

Criminal Code

provide bilingual services in the courts, just as we do nationally for the public service.

As I said earlier, some of the provinces will be implementing the legislation sooner than others, and those will be the provinces that have a much larger minority language group than others.

[Translation]

I have here, Mr. Speaker, a news release put out by the Minister of Justice (Mr. Basford) and the statistics for 1977 on the number of Canadians who speak the language of the minority in each Canadian province. In the province of Newfoundland, for instance, only 0.7 per cent of the people speak French. In Prince Edward Island, 6.6 per cent or 7,365 persons speak French. In the province of New Brunswick, almost 40,000 persons speak French, or 5 per cent of the total population. On the other hand, in that province and especially in the riding of Yarmouth, many people speak French. New Brunswick is a truly bilingual province where the two languages "work" harmoniously together. There are more than 200,000 French-speaking people there, that is 34 per cent of the population.

In the province of Quebec, 13 per cent of the population or 800,000 people speak the minority language, which is English.

In Ontario, 6.3 per cent of the population or 500,000 people speak the minority language, which is French.

In Manitoba, the neighbouring province of Saskatchewan, 10 per cent of the population or 60,500 people speak French.

In my province, Saskatchewan, 3.4 per cent of the population or 31,000 people speak French as their mother tongue. They live in southern Saskatchewan, in the town of Gravelbourg, and in the other nearby villages.

In Alberta, 3 per cent of the population or 46,000 people speak French.

In British Columbia, 1.7 per cent or 38,000 people speak French. But in that province, most French-speaking people live in Vancouver. In that city alone there are nearly 30,000 people who are French-speaking. It would therefore be easy in the area around the city to find a French speaking jury.

● (2152)

[English]

As I said earlier, when one looks at the statistics one will find provinces where bilingual courts are being implemented very quickly. The need is obviously present in the provinces of Ontario, Quebec and New Brunswick. A large number of people in those provinces speak the minority language, be it English in Quebec or French in the other two provinces. It is not quite as important to have bilingual courts in the remaining provinces, but those provinces have given approval in principle. They are interested in implementing bilingual courts, particularly for some of the regions where there are

[Mr. Nystrom.]

large Francophone populations. I am thinking of, for example, parts of Manitoba, Nova Scotia and Saskatchewan.

It is important to proceed with this bill. It is one gesture toward keeping this country together. Not just bills similar to this one will keep Canada together. When we talk about national unity and having an understanding between all peoples of our country, we should realize we must resolve the economic problems of Canada. As long as there are more than one million people unemployed, there will not be a positive feeling about unity and staying together. If some of those basic economic problems cannot be resolved, it does not matter how many bills are passed by the House.

There are too many inequities in this country. Too many things in the prairies are unequal and should be resolved, such as freight rates, and there should be an increase in the manufacturing of basic goods and materials. There is too much unemployment in the province of Quebec. There are not enough opportunities for development in the Atlantic provinces. Too many things are discriminated against in the north. Hand in hand with language reform, which is ongoing in the right direction, we must have economic reform so that all Canadians will truly feel they are a part of this great country, which is to their benefit as well as to the benefit of their children and grandchildren in the future.

[Translation]

Mr. C.-A. Gauthier (Roberval): Mr. Speaker, I want to say a few words about this bill before it is referred to committee for consideration and probably amendment, as I heard it tonight. The purpose of this bill is to allow an accused to defend himself before the court in his mother tongue, to have a judge who understands him, to have a jury in his mother tongue. We in Quebec have been doing this for a long time. For 110 years we have been setting the example for all other provinces, and for that reason we are happy tonight to be discussing Bill C-42 which, according to what the minister said, seems to be accepted in principle by all provincial governments. And the minister did say "in principle". For 110 years in principle the other provinces should have protected French minorities and in principle they still hope to have French-speaking courts in their provinces. From what I heard tonight I think that practice will still be long in coming.

When you cannot be accepted as a Canadian in certain provinces because you do not speak English, I tell you it hurts, Mr. Speaker, it really hurts. It makes one wonder what Anglophones have in their minds or in their hearts not to understand that Canada is made up as two peoples. When you go to British Columbia, Saskatchewan, Alberta, you are likely to be called names every day because you speak French.

The members in this House, and I know they are serious and aware of this, should be taking a stand in their provinces with their fellow citizens, as is being done in the province of Quebec. I am proud of the province of Quebec when my fellow citizens respect Anglophones as we like to be respected when we go in English-speaking provinces, Mr. Speaker. I do not