

United Nations

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Tardif): Order. I regret to interrupt the hon. member, but the time allotted to him has now expired.

Mr. Harold E. Winch (Vancouver East): Mr. Speaker, I desire to make a very few comments on the matter now before the house. I must admit I find myself both intrigued and somewhat puzzled by what has motivated the hon. member to move this resolution. It is a rather peculiar one because it calls upon the government of Canada to take the initiative through the United Nations to bring about the standardization and internationalization of scientific and technical words, terms and phrases which could readily be reduced to one word for all languages.

If my understanding is correct, those who deal with scientific terminology have had a scholastic education in acquiring their scientific knowledge, which basically was taught in either Latin, German or English. These are the basic three scientific languages that scientists understand.

Quite honestly, Mr. Speaker, I cannot understand the urgency of the government of Canada initiating through the United Nations the establishment of a committee to try to standardize and internationalize scientific and technical terms. However, I was most interested in the last part of the motion. Although the introduction refers to the standardization and internationalization of scientific and technical terms, the motion concludes:

—in order to promote international understanding and facilitate communications between nations.

Within these words, Mr. Speaker, lies a wonderful idea and a beautiful motivation. But surely such a concept should not be concerned with scientific and technical terms and their standardization and internationalization. I would accept the last part of the motion because what we need is an international language between peoples, not just between scientists.

• (5:40 p.m.)

I would say from memory that it is more than 50 years since Esperanto was introduced as an international language. I think that any step which would bring into being an international language—not a language that deals only with scientific and technical terms—is a forward step. We need to facilitate international understanding and communication between the peoples of the world and not just between scientists. If the hon.

member's motion helps to do that, I am sure that he will have 100 per cent support for his bill.

Mr. Stanley Haidasz (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development): Mr. Speaker, I wish to make a few remarks on the motion of the hon. member for Spadina. He wishes to bring to the attention of the federal government the advisability of taking the initiative in the United Nations to establish a committee which would, with the consent of other member nations, standardize and make international all new scientific and technical words, terms and phrases. The hon. member's motion involves the broad problem of communication. We must begin somewhere to make standard our technical terms. His motion is also commendable because it touches on the field of scientific terminology.

During my life as a physician and medical student I have had considerable experience with the nomenclature used by the medical profession. To obtain admission to a faculty of medicine a student had to know Latin. Those of us in medicine use many scientific terms, the roots of which are in Latin or Greek. If one peruses the subjects of a medical course, especially the subjects of anatomy, physiology, pathology, bacteriology and pharmacology, he realizes that the terminology used in those courses will be understood by those in the medical profession in all parts of the world, and must be understood by them as of necessity.

Verbal communication also is a problem for teachers who must travel through different countries and give lectures. It is also a problem for members of international conferences, when they address delegates from different nations. Communication is also a problem for the interpreters of translation services of the various professional bodies which sponsor such international conferences. For these reasons, as well as for others which have been outlined previously by the hon. member for Victoria, B.C. (Mr. Groos), I think the hon. member for Spadina is to be commended highly for bringing his motion before the house.

In the past, on two or three occasions, I discussed with him his intention of introducing a motion similar to this one. I am happy to say that I am in favour of it, and I hope that it will meet with the approval of the members of this chamber. From my experience at the United Nations, I know that communicating with those who speak different