal rights to the French-speaking citizens of this country. This is the problem and we will have to deal with it and solve it together one day, otherwise Quebec will do it unilaterally.

● (1642)

[English]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Turner): Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. Members: Question!

Mr. Basford: Mr. Speaker, because of the speech of the hon. member for Palliser (Mr. Schumacher), will you please call the yeas and nays?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Turner): All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some hon. Members: Yea.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Turner): All those against will please say nay.