

Official Languages

The objection raised is that the western provinces, which do not comprise enough French-Canadians, would be more or less interested in the project.

Mr. Speaker, as we do not know what the future holds in reserve for us, in what direction the population might move suddenly, it is always safer to provide for all contingencies.

I remember what happened in committee in that respect and I should like to give the same example I gave at the time.

In Newfoundland, at the present time, the French-Canadians represent 7/10 of 1 per cent of the population and, therefore, it is impossible to establish in the province a bilingual district. On the other hand, in Labrador—a territory which accounts for a large portion of the Newfoundland territory and where a tremendous development project is being carried out at Churchill Falls, the labour force comprises 60 or 70 per cent of French-speaking Canadians from Quebec.

So, if those people decide to remain there, they become Newfoundlanders until such time as the geographical error placing Labrador in Newfoundland is corrected. At any rate, we are faced, in the meantime, with that situation, and a bilingual district may well be created in Newfoundland, in the Labrador region. Then, it would be perfectly normal that the Advisory Council include a member from Newfoundland as from every other province.

That is, I think, a more constructive way of promoting better understanding and, as the Minister of Justice (Mr. Turner) has often repeated, all the more so as this bill is only concerned with federal institutions.

But, where the establishment of bilingual districts is concerned, territorial limits are involved and that comes under provincial jurisdiction. And, as there have always been conflicts, which have often proved to be unproductive, between the provinces and the central government, it would not be advisable to leave the door open to more, when this can easily be avoided.

• (5:20 p.m.)

The government appears to fear the reaction in certain parts of the country. If such fear is being entertained with regard to a bill that is considered to have priority, the following conclusion is unavoidable: either the country is not ready to accept such legislation, or the government is not daring enough nor dynamic enough to obtain acceptance of the two official languages. Possible reactions

[Mr. Matte.]

should not be feared, and I think it would be the best way to reassure those who, are now having difficulty in recognizing certain things, and I understand them very well.

Obviously, where there are very few French-speaking people, where other ethnic groups are much more numerous than the French-speaking minority, it is very normal that there should be strong disagreement and that the majority should not understand why a French-speaking minority should be given special privileges or rights.

Of course, one could build an argument around this but it is not the purpose of my remarks. I just want to come back to the amendment to say that I feel the government should accept it. I cannot see what difference it would make if it were accepted.

It is already provided that there will be from five to ten representatives. If this amendment were adopted, the number would be set at 12. I fail to see anything very serious there. I do not agree with the hon. member for Madawaska-Victoria who kept harping on the matter of number. Indeed, he seemed to want to minimize that matter by saying that it was wasting time, that it was useless to dwell on a matter of number. I suggest it is much more serious than all that. I agree it is a matter of number, but it is also important to know what the number represents. It is not the number as much that is important, because it is already provided there will be as many as 10 representatives. Then, by including the Territories, we would want by this amendment to increase this number to 12, in order to reflect Canada's true image. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, that is not dallying over numbers; it is an extremely important question. Representation on the advisory board must reflect the image of Canada.

[*English*]

Mr. Robert Stanbury (Parliamentary Secretary to the Secretary of State): Mr. Speaker, my purpose in rising at the present time is simply to put on record certain references from Book I, *The Official Languages*, which is the first report of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism. I think there may have been some misunderstanding about whether the bilingual districts recommended by the commission would correspond in every case to a census division. Hon. members will find at page 107 of Book I a reference under the heading, "Determining Boundaries of Bilingual Districts":

To achieve this in a given area it is necessary to decide on rules for setting the boundaries of