

Official Languages

the individual Member of Parliament is to be increased, the government and, indeed, all parties should pay the proper attention to committee reports. Having regard to what I believe was the good will from all sides shown during the committee proceedings, we intend to support this report.

Mr. Woolliams: Would the minister permit a question before he continues? It concerns the introductory remarks he has just made. He talked about making the committee system work and told us that various amendments were considered in committee, some of which were allowed and some of which were voted down. Are you really saying that any amendments which have been placed on the order paper by members of the opposition will automatically be voted down at this stage because they were considered by the committee?

Mr. Speaker: I hesitate to do this again, but perhaps the hon. member will keep in mind that he ought to address his remarks to the minister through the Chair.

Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton): I might say that where an amendment in the terms proposed here, on report stage, has been proposed in similar terms in the committee and has been given thorough scrutiny and discussion, the government takes the position in the main that we should accept the committee report in that respect. It may be that some of these amendments were not proposed in the committee in which case there will have to be a fresh discussion in this chamber.

The purpose of this amendment is to make of the advisory board a strictly representative institution, one upon which every province and territory would be represented. This is underlined by the speech the hon. member has just made, and his reasoning is set out more fully in the record of the committee at pages 220 to 228. The amendment sets a minimum figure of 12 members but no maximum figure, and we think this is objectionable in the sense that it might conceivably lead to a very unwieldy board.

As the hon. member admitted, it is not at all certain that every province will have a bilingual district. Newfoundland and British Columbia would not if the recommendations of the B and B Commission are followed. The bill now provides that members be selected as nearly as may be as being representative of the various principal regions and provinces of Canada. In the bill as it reads there is

already ample flexibility and room for ensuring that the regions of Canada are adequately represented. We do not believe that the bill would be advanced and the law improved by adding the inflexibility of a provision that each province be represented on the board. Those, in the main, Mr. Speaker, would be the reasons for which we would recommend to the house that the amendment be rejected.

• (3:40 p.m.)

Mr. McKinley: Would the minister permit another question? I wonder whether the minister would try to persuade his colleagues in the cabinet to operate in the same manner when we reach the report of the committee on agriculture.

Mr. Horner: Transportation too.

Mr. David Lewis (York South): Mr. Speaker, may I first say that I heartily disagree with the minister's statement that, because the house is faced with the report of a committee that has worked very hard on a bill, the house, the government or anybody else ought to accept the report—period. I think the minister cannot have thought about this matter very carefully because it seems to me to be a most illadvised remark.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Lewis: If the suggestion were followed it would totally destroy the value of this stage of a bill. Why have the report stage of a bill if the house has to accept automatically everything presented in the report of a committee? Obviously, in view of the new set-up of our committees the intention of the report stage is to give all members of the house an opportunity to deal with a bill and to move amendments. In this way the collective wisdom of all members of the house replaces the collective wisdom of a number of members of the house. This may not always be better wisdom but it does give wider representation. I hope that the minister did not mean what he said in this regard.

Second, I frankly tell the house that some of my colleagues in the New Democratic party caucus have a great deal of sympathy for the amendment moved by the hon. member for Cardigan (Mr. McQuaid), though I am not one of them. I fully appreciate the sincerity of the thought behind this motion, but I suggest to hon. members, to my own colleagues and to others that the motion is really not a good one, and for two main reasons.