

*Official Languages*

Liberals or the Union Nationale, would support Lévesque, not because they are separatists but because they are fed up with the two parties in Quebec.

Mr. Speaker, does that mean that Mr. Lévesque offers a clear choice to the population? Besides, he himself is all mixed up. He says that in Quebec, only French must be learnt as the official working and promotion language. If ever Mr. Lévesque becomes premier of Quebec—I hope that will never happen—and must borrow from the United States, before inviting Americans to invest money in Quebec, will he require as the main condition that the American investor speaks French, and that his working language be French? No. It would be quite the opposite. Mr. Lévesque will go hat in hand to Washington and New York, and beg in English, like everyone else.

He hardly protested when the agreement for the purchase of hydro-electric power from Churchill Falls was negotiated in English. Now he shifts his position slightly and says that there is more for him in the substance than in the form. The form is English but he would like to have it French which would be—quite an acrobatic feat.

Mr. Speaker, at any rate, I do not intend to discuss here provincial politics. Perish the thought. However, I intend to say frankly that both official languages must be recognized, not only in Quebec but everywhere in Canada. It does not compel anybody to learn French or English, but it is advisable to learn both languages.

Today, we note how much importance the English-speaking and the French-speaking Canadians give to the teaching of both languages at all school levels.

When we refer to bilingualism in areas where there is a sufficient number of French Canadians, it means that the people should speak French. We all know this.

But, in the province of Quebec—and here I wish the minister could lend me his ear—we have some areas where there are practically no English-speaking people but where the federal employee is required to speak English. There are very few federal civil servants in the province of Quebec who are not bilingual. In many cases when competitions of the federal Civil Service are held, a French Canadian is required to speak English, while an English-speaking person is not required to speak French.

Therefore, this must stop. The same requirements must apply to both.

• (3:10 p.m.)

I have said again and again: Up to now in Quebec—and I hope it will stay that way—English-speaking people have been put on the same footing as French-speaking Canadians.

In Amos, Abitibi, Quebec, I started to learn English in school. There were no English-speaking people in the small municipality of Amos in 1920, 1922 and 1923.

I was happy then to start learning English. I was glad to do so because I was convinced that a person who knew two languages was superior to another who knew only one. I have always thought so.

This does not mean that one has to neglect his maternal tongue in order to learn the other one. It seems to me that the culture of a bilingual person is more complete than that of another who can only speak or understand one language.

For instance, when I went to Czechoslovakia some four years ago, I found that most people could speak three, four, five, six and even eight different languages. It was wonderful to hear those people go from one language to another and talk with someone who spoke a language completely different from theirs.

In Canada, and most particularly in my region, Polish, Ukrainians are learning French and English; they keep their mother tongue. I am most pleased to find that those young people who attend our schools speak their own language at home. They speak three languages fluently. I feel that this enriches their culture. They speak a flawless French as any French-Canadian. They speak a flawless English as any English-Canadian. This is seen more and more today across the country.

If people recognize that they enrich their culture if they learn Spanish, Italian, German, and so forth, they should recognize all the more that it is enriched through a knowledge of at least our country's two official languages. It is essential, it seems to me.

Then again, that does not force our citizens to learn a language against their will. I believe that jurisdiction in matters of bilingualism belongs much more to the provinces than to the federal government.

At the present time, the federal government resorts to suggestions or measures on bilingualism within federal departments, but such departments do not represent the major part of Canada.