

about two-thirds speak Czech and one-third Slovak.

We have in this country, of course, many Czechs, but we have a great number of Slovaks too, and those of us who are familiar with this portion of the Canadian population bore them very much in mind when we visited both Prague and Bratislava.

The literacy rate in Czechoslovakia is over 96 per cent. This is indicative of the high level of culture that prevails in that country, founded 50 years ago by that great democratic leader and philosopher Mazaryk, whose son, Jan Mazaryk, the Foreign Minister after the Second World War, whom I had the privilege to know and to call a friend. As is well known, Czechoslovakia has had a communist government since 1948.

The tragic events of last August are of course still painfully fresh in our memories, as they are in the minds of the people of Czechoslovakia. There is no need today to dwell on the events that preceded August, though the memories of the elation felt by the Czechoslovakian people in those days, which communicated itself so infectiously to the other peoples of the world, and not least to the Canadian people, can yet bring a feeling of warmth to our hearts, even though, with hindsight, a sad warmth. Suffice it to say that after August, the Czechoslovakian people found it necessary to come to terms with a new situation: a courageous and realistic people had to discover a new *modus vivendi*, one which would permit them to save as much as possible of the reforms and measures instituted before August, while satisfying their Warsaw Pact partners that regional political and security systems would not be endangered.

It is not my intention today—and I am sure senators will understand—to reveal the full discussions that we had; and we did have 3½ days of continuous discussion. One would not want to make the problem of the Czechoslovakian government or its people more difficult but, to the extent that it seems prudent, I would like to outline the nature of the talks and my impressions of the talks that we had both with important personalities in the Government of the Federal Council itself, the National Assembly, and the heads of the governments of both the Czech state and the state of Slovakia.

Just prior to our arrival in Czechoslovakia, what I might describe as the necessities of political life in that country resulted in the replacement of Mr. Alexander Dubcek as

First Secretary of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia by Mr. Gustav Husak. This was accompanied by other organizational changes which, though weakening the position of political forces which had spearheaded the reform movement of 1968 and strengthening the position of forces which were in varying degrees opposed to the reform program, nevertheless appeared to leave the balance of power in the hands of moderates who can hope to enjoy public confidence.

Of course, the Government of Czechoslovakia has remained in a difficult position, but counterbalancing the increasing press censorship and the continuing replacement of reformers in official positions has been the fact that there has been no visible policy of persecuting political opponents. Indeed, a conditional amnesty was announced on May 27 for those who fled abroad. Perhaps another sign of moderation is the fact that Professor Ota Sik, known as the "father" of the economic reform plans of Czechoslovakia, who returned to that country last month to defend himself against various charges before the party's Central Committee, was, after expulsion from his position as a member of that committee, not prevented from leaving Czechoslovakia to return to his teaching position at a university in Switzerland. I venture to hope that an equally civilized approach will be taken in dealing with other Czechoslovakian figures now under criticism by the regime.

[Translation]

In view of Canada's interest in the question of constitutional reform, we were interested in the new constitution of Czechoslovakia, which came into force on January 1 this year. We also took the opportunity to gather information on the background and operation of the political bodies under that constitution.

[English]

Honourable senators, I am sure I speak for Senator Flynn and Senator Aird when I say that we were very proud of the way in which the delegation of senators from this place was directed by our Speaker.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

Hon. Mr. Martin: In public ceremonies, in private conversations, wherever we went, we were under the direction of His Honour the Speaker. I can assure this house that he conducted the delegation in an exemplary way. He honoured the Senate and he