

Official Languages

hold aloof from other nationalities, the Anglo-Canadian who prompts his countrymen to keep their minds set exclusively on their own interests may well be cheered by his hearers, but impartial history will deem his action as faulty in conception as it was pernicious and evil in purpose.

We are—or we want to be—a nation made of the most heterogeneous components; Protestants and Catholics, English, French, Germans, Irish, Scotch etc., each one, let us not forget it, with its own traditions and prejudices. In each one of these opposed components, however, there is a common link of patriotism and the only true policy is that which transcends this common patriotism and carries all those components towards a common aim and common aspirations. Where is the remedy? Certainly not in ostracism nor in hard or cruel means. The true remedy is to be found in tolerance and mutual respect.

[*English*]

The concept of bilingualism, Mr. Speaker, is that of a bilingual society and state rather than of a state and society in which every individual is bilingual. We do not require that every citizen shall be obliged to speak or write a second language; rather, we say that each citizen should be able to communicate or deal with the federal government or any of its agents in either of the two official languages, the principle being equal access to the services and institutions of the federal government.

I believe this policy will need the nation's commitment. I believe that the bill will have to be explained to the people of Canada. I believe that whether we are English speaking or French speaking we shall have to make a reasonable accommodation, exercise patience and tolerance, wrestle with our own prejudices and understand this question with positive good will and an open mind. I believe this is a commitment which our French speaking and English speaking Canadians must make, because unity is a two-way street. I believe we can solve our difficulties and reconcile our views. As Canadians, we have too much to gain and too much to lose. We have inherited the bounty of one of the richest lands on earth and together we can turn it to our benefit and to the enhancement of other peoples in our world.

Let us quicken the fashioning of a new nation of two languages so that we can move on to the harvesting of the promise that brought us all to these shores, no matter whether we came yesterday, the day before

[Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton).]

yesterday, a generation ago or five generations ago. That promise brought us to these shores where we are and shall remain one of the most fortunate clusters of people to be favoured on the face of the globe.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Before I recognize the hon. member for Charlevoix may I ask whether the hon. member for Témiscamingue has a question?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Réal Caouette (Témiscamingue): Mr. Speaker, I simply wish to ask the hon. minister a question.

He said a while ago he was convinced that the great majority of young English-speaking Canadians accept the principle of this bill. I would very much like the hon. minister to tell us whether he can also sincerely believe that the great majority of young French-speaking Canadians also accept it.

Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton): I also believe that and I think one of our duties is to explain the magnificent option open to young French Canadians to become good Canadians.

Hon. Martial Asselin (Charlevoix): Mr. Speaker, we have just heard the statement made by the Minister of Justice (Mr. Turner).

[*English*]

Mr. Skoberg: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, since backbenchers will wish to participate in this debate may I ask whether copies of the amendments some hon. members have will be circulated among all hon. members generally?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I am advised that copies of the amendments have been prepared and will be circulated to all hon. members as soon as possible.

• (4:20 p.m.)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Asselin: Mr. Speaker, as I was saying, we have just heard the Minister of Justice make a very good speech. I want to congratulate him for his introduction of the bill which, in some respects, I do consider difficult to explain to the Canadian people as a whole.

Of course, we have not had time to study in detail the amendments which the minister introduced this afternoon, since he only tabled the list a few minutes ago, and I must say that I am not in a position to discuss them. However, I take comfort in the fact