

Official Languages

were not informed of the amendments that would be made to it. It is my understanding that the Secretary of State is the minister responsible for this bill. As such, it is usual and traditional for him to introduce the bill. I also point out that this is a debate on second reading, a debate on the principle of the bill. It is a debate which, under the new rules, takes place before the bill is sent to committee to be considered in detail.

I understand, nevertheless that the Minister of Justice (Mr. Turner) will, when speaking to the house on Tuesday, relate frankly what minor amendments he proposes to the bill. I think it is nit-picking to be greatly incensed about these matters when we are supposed to be discussing the principle of the bill. The Secretary of State deals with the principle of the bill, and the Minister of Justice does not—

Mr. Aiken: Mr. Speaker, may I ask the hon. member a question?

Mr. Allmand: I would like to deal with questions at the end of my speech, if the hon. member does not mind. I shall be pleased to answer his question at that time. The principal purpose of my participation in this debate—

Mr. Peters: We would like to hear that.

Mr. Allmand: I have listened to you, and now you can listen to me. I will tell you why I am participating in the debate. The reason is that I am in this house as an English speaking representative from the province of Quebec. I represent a minority group in that province which for many years has put forward the proposition that the French speaking people in Canada outside the province of Quebec should be treated as we have been treated. For many years, the English speaking people in the province of Quebec have been treated with great justice. In recent years, since about 1960, there have been growing in the province of Quebec movements of extreme nationalism. These movements of extreme nationalism—I do not believe they are the answer to the problem—have in many cases been based upon valid complaints and grievances.

It is true that for many years, not only outside the province of Quebec but within it, the English speaking establishment that controlled the industries and much of the economic life of that province was very insensitive to the French speaking people in the province. It was very difficult for the French

speaking people to participate in the business community in their own language. There were justifiable grievances. But with respect to the solution of these grievances I support not the extreme solutions of the separatists or nationalists, the solutions of Mr. Lévesque and Le Parti Québécois, but the solutions of our Prime Minister. I believe his solutions will do more to unite this country and defeat any type of separatist movement.

There have been nationalist movements in Quebec in the last few years. So far, fortunately, these nationalist movements have not attained any great power. They have made a great deal of noise; they have, in some cases, damaged life and property, but they have not attained any political power. We have seen, however, a serious case of injustice when such a movement has attained power. I refer to the Catholic School Board in the municipality of St. Leonard. The decision was made to gradually take away the right of the English speaking people in that municipality to an education in their language. Last year this right was removed for the first year of a child's education, and starting this fall it will be removed for the second year.

The people in the municipality took this matter very seriously, as did many other people in Montreal. I give great credit to Mr. Robert Beale who has been a leader in the attempt to obtain private schools for these people. These are working class people; they are not rich. They have scrimped and scraped and saved small amounts of money with which to rent classroom space, provide books and teachers for the pupils. This they have done on their own.

I am rather amazed that the spokesman for the New Democratic party should set up a straw man by saying we should be debating another bill because other legislation is more important to the people of Quebec. If we had come forward with another bill I think he would have asked why we were not dealing with this bill. This is his usual type of politics.

This bill was introduced and given first reading on October 17, 1968. We are now dealing with second reading. I do not understand how anybody can pretend we are pushing this bill forward because it is a pet project of the Prime Minister. It has been on the order paper for a long time. While listening to members of the opposition I counted the number of bills which have been passed since this bill was given first reading. Forty-one bills have been passed by this parliament