

*Official Languages*

context. This done, it will be realized that the undertaking has little chance of complete success unless all people of good will can be won over to its aims. What is involved is a long and difficult process which will bring about profound changes in this country. We are called, then, to a common endeavour, far-reaching in scope, in the full knowledge that it will be difficult, that results will be slow to appear, but that we must see it through if we are to give this country the cohesion it lacks. To fail could be fatal, for the time is past when the individual, within the borders of his province, could agree to live apart from the rest of his fellow countrymen.

I believe that all Canadians are well aware of the seriousness of the choice they must make. I also believe that the great majority of them will choose federalism, with all that it entails. I believe, finally, that Canadians, over and above constitutional or political considerations, recognize that a man loses nothing by granting justice to his neighbour, and that stretching out one's hand to another is one of the few noble gestures this life affords. To do this, we must have the support of every Canadian. We are counting, especially, on the young people, who must rise above prejudices in order to embrace the collective vision of a future of greater justice and brotherhood.

[*English*]

This country belongs to all of us and its future is the future of us all; this undertaking has been postponed too often and we must now set a date for its fulfilment.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear.

**Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition):** Mr. Speaker, I support the reference of this bill to the committee and, therefore, the adoption of the motion that has been proposed.

I regret to have to begin my remarks by making a protest in the strongest possible terms. The government has not seen fit to tell hon. members about the amendments it proposes to introduce. I do not wish to inject any heat into the discussion; I have always tried to avoid this. But, Mr. Speaker, one must ask what games hon. gentlemen opposite think they are playing in refusing to tell the house about these amendments. How can anyone expect me, as Leader of the Opposition, the leader of the New Democratic Party and other leaders to discuss this bill intelligently when the government withholds essential information?

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear.

[Mr. Pelletier.]

**Mr. Hees:** That is the new Liberal dialogue.

• (12:10 p.m.)

**Mr. Stanfield:** Mr. Speaker, I will leave that topic. This bill is placed before the house to strengthen rather than weaken Canadian unity. It is put forward for the purpose of making Canadians, whether they speak English or French, feel at home in this country to the extent that this is practical, and making federal government services available in the two languages. This is the principle which was discussed at the resolution stage. It was warmly accepted by all parties, including the New Democrats and Creditistes. Our task now is to judge the bill in the terms of these general purposes.

[*Translation*]

The purpose of this bill is not to compel English-speaking Canadians to learn French, and vice versa. This bill is aimed at providing French-speaking or English-speaking minorities with all federal government services in the language of their choice, as far as it is practical. If the purpose of this bill were to impose bilingualism, I would oppose it, as I believe virtually every member of this house would.

The principle of making federal services available in both languages, as proposed today, is intended to really Canadianize all English-speaking and French-speaking minority groups, wherever it is practical to do so.

[*English*]

If the purpose of this bill were to impose bilingualism, I would oppose it as I believe virtually every member of this house would. As I understand the purpose, it is to make the services of the federal government more broadly available to the people in the one of the two languages of their choice.

In considering Canada, we must of course consider the country as it exists. It might be easier for some of us if we had only one language. It might also be easier if Canada, long ago, had adopted the melting pot theory. That, however, is not my view. I believe the existence of the two official languages of the two founding peoples of this country has made Canada distinctive and has created a tradition and respect for diversity which also show our appreciation of the nature of the people who have come to Canada from many other lands. Our task is to strengthen their union and our country as it exists. Canada, of course is not a melting pot but a country which respects diversity.