

Official Languages

of services by authorities to members of the public, it is the duty

(a) of the Public Service Commission... and
 (b) of the authority concerned, in all other cases, to ensure that, in the exercise and performance of the powers, duties and functions conferred or imposed upon it by law, due account is taken of the purposes and provisions of this Act, subject always to the maintenance of the principle of selection of personnel according to merit—

All we are saying is that the two classes of persons to whom we have referred should not have been omitted. Acceptance of the motion would give them the psychological security that those in the R.C.M.P. and in the Canadian Armed Forces need. Why not give them the same protection as is spelled out in the Public Service Employment Act?

The minister tells us the amendment would not really change the law. But I feel that if there were a disposition to include this provision for the safeguarding of those who serve in the Canadian Armed Forces and the R.C.M.P., no one would oppose it.

It seems to me, though, that under the new rules every opposition amendment, regardless of its merits, is voted down unless it has had the prior approval of the government or of the standing committee. We saw this happen this afternoon and we shall see it again with regard to the amendment now before us. What we are really doing in the House of Commons nowadays is playing games. Can the taxpayers afford to keep us here playing games when what we do has no effect? The government is saying: We shall run the country and we shall not listen to any suggestions put forward whether they have merit or not; we shall ram our legislation through, and we shall bring in further new rules so as to stop the opposition getting across to the people what is really going on in this country.

An hon. Member: Stop playing games.

[*Translation*]

Mr. J.-A. Mongrain (Trois-Rivières): Mr. Speaker, in connection with the amendment proposed by the hon. member for Cardigan (Mr. McQuaid) I should like to second almost all what the hon. member for Champlain (Mr. Matte) said earlier about a situation that has been going on in Canada for quite some time.

I also wish to say that I agree with him that it is highly frustrating to be arrested by a constable or to be admonished by a unilingual peace officer in a city such as Ottawa which, of course, should be bilingual. The hon. member for Champlain will nevertheless agree that there is some progress in this field

and that we should give enough time to the new generation of public servants to acquire a reasonable knowledge of the second language, which they never had the opportunity to learn.

I would say to the hon. member for Champlain that bilingualism applies even to federal members of Parliament, because they must serve the whole Canadian population. I would hope that the hon. member for Champlain and all his colleagues who are not yet bilingual, who are as yet unable to understand the observations directed at them by peace officers, will themselves take courses in English as soon as possible, to set the example and to become truly bilingual.

In order to really prove to the hon. member for Champlain that I am not prejudiced about it, I would like to quote what he wanted to quote a while ago but could not because he was not allowed to do so, when he attributed to the hon. member for Cardigan words he would have said during a meeting of the special committee on official languages.

I draw it from page 231 of report No. 2. I checked with the hon. member for Champlain to see whether these were the words he alluded to, and he said yes. Here is the text which I will read in the hon. member's tongue to assure the house that I change nothing.

Someone had said that in Canada, everyone might not be in favour of bilingual districts, and the hon. member said this:

[*English*]

Mr. McQuaid: May I be permitted to answer that? I think we have to recognize that there are areas in Canada particularly in western Canada Mr. Pelletier—

An hon. Member: And in Quebec.

Mr. McQuaid: —and probably in Quebec too—but I am referring now particularly to the west—where 10 per cent of the people are French speaking. Now, these people are violently opposed to having a bilingual district established in their particular area. They feel that they are progressing satisfactorily among themselves the way they are, and are not anxious to have a bilingual district established. Surely such people have a right to be heard—or, at least, have their expressions and views put forward to the advisory board. There is nothing wrong with that, is there?

[*Translation*]

That is the text alluded to by the hon. member for Champlain, and I am one of those who think that bilingual districts may not be the best formula. It should not be inferred though that English-speaking Canadians living in Western Canada, are opposed to the principle of official bilingualism. If they have restrictions concerning