

source of serious problems in Canada's history.

In his statement the minister recognizes that the recommendations of Book II of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism fall more in the provincial field of responsibility. But he adds that there is a federal dimension to the problem. He went on to say that the federal dimension involves the development and encouragement of programs which will advance and encourage the use of the two official languages across the country. We do not disagree with this concept. But one is too easily reminded of the development and encouragement of medicare which forced many of the provinces to swallow an unacceptable plan. Having foisted this principle on the provinces, the government is now considering removing itself from this field.

The Secretary of State (Mr. Pelletier) also mentioned the restraints resulting from austerity. The present Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Sharp), and ex-minister of finance, also talked of austerity as the Liberal government forced medicare on the provinces. While the federal government is limiting its contributions because of austerity, it should not push increased expenditures on the provinces. Having in mind the position in the past, I would hope that the programs proposed for federal assistance to the provinces will allow for some form of assistance not only for the two official languages but also for the other ethnic languages which have become a part of Canada's culture.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, in welcoming the statement by the minister we ask the government to exercise caution in its meetings with the provinces. Having in mind past experiences of the provinces with this government, it is probably superfluous to ask the provinces to exercise caution in dealing with the federal government.

Mr. David Lewis (York South): Mr. Speaker, may I begin my brief comments on this issue by saying immediately that so far as I am concerned I cannot see anything in the minister's statement or in the proposals which he made to the provincial ministers that suggests any intention to interfere with the provincial jurisdiction in education. I do not think one should assume this from the proposals which were made.

It has been evident from the start that if bilingualism in Canada is to be promoted and to become a reality, the major responsibility

Financing of Bilingualism Programs

for it lies, in fact, with the federal government. The additional cost of enabling Canadians to learn the second official language and of increasing the teaching of the other official language in our schools should be borne by Canada as a whole through its federal treasury rather than by the provincial governments and the provincial treasuries. This is what the B and B commission indicated, and this is what we knew from the start. We therefore welcome the federal government's acceptance of that responsibility.

I have only three comments to make on the proposals that have been put before us. The first is the hope that the federal government will be as concerned with promoting the learning of other languages in Canada when the volume on other languages is produced by the B and B Commission as they have been with the promotion of the two official languages.

My second comment is that this is a field from which the federal government should never withdraw. I say this because we have had indications from the federal government of its intention to withdraw from other cost-sharing programs, an intention which I and my colleagues believe is contrary to the interests of Canada in those fields. But when the federal government seeks the co-operation of the provinces in introducing costly programs to promote bilingualism in Canada, the people of Canada are entitled to a firm assurance that it will not then load the provinces with the cost of that task at some future time. I do not wish to overemphasize this because although the minister did not say that in the future the government intends to withdraw from this field it is a fact that the government did not at first say it would withdraw from other cost-sharing programs, the cost of which is now being loaded entirely on the provinces. Therefore I think it is the duty of Members of Parliament to warn that any suggestion from the government of placing the burden of the cost of promoting bilingualism in Canada on the provincial treasuries would be a betrayal of the cause of bilingualism and of the obligation of this government to the people of Canada.

The third point I want to make is to express my astonishment at hearing the government pull a figure out of the air. I appreciate that any government has to allocate priorities and decide how much it can spend on A, B or C, but I am somewhat repelled by the notion that some bureaucratic group should decide that \$50 million is to be spent on this project. I do not know why and how it