

within the cabinet a demand, so-called, for bilingualism. As a consequence, we ended up with the Hawthorn-Tremblay commission being appointed, on the basis of one man being of French origin and the other of English origin. I think that was really ridiculous, because either one of those gentlemen would have done a credible job by himself within the terms of the inquiry. But here was a situation in which recognition was given to the demand for the commission to be of a bilingual nature. So far as I am concerned, this did not enhance the position of the commission one bit.

I believe the gentleman concerned was Professor Tremblay. If I have misnamed him, I apologize. He, Professor Hawthorn, or any one of a number of people could have done a job comparable with the job that was done. I think that for us to start involving ourselves in the Supreme Court and our court structures, which are there for the purpose of dispensing Justice, being fair and interpreting laws for us, by attempting to intimate that the selection of the members of the court should be influenced by the factor of bilingualism, would simply be catering further to the exploitation of either language such as has occurred with certain political groups in this nation, not the least of which was Jean Lesage when he was premier of the province of Quebec.

To ask us to support this motion is, I think, simply asking us to give some further support to some concept of divisiveness within our nation over the matter of language and culture, when our purpose should be to think in terms of Canada as one entity and of people in Canada as Canadians regardless of their mother tongue or heritage. I would not support this motion because I think that by so doing, even looking at the imbalanced way in which it is constructed, I would simply be supporting the concepts of bigotry that are strong enough in our country without adding further fuel to them. I do not say this in any unkind way to the sponsor of the motion, but I think it might be just one more addition to those forces which are not out to unify us.

[Translation]

Mr. Jean-Charles Cantin (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice): Mr. Speaker, I simply want to remind the house that the member has just drawn the conclusions of his own question.

He has made representations and, as he was reminded by the Minister of Regional Economic Expansion (Mr. Marchand), he is aware

Judgments of the Supreme Court of Canada of the reforms now under way concerning bilingualism within the public service, and the Supreme Court of Canada.

I tend to believe that the information the hon. member is asking for would not only be useless but also unavailable at the present time and that one cannot expect public funds to be spent to compile statistical data for the sole purposes mentioned by the hon. member.

I will therefore ask him to consider withdrawing his motion since he knows that the Minister of Justice will certainly examine his representation. It would be sensible of him, I believe, to do so since we do not have the required information and therefore cannot provide it.

• (5:40 p.m.)

[English]

Mr. David Lewis (York South): Mr. Speaker, I want to say just a word about this motion. As hon. members know, my support of the bilingual character of Canada and the need to respect it is pretty strong. I have stated my position on a number of occasions. But I would like to suggest to the hon. member who placed this motion on the order paper that the kind of bilingualism he is talking about distorts the notion of bilingualism in Canada, and by distorting it may well do the whole subject a great deal of harm. Bilingualism in the courts of this country surely means only that people who appear in our courts, either as counsel or as citizens, can carry on their case in either official language. If it means more than that, then there will be a great many problems created in this country. If there is any compulsion that certain judgments, because they cover a certain area of the country must be written in French while others must be written in English, we will really be asking for serious trouble.

What should be available to the citizens of Canada is, in my and any other reasonable person's understanding of bilingualism, the right for counsel appearing before the Supreme Court of Canada to make their arguments in either official language and that members of the court should also be free to give judgment in either official language. I have read judgments of the court on cases which have come before it from Ontario and sometimes from British Columbia written by one of the French speaking judges of the court in his mother tongue.

The fact that a judgment is written in French—and it happens mostly in criminal appeals—and concerns an appeal from some