

Official Languages

the benches behind, he might start by putting his own house in order and by punishing the members of his own party who refuse to be sensible, before upbraiding the government unwarrantably, as far as I am concerned.

He says: "Little effort has been made" and this is true especially of his party within which, on the contrary, a great deal has been done to revive old prejudice, old grudges. Some take pleasure in this almost sacred house in confusing the minds, in subtly playing with racial feelings, in running down some important people.

I would be ashamed to call myself a Canadian if I had to sit next to those people during this debate. My whip forbid!

Mr. Ricard: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege.

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. member for Saint-Hyacinthe on a question of privilege.

Mr. Ricard: I heard the hon. member say earlier with regard to my leader: Let him look immediately to his right, immediately to his left—I do not remember his exact words—but he wanted to suggest that I was one of those who sowed the seeds of discord, or who opposed the bill now under consideration.

I should like to ask the hon. member whether he intended to single me out when he said that?

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. member may not put a question to a colleague who already has the floor.

The hon. member for Saint-Hyacinthe rose on a question of privilege which to my mind is not justified. The hon. member for Madawaska-Victoria should go on with his remarks.

Mr. Ricard: Mr. Speaker, with all due respect, I feel that motives have been wrongly imputed to me; I have the right to ask the hon. member for an explanation to find out whether or not I am incriminated.

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. member for Madawaska-Victoria.

Mr. Corbin: I thank you, Mr. Speaker, but I should like to add that I was not referring to the member for Saint-Hyacinthe personally whom I consider as a reasonable man.

I should like to urge, however, some opposition members, such as the members for Swift Current-Maple Creek (Mr. McIntosh)

and for Brandon-Souris (Mr. Dinsdale), to have themselves invited or to take it upon themselves to visit New Brunswick in order to see at first hand what goes on there in the field of bilingualism. I believe they would come back delighted with and informed by their experience, provided of course they go with an open mind.

Mr. Speaker, on May 18th New Brunswick, and more particularly Moncton University, had the honour and privilege of welcoming the right hon. Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) to award him an honorary doctorate.

The Prime Minister, at the end of the speech he made on that occasion, said this, and I quote:

French and English Canadians of New Brunswick, you are showing, in spite of the tensions that may still exist in your province, a remarkable willingness to live together. As a result of your mutual tolerance and understanding, you represent in a way the crucible of the Canadian experience. On your determination and success may depend the success and future of Canada. For you will have shown the rest of the country that two great families, formerly divided, can unite and rediscover one another.

Citizens of New Brunswick, you are laying the foundations of the Canada of tomorrow if, by common consent, we are all willing as you are through mutual respect, confidence and brotherhood, to try our luck and run the risk of experiencing a new and full life.

I said, at the outset of my remarks, that I would take part in this debate with a certain feeling of bitterness. I may have exaggerated, but I often think of the past. And if ever the past got the better of me, I might, like many members of certain opposition parties, give way to exaggeration and political abuses.

About six years ago and even before, I personally called for the recognition of both official languages in New Brunswick. I was neither the only one nor the first to do so. Indeed, hundreds of other young Canadians, English and French were calling for the legal recognition of their culture and their language. Numerous associations and groups have kept insisting on recognition so that today, in New Brunswick, English and French are official languages, and everybody is all the better for it.

Mutual tolerance which was practised in my own village of Grand Sault—in English down home we say Grand Falls—by both linguistic groups, tolerance and mutual respect for both cultures in New Brunswick can very well be transposed on the national scale with a tiny bit of goodwill.