

patching work when it becomes absolutely necessary, otherwise the whole structure will break down. On the contrary, this compulsory solution, this negative approach to bring about changes which have become necessary is not to the credit of this parliament.

This is why I would hope that this bill be considered only as a solution to an emergency because it deals with the basic freedom of the individual. It should not become the method used by the government to coax Quebecers and Canadians into believing that the government is about to solve all their problems and that it alone has the solution, the proof being that it is capable of bringing remedies by simply introducing bills so that this country may stay united.

● (1632)

Mr. Speaker, if this is the first note of a ditty we will be hearing during an election campaign and it was done for that purpose, I say that this bill will change nothing to the present conditions. I am not being pessimistic, but I would like this negative attitude of the government, this legislation forced upon us make all members realize that we should rather consider the basic major changes which would finally make Canada meet the requirements of its citizens.

Mr. Speaker, I am not overly impressed when I am told that from now on—as I am not entirely convinced—a French Canadian from Toronto, Vancouver or New Brunswick will actually be tried in French, if he so desires. Mr. Speaker, it would please me and I hope it will happen. However, if they think all the problems related to national unity will then be solved, I think they are deluding themselves, Mr. Speaker.

I remember, a few years ago, when I presented a motion opposing that introduced by the Prime Minister on the official languages and their implementation. It was another story we heard during an electoral campaign. The Prime Minister was to solve the problem of Canadian unity by establishing bilingualism across the country.

Mr. Speaker, seven or eight years have passed and what are the results? Do Quebecers or Francophones make a greater positive contribution to the administration of this country? No, Mr. Speaker. Indeed not. High officials are still almost exclusively Anglophones. The number of mid-level officials has increased by a few percentage points, but there would have been as many, and possibly more, without this legislation or this motion to implement bilingualism in this country.

Mr. Speaker, I suggest that these changes would not bring about any concrete results. Why? Because the government would rather ignore the real issue. The problem we are facing in Canada is certainly not linguistic in nature. We have about as much of a linguistic problem as the Irish would have trying to maintain their identity among the English. Mr. Speaker, although an Irishman is no Englishman, there is nothing preventing him from using English as a vehicle for his thoughts here in Canada. The problem has nothing at all to do

Criminal Code

with linguistic considerations. It is as painful to be laid off in French as it is in English.

The problem is essentially national. French-speaking Quebecers want to be involved in the activities of Canadian society as equals, not as second class citizens. And there can be no justice in Canada without equality. In 1978, Mr. Speaker, it is about time people understood this basic idea. As the elected representative of the Champlain riding, Mr. Speaker, I am not suffering from any sort of inferiority complex, and I stand here after following in the footsteps of thirteen generations of Canadians who were among the very first to come to this country.

Mr. Speaker, I never asked anybody permission to speak my language, and I wish I never had to ask whether I could be tried in my language if I were outside Quebec. Those are the facts, Mr. Speaker. Quebecers are no longer satisfied today with band-aid or emergency solutions to hinder the emancipation and the self-fulfilment of Quebec. Everyone in this House, whether from British Columbia or Newfoundland, should be glad to see the founding pioneers of this country developing voluntarily, positively, in order to bring about in Canada a new vitality, new advances, merely with the recognition of their equal status.

Now, Mr. Speaker, of course I would find it absurd to demand a trial in French in an exclusively English area. That would be absurd, ridiculous. I would also find it ridiculous that someone demand a trial in English in Trois-Rivières or Cap-de-la-Madeleine. Let us be logical, let us use common sense and recognize the need to reform this country by granting each of its geographic and demographic entities the autonomy and self-determination each one needs to be able to free themselves and develop as they see fit. Let us not try to force French upon British Columbia; it is as ridiculous as to force English upon Quebec City or Trois-Rivières.

Let us not try to go against the most elementary judgments of people on the pretext of creating an artificial national unity. Mr. Speaker, let us recognize that Canada is vast enough to be made into distinct and independent entities which would be able to bring together a new country, but this time a country meeting the needs of its inhabitants. And so Quebecers would not have to intrude into the internal affairs of British Columbia and people from the prairies would not have to meddle in Quebec's affairs, and then we would have a united Canada.

Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has been posing for years as the champion of Canadian unity, as if unity or harmony in this country depended only on the ideas of this man. Mr. Speaker, he has been proving to us for ten years that his concept of Canadian unity has led to the imbroglio, the muddle, the chaos we now see in this country. That is why it is high time we woke up and considered first of all not the constitutional alternative of a thrill-seeking Prime Minister but rather the true interests of the Canadian people, and