

*The Budget—Mr. Girard*

point at issue being the respect due to the rights of the French-speaking citizens of this country, within the confines of their own home.

We want a French name for the very reason, no doubt, which has prompted the officials of the Canadian National Railways to refuse it. It is clear that the company has been guilty of no excessive zeal with regard to the respect of the confederative rights of the two great races of this country.

May I add that as far as the immediate interests of the tourist trade go, a French name would certainly be preferable, financially, since it is the very French character of the province of Quebec—where this future hotel is to be built—which constitutes an attraction for American tourists.

On behalf of various tourist trade promotion groups campaigns have already been launched in order to ensure that our Quebec cities and towns retain that French character which business interests are unfortunately causing them to lose.

There is already a Queen's hotel in Montreal; a second one would create confusion. Personally, I dare say that a queen must prefer having her name honoured elsewhere than in the commercial field.

Mr. Speaker, is it not unfortunate that, on matters which may seem so unimportant, we should have to create a movement of opinion in the midst of an entire population, as is the case in relation to the name to be given to that hotel?

Why is it that in addition to their normal legislative functions, French-Canadian members must insist so often upon the respect of the rights of the French-speaking element with respect to details, perhaps, but which are nevertheless important because of their dangerous recurrence?

We may be insisting upon many matters which may look trivial when compared to the great problems which confront our nation but it must be realized that the accumulation of little injustices encroach dangerously upon the sacred rights of the French-speaking population.

French Canadians would not deserve the title of true Canadians if they did not exert themselves to remain true to themselves, thereby contributing to the enrichment of our Canadian spirit.

Imagine for one moment that a French name were to be given a large Toronto hotel; maybe then our state of mind would be understood.

Our constitution and our government acknowledge, of course, the French fact and its handsome contribution to the cultural

vitality of our country, but we must fight constantly and frequently to obtain constitutional bilingualism on a bit of a cheque.

The government treats us as equal partners in the development of our country, but its public service won't give us more than 13 per cent of its higher positions.

French is one of the official languages in our country, but on the very floor of this parliament it is spoken by only a few, at the risk of not being understood by the majority.

Furthermore, in order to show that we must fight always, even though the French fact is recognized by the constitution, I quote the following from page 2 of the *Montreal Gazette* of yesterday:

*(Text):*

Decision of the Senate-Commons committee currently studying capital and corporal punishment to hear evidence from one of Canada's two official hangmen, raises new problems. The official in question, Quebec's own official executioner, is reported to speak only French.

*(Translation):*

If indeed our rights were recognized, it should read instead that as the official representatives of our bilingual country were not able to understand one of the official languages, that had caused some difficulty. As a matter of fact, the recognition of our rights with regard to bilingualism should not be practised at the bottom but at the top.

Of course, we are at home within the confederation, but it is made unbearable for us. There is always a "but" implied in a thousand details, which is perhaps unpleasant for the house, but much more so for those who suffer from them and those who have to denounce them.

There might be the temptation to apply the famous speech from Rostand's *L'Aiglon* "Not a prisoner, but"; when talking of our people. There is always a "but", which is the only real obstacle to national unity, a "but" that fathers separatism, a "but" that keeps us constantly on the defensive, a "but" that stops us from co-operating openly in the normal process of our national destiny.

It is from Ottawa that the initiative must come for the removal of this "but" that is jeopardizing national unity in this country. By asking the Canadian National Railways to agree to give a French name to a hotel being built in one of the largest French cities in the world, this government would make a gesture of fairness and national unity. Therefore, in concluding my remarks, I would like to make a personal appeal to the Prime Minister (Mr. St. Laurent) who cannot refuse his fellow countrymen not a