

*Official Languages*

agree with him in this respect. In his concluding paragraph, the Prime Minister, also an eminent lawyer, said:

The government, as you know, hopes to secure a substantial consensus on the desirability of a constitutional bill; one that will operate to extend the provisions of section 133 for the benefit of all Canadians.

I am not a lawyer myself but it seems to me that when you amend statute law so that it means something other than what it meant in its original form you are to all intents and purposes amending the statute, in this case, the constitution. Section 133 guarantees the use of the English and French languages in certain instances. To broaden by statute law the use of these languages, as outlined in Bill C-120, to me means amendment of the constitution.

• (9:30 p.m.)

The hon. member for Churchill (Mr. Simpson) made reference to the setting up of these bilingual districts, whether under the 10 per cent or the 80 per cent criterion, but I do not think the government has licence or authority to bring forward this kind of legislation. I know that the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) argues, and eloquently, that this measure is not an infringement of the constitution. All I can say, Mr. Speaker, is that if he is that sure of his ground, other legal authorities are equally sure that the government does not have the right to amend the constitution in this regard, in other words, to introduce Bill C-120. Hence, the refusal of the government to allow the Supreme Court of Canada to rule on the constitutionality of this bill before introducing it in this house is of some concern to me.

I think the motive behind this legislation is political. I think the Liberal party is thinking ahead to the next election. This languages bill, which amounts to nothing more than a carrot on a stick, will give some measure of support to Liberal candidates in the next election. At the risk of offending all of the other ethnic groups in Canada, Quebec's support for the Liberal party must be guaranteed. Heaven knows, there is not much hope for them in the west.

I want to put on the record this evening some of the views of ethnic leaders across the country. One of the more interesting documents that I have in my hand is entitled: "The inadequacies and injustices of the official languages bill", and contains remarks made by Russell Dzenick, L.L.B., a prominent Liberal in the city of Edmonton. He is also president

[Mr. Skoreyko.]

of the Ukrainian Canadian Committee. These remarks were made at a panel discussion held during the Alberta provincial Liberal convention on April 25 and 26, 1969. He said:

The latest step in the government's program in dealing with the future of Canada is the official languages bill.

I propose to deal with the question of how the official languages bill and the B and B report affects the one third of Canadians with whose existence the government appears to be completely unconcerned—and which lack of concern has shown itself in all other facets of life so evident since the Pearson days and continued more boldly during the present Trudeau era.

The official languages bill has completely failed to consider the existence of Canadians of non-English and non-French origin—the supreme example of the majority taking full and irresponsible advantage of its numbers to impose its will upon defenceless minorities by law rather than by usage and gradual development as is and should be the case in all democratic nations.

The bill, in accordance with the bilingual and bicultural report proposes to set up "federal bilingual districts" dealing only with the guarantee of the use of both French and English in areas where there are 10 per cent of each group residing; but completely fails to propose any constitutional safeguards for the preservation and continued development of languages and cultures of those Canadian citizens who are not descendants of the English or French races. For example: If in a given area the Ukrainians, the Germans, the Italians or other persons of any other extraction constitute 80 per cent of the population, then it would nevertheless be deemed to be a bilingual area of French and English notwithstanding the overwhelming majority of citizens. The bilingual districts would leave Canada open to racial and political gerrymandering with Canadians of other extractions becoming mere pawns of the English and French Canadians.

If bilingual districts are to be established on the 10 per cent formula, it should include other languages where population in such districts contains 10 per cent or more of people who are neither of French or English origin.

In principle—I believe in a variety in association, languages and cultures. These should be recognized, appreciated and encouraged. It is most important that we recognize the value of multiculturalism in Canada. This cannot be done by the forceful promotion of two languages to the exclusion of all others.

In lieu of the offensive language contained in section 2 of the proposed bill let us consider a substitute clause along the following lines: "English and French are the two major languages of Canada. Languages of Canadians who are descendants of other ethnolinguistic groups are also recognized as Canadian languages, fully equal in rights and privileges to English and French."

There are several very important moral and material benefits to be derived from the recognition of languages rooted in Canada, of various Canadian racial groups, who, together, have built up different areas of present day Canada.