

Official Languages

want Canada to be still in the future this bicultural and bilingual Canada which most Canadians wish to have.

I agree with the Minister of Justice when he says that the young, either in the province of Quebec or in English-speaking provinces, are eager for a renewal in Canada and it is obviously by relying on them that we will build the Canada of tomorrow. That is why I repeat my request to my English-speaking colleagues, in order that together we may at least show all Canada that we are capable, with some goodwill, to build a Canada where it will be good to live in the future.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

[*English*]

Mr. Colin D. Gibson (Hamilton-Wentworth): Mr. Speaker, it is not only a pleasure but an honour to speak in this house on this bill after such a thrilling, inspiring and eloquent speech as the one we have just heard by the hon. member for Charlevoix (Mr. Asselin). In my opinion the hon. member's words will do more to fuse national unity than many of the speeches we have heard from either side of the house since this session commenced. The talented and eloquent words of the hon. member for Charlevoix inspire me to take a stab at ma deuxième langue. If he will stay with me I have something to say in French.

[*Translation*]

May I quote here an excerpt from the opening statement made by the right hon. Lester B. Pearson in February 1968 at the first meeting of the constitutional conference.

There are two facts which could not be denied by whoever considers the situation with impartiality. The first is that Canadians of French language and culture do not have the same possibilities as the English-speaking people to live their lives, to raise their children or to make in their own language their full contribution anywhere in Canada.

It is to such a question that I will attempt to give an answer. It would be necessary also to recall the evolution of bilingualism in Canada since 1967. Let us recall the stands taken by our party since the achievement of Sir Wilfrid Laurier and the actual Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau), not forgetting the Right Hon. Louis St. Laurent and Lester B. Pearson, and ending with the urgency to legislate on the matter if Canada is to survive.

Mr. Speaker, what is our ultimate goal as Canadians of either language? The greatness, development and progress of our country, at

all levels. To reach that goal, we must combine our efforts and not divide them in futile struggles which in no way improve our lot or that of our country. We want a better life for all our citizens. Why should we quarrel constantly? Both the English and the French elements in Canada are there to stay and both are determined not to abdicate their language or their traditions.

Their increasing numbers will certainly not weaken their respective position. Why should we refuse to allow either of them to communicate officially in their own language with the government of the country or the various judicial or administrative agencies under its jurisdiction? Let us be more serious and more realistic.

[*English*]

It will be a great day for Canada when Bill C-120 is placed on our statute books. It has great effects for individual Canadians in all parts of the country, from one coast to the other and from one region to another. It will have great benefits in respect of one province and its relations with the others. The only result of this bill can be a fusing of this federation with a better spirit among the provinces and a better relationship between the provinces and the federal government. The composite result will be a vibrant and young nation growing in bilingualism and biculturalism.

I do not use the word "biculturalism" in the sense of a by-product. I have in mind the facts of French life—French levity, lightness and camaraderie—about which we are all aware. This is what French Canadians have brought to us, particularly many of us here in Ottawa where we have formed many friendships. These things are real and this is the message that we can spread.

This is the kind of thing we can teach our young Canadians so that when they grow up they will be stronger and better Canadians living richer lives that we ever had the opportunity to live. We will be the forerunners because we will have had the initial advantage of meeting our confreres from the province of Quebec on both sides of the house. We have learned from them and we pass on what we have learned without fear or reluctance. We move forward joyfully in this crusade for Canada.

We will take a huge step forward by adopting this bill. Perhaps we will not completely