

*Official Languages*

annoying, than having to deal with policemen, with detectives who cannot understand you?

Early in the session one of my colleagues was arrested by the Ottawa police, as always English unilingual.

I say it is inadmissible that, in the capital of a country where at least 40 per cent of the population speaks French, one should not be arrested in his own tongue at least.

Mr. Speaker, if we do not recognize bilingualism as an element of competence in bilingual districts, this bill is absolutely worthless. It will change nothing and bring nothing new to this country. Even now, this is roughly what we hear in Quebec. Of course, at this stage in the province of Quebec, the situation is well understood and people smile at our quibbling, at our hesitations about a problem which should have been settled not in 1969, but in 1867. We are already 102 years late and we still have doubts about the importance and necessity of establishing bilingualism in the public service of our country.

Mr. Speaker, even that bill was not required to take those steps. Instead of bringing about divisions, instead of trying to convince Canadians that the problems of the country were being settled through a bill on official languages, the government should merely have enforced section 133 of the constitution. To establish bilingualism wherever it is required in the public service, that bill was not required at all. It is obvious that steps should have been taken a long time ago.

If in a municipality, like, say Maillardville, in British Columbia, there are 5,000 or 10,000 French-speaking post office users, obviously the postmaster there should understand and speak French. And if there is a member of the R.C.M.P. on duty there, again it is obvious that he must understand those who come under his authority. All that could have been accomplished without introducing a bill. They want, with the help of a bill, to create in the province of Quebec the impression that Canada is becoming bilingual. It is not true. There are still many reservations. This will not be a step forward but backward.

Therefore, I agree with the minister's statement that there is no need to define anything as that constitutes a kind of insult to the French Canadians. Some people are afraid that French Canadians might become members of such organizations, afraid that they might be appointed to certain positions because they have a better knowledge of both languages and, with an amendment like

[Mr. Matte.]

this one, those people would like to prevent such a thing. I would hate to suspect the motives of the hon. member who is introducing this amendment, but when you have taken the trouble to study the problems of the country as well as the development of the French fact in Canada, you are able to guess pretty well the motives behind this proposition.

The aim is to maintain at all costs this situation thanks to which those who only speak English have always precedence over those who are bilingual. That is aberrant! The question of proficiency is only a face-saving device. Of course, French Canadians will never match the proficiency of their counterpart if the yardstick is the majority of the country.

Our laws are democratically conceived for the country as a whole according to its general frame of mind. It is therefore always difficult for those whose mother tongue is not English to display the same proficiency as that of their English-speaking countrymen since they have a different mentality. The problem is not there.

I shall go as far as to say that the problem of national unity will not be solved by such a bill. On the contrary. It will only breed dissension without fostering in the least the unity of the country. The French Canadians, and the Quebecers in particular, will not feel happy until they have a share in the management of the country. In other words, the bill should not be a bill on the official languages but a bill concerning the participation of the Quebecers, of the French Canadians in the management of public affairs. They should assume at least one third of the administration of the whole country. This is what the French Canadians want and they will not back out as long as they do not get it.

Mr. Speaker, however harsh these few remarks may sound, they are true because what will have been changed by the official languages bill in a few years since nobody will be transferred. For the time being, the government does not want to create fear. Nobody will be transferred. Everything will remain as it is and in a few years there will be bilingual employees whose mother tongue will be English. Then, the French Canadians, the Quebecers, will be excluded or almost so from the administration.

If we take into consideration all the Crown corporations or the government departments, everything that is related to the federal administration, the participation of the