

*Official Languages*

[Translation]

**Mr. Eymard Corbin (Madawaska-Victoria):**  
Mr. Speaker, I shall vote against the amendment moved by the hon. member for Cardigan (Mr. McQuaid).

I was on the committee and I realize that this amendment similar to the one that was defeated there. I believe that there might be some advantage in again calling the attention of the government to the point stressed in that amendment. As far as I am concerned, and for the reasons I have already put forward in committee, I shall vote against the amendment.

A while ago, the hon. member for Cardigan, behind the scenes, so to say, referred to what he called an irresponsible statement. I see that he is smiling. Evidently, I felt that his remarks were directed against me, since I was really the person concerned, but he did not see fit to point to me as such.

Mr. Speaker, it is always dangerous to quote words out of context and, in a way, I rise on a question of privilege, because I would like to clear up this matter.

When I spoke on the amendment in committee, in an attempt, such as I am making today, to reconcile the views of the hon. member for Cardigan and those of the government, I said:

It seems to me that we are determining that there shall be one representative of each province, as well as one representative for the Yukon and the Northwest Territories. The following situation could well happen with regard to the committee. The representatives of the provinces that do not have any bilingual districts or have very few bilingual districts would overwhelm the representatives of the provinces with several or even many bilingual districts.

In this way they could,—

That is the representatives of the provinces that do not have any or have very few bilingual districts.

—in this way, they could, simply through their numerical strength, thwart the will of the minority to establish bilingual districts.

That is the statement the hon. member was referring to a moment ago and he qualified it as irresponsible.

It seems to me, Mr. Speaker, that the purpose of committees is to consider, scrutinize in depth all the possible effects that any legislation or regulation will have, and it is in this spirit that I dealt with this subject. I did not say that could be done. I depend on the government's judgment to appoint committee members who will have an open mind and who will interpret the law not according to

[Mr. Baldwin.]

the letter but to its spirit. It is in this sense that I gave that example.

I do not hold to it too strongly, but here is what I said:

In my opinion, we should try above all to ensure a representation of districts in Canada rather than of the provinces as such.

You will agree with hon. members, Mr. Speaker, that we are now moving towards regional rather than provincial representation, in many fields. I know that there are now many federal committees and commissions on which all the provinces are not represented, but which are working out well all the same. Those committees represent regional or private interests, and they have to settle regional or private problems. For that reason, there is no need for a representative from every province.

Furthermore, I said to the committee:

—this is the important point.

Regional, instead of provincial representation.

—on the other hand—

—and that is in keeping with what the hon. member for York South (Mr. Lewis) said a moment ago.

—I would fear this: if there were only 5 commissioners, for instance,—

As under the law the governor in council is authorized to appoint five to ten of them.

—we could appoint two from Quebec, one English-speaking and one French-speaking, two from Ontario, again one French and one English, and one representative from the Atlantic provinces, which would make five.

A minimum of five on one committee.

So, the West would not be represented—

There is in the West a significant French-speaking minority that would not be represented on that committee. And I just cannot see what there is to gain by appointing one representative for each province of Canada.

This is a struggle with numbers which would lead us nowhere. The hon. members of the opposition have all spoken—some with much eloquence—in favour of this legislation, and now they are all fighting over the matter of numerical representation.

It seems to me that it is wrong for them to insist on this, and I would urge them to vote for this legislation as reported on by the committee and to vote against the amendment proposed by the hon. member for Cardigan.