

Proceedings on Adjournment Motion

Canada, from Halifax to Vancouver, and it is most pleasant to live here and to get to know one another. However, we would like the culture and the language of the two great nations to be considered on an equal footing here, in the Ottawa-Hull area.

As far as the R.C.M.P. is concerned, one must not be afraid to state the facts. There have been difficult technical problems and it is quite possible that French Canadians who joined the force in the past with certain aspirations failed to demand that their rights be respected. They realized that to go up within the R.C.M.P., they had to refrain from speaking French, they had to speak English and accept the general understanding that they abandon their language and forego their characteristic.

Today, however, in view of the new dynamism of the French Canadian people which was so concretely expressed in the new orientation taken by Quebec, which seeks to work with the whole of Canada instead of separating from it, we would like the federal government to act. I do not know which minister will reply, but I would like to get a precise answer.

We are often given evasive replies in the house. We always have to come back on the same subjects to get explanations and details. Why could we not, once and for all, get from the responsible minister or the parliamentary secretary an assurance, a firm and definite statement in that respect? I see that the Solicitor General (Mr. Pennell) is in his seat. He is probably the one who will answer. Well, I hope that for once we will be given in good faith a clear and accurate statement concerning bilingualism within the R.C.M.P. and the assurance that immediate steps will be taken to give the French speaking population the prerogatives to which they are entitled at the federal level of administration.

We do not have the feeling that we are asking for something which is out of the ordinary. We only demand that the rights of French Canadians be respected. Our group does not feel superior to the other but wants to have its own say.

I have often had the opportunity of putting written or oral questions to the Minister of National Defence (Mr. Hellyer) whom I see in his seat. I have also asked questions of the Minister of Veterans Affairs (Mr. Teillet) concerning veterans hospitals but tonight the R.C.M.P. is involved. When can we get a straight answer, a firm policy, an effective policy, here in Ottawa?

[Mr. Allard.]

When can we obtain justice, when will we achieve equality of the two great cultures?

● (10:10 p.m.)

[English]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. I must interrupt the hon. gentleman to remind him that his allotted time has now expired.

Hon. L. T. Pennell (Solicitor General): Mr. Speaker, first of all let me say that I commend the hon. member for the very moderate tone in which he has dealt with this important subject. I should in all fairness also put on the record the fact that the hon. member for Hull (Mr. Caron) has raised the same point on numerous occasions with members of the government.

I am sure that we require more bilingual members in the R.C.M.P. not only to carry out important duties in the national capital, but elsewhere in Canada. We all agree that an increase in the number of bilingual members will make the R.C.M.P. a better force. At the present time we are supplying as many bilingual members as it is possible.

I am sure that the hon. member who raised this question will be encouraged by the fact that we have increased the amount of advertising in the French newspapers and periodicals in an effort to overcome this difficulty. In conclusion I am also certain that he shares with me the earnest hope that our efforts will be fruitful in this regard.

NATIONAL DEFENCE—COMMITTEE CONSIDERATION OF INTEGRATION MEASURES

Mr. J. M. Forrestall (Halifax): Mr. Speaker, if I may be permitted to preface my very brief remarks before my analysis of this situation, let me assure the Minister of National Defence that it is indeed most urgent, notwithstanding the indication he has had as a result of a survey of men and officers. The indication I have received is quite to the contrary and represents something of the order of 1,733 communications received which oppose this general area of integration that is of concern.

Men in the service, particularly those in Halifax, largely belonging to the navy and to a lesser degree to the air force and army, require among other things a real assurance from the minister and the government that in the event of legislation being passed by this house which brings about integration in its fullest sense they will be free to decide either for or against re-enlistment without fear of financial, pension or other penalty which may