

*Official Languages*

Let me take the more important reason first. There are some provinces from which it might be considered wiser to have two representatives on the advisory board. If I may, I should like to name those provinces. I think it would be very advisable for the future of Canada and for the workings of this advisory board to have Quebec represented by an English speaking as well as a French speaking member, and to have Ontario represented by a French speaking as well as an English speaking member. If you had only the one member for each province then obviously you would limit Quebec to one French speaking member, because the majority of the people in that province are French speaking, and Ontario to one English speaking member for the same obvious reason. In the case of these two large central provinces, where in Quebec there is a large English speaking minority and in Ontario a large French speaking minority, I respectfully urge the government to consider it advisable to permit each province to be represented by more than one member.

I also suggest that it may well be an additional advantage in regard to the working of the bill and the welfare of Canadians that instead of having one member for each of the three prairie provinces, if I may use that area specifically—, there be representatives on the board of some of the minorities who live in the prairie provinces. It may well be much more important to the working of this bill and the purpose the bill is trying to serve to have a member of Ukrainian or German background on the board rather than a member for each of the three prairie provinces where the general situation and attitudes are very similar.

It seems to me that to provide rigidly that there be one member from each province and from each of the two territories is not a good idea in terms of what Canada really requires and what the function of the board will be. It is not a board that will carry on inquiries over a wide spectrum; it will be concerned merely with the consideration of the census and matters related to the establishment of a bilingual district.

I can see arguments on the other side, and I frankly admit that I am not without difficulty in opposing this motion. I can well see, as some of my colleagues have indicated to me with a great deal of validity, that there will be great value in bringing on to the board representatives of provinces that are not likely even to have federal bilingual districts—

[Mr. Lewis.]

the hon. member for Vancouver-Kingsway (Mrs. MacInnis) for one pressed this point upon me—in order that those provinces are brought into the workings of the act in the way in which the hon. member for Cardigan intends. If one were to do that, the board would have a membership even greater than 12.

Personally—and here I come to my second reason for feeling unhappy about this motion—on principle I oppose the notion that every federal body and federal instrument has to be representative of each province and territory in Canada. I think it is about time that our federal institutions concern themselves with the quality of representation rather than with the geography of representation in every case. There are a great many institutions, including even cabinets, that could benefit from a little more quality and a little less geography. That is probably true of this cabinet, as it has been true of other cabinets.

Personally, I cannot support the amendment because of its rigidity and the requirement that there be one member for each province. If the government were to make allowance for the points I have made, which in my view are more important than representation from each of the provinces, then the government would have to add to the 12 members proposed by this motion. I think it is more important to have a representative on the board of the large minority group in Quebec as well as another representative of the large minority group in Ontario, along with people who can express the views and wishes of other minorities in western Canada that are larger than the minority that speaks one of the official languages.

With this kind of representation, which as I say is much more important to me than any sort of mechanical provincial representation, the board might consist of 15 or 18 members instead of 12. I am prepared to place the responsibility for these appointments where it belongs, on the government.

Perhaps this is another opportunity as we start our discussion of the report stage for me to repeat what I said in the first speech, I think, that I made on this bill and also two or three times in committee. This bill will be a blessing rather than a catastrophe only if the government acts in a way that is sensitive to the needs of Canada's future and the needs and wishes of Canada's people—all its people everywhere. This bill will be a blessing rather than a catastrophe only if the government