

*Official Languages*

she will understand the abuse that is hurled at her in both languages. It is clear, therefore, that the authorities will have to exercise discretion in the selection of applicants for appointments. A bilingual candidate need not necessarily be the best candidate for the job.

I live in an area which to all intents and purposes is bilingual. Not long ago a man was moved out of my area to another area in which he will not need to speak both languages. Unless that man can perform his job satisfactorily to begin with, it will not matter whether he is fluent in one or both languages because his services will satisfy no one. I remember an occasion not long ago when several young French speaking people were complaining about certain problems having to do with unemployment insurance and the local manpower centre in my area. They came to me with their troubles and I asked them who it was they had dealt with. They told me. Evidently they had been to see a French Canadian who was not much good at his job. In the end I told them to go to somebody else. They went to that man, discussed their problem and it was solved. I have mentioned this incident merely to illustrate the fact that if you want a job well done you must hire qualified personnel and that it does not matter whether the person you are hiring speaks one language or two languages. Of predominant importance is that person's ability to do the job well.

On a number of occasions I have heard of men who think that because they are fluently bilingual they are in some ways superior to the rest of us. They expect to receive preferential treatment when they apply for jobs. People like that are not interested in bilingualism as such; they are only interested in promoting their own advancement. That sort of thing we do not need. This bill only transforms into law what has been happening in Ottawa and in the public service for several years. For many years the public service has been hiring increasing numbers of bilingual employees, the idea being to develop bilingual services in various departments of government. That seems to be a good idea and, frankly, I do not see why we should not extend the philosophy underlying bilingualism right across Canada.

I believe that all our school children should be taught to speak French. But when some of our public school teachers who teach our youngsters French are put alongside French

[Mr. Peters.]

speaking people, one finds that the French teachers and the French speaking people cannot talk to each other. Clearly we are not teaching our school children conversational French, and we should be. If we do not teach our children conversational French we will not teach them to be truly bilingual, and we will all be the losers.

Although I have been perturbed at the utterances of some hon. members on the other side of the house with regard to what this bill is to accomplish, I must say it is my impression that French speaking and English speaking Canadians are broadminded enough to put aside their prejudices in an attempt to make this legislation work. Fundamentally, all the people of this country will have to decide whether the concept of bilingualism is to work. If we are to become a bilingual nation we shall have to create a federal department of education so that both languages may be taught to all Canadians from coast to coast. We shall have to begin training our youngsters in kindergarten when they are five years old. All our children must become like the children of an hon. member of this house whom I have known for many years. Only recently did I realize that his family was equally at home in either language. That is how well trained all our children must be. As I said, our French teachers must teach our children conversational as well as written French if our children are to become bilingual. Our schools will have to use a system similar to that used by the Berlitz school of languages. Unless we treat all Canadians equally and give them all a chance to learn the two languages, we shall merely be legislating preferential treatment for one limited group.

All political parties will have to consider how best to implement the policy of bilingualism. The question is, do we or do we not want to become a bilingual country? That is the major problem we must face, and unless we face it and solve it adequately I say that this bill could cause unlimited division. Nothing but bad feeling will flow from any policy which insists that jobs be allocated on a language basis.

A few minutes ago I was speaking to an hon. member who told me that a man who applied to the Public Service Commission for a job was turned down on the ground that his name was too English-sounding. They wanted a bilingual person to fill the job and his name sounded too English. The hon. member took