

Official Languages

of parliament who believed there was sincerity in statements made in the house and they could place their trust in them.

This is why I believe amendments proposed by the official opposition merited consideration. Those amendments may not have been necessary to complement the legislation, but they spelled out in clear language exactly what the people of this land wanted. I suggest that the indifference of the government is sufficient justification for the suspicion that exists in the minds of many Canadians. Nothing is more damaging to our democracy than the mistrust and suspicion of our people, yet the government has accomplished that feat in just one year, and at a time when justice and understanding for all of Canada is urgently required if we are really and truly concerned about achieving unity.

I suggest to the ministers responsible for Bill C-120 that if they are concerned about unity in this country they had better do something about it; they should get out on the hustings, accept their responsibility and explain to the people of Canada what the bill is all about. I believe there is unity and purpose in Bill C-120, but the actions of government members, particularly those of the Secretary of State (Mr. Pelletier), will never achieve this desirable goal. The amendments that were not acceptable to the government were probably unnecessary in many instances, as I have already said. But safeguards must be written into the legislation if it is to be effective. I was particularly amazed at the government's refusal to consider having representation from every area of Canada on the advisory board. I believe this is an absolute must if the government is concerned about national unity at this time.

When one considers the smart aleck remarks of the Secretary of State, as reported at page 10823 of *Hansard*, is it any wonder that we are suspicious? I remind the minister that approximately one hour after his damaging speech on the bill, almost all his honey-covered colleagues put on the greatest demonstration of rudeness I have had the displeasure of witnessing. When the hon. member for Vancouver-Kingsway (Mrs. MacInnis) rose to speak, the majority of members opposite showed their rudeness by the interjections made at that time. The Secretary of State should consider what was done on that occasion before he refers to the rudeness of the opposition.

The hon. member for Hamilton West (Mr. Alexander) asked a question in all seriousness. All we heard was sarcasm before

any attempt was made to answer the question. I can assure the Secretary of State that he will hear a great many noises from one end of this country to the other if he does not show fair play in implementing the regulations of Bill C-120. This is a matter that concerns me. Once the bill has been passed, members of parliament will have no knowledge of the regulations under which it will operate. I dealt with this matter on a previous occasion.

• (5:50 p.m.)

I believe the regulations should be before the members of this house so that we can have a thorough knowledge of what we are really talking about before passing this bill. The principle of the bill is brilliant, but the regulations are not here.

I would like to say that I do not want to associate myself with the remarks made by the hon. member for Swift Current-Maple Creek (Mr. McIntosh), particularly in view of the fact that my constituency borders on his. In fact, a short while ago I was amazed that the amendment introduced by the hon. member was voted upon in his absence. It amazes me that anyone should introduce an amendment and not be here to vote on the amendment.

Mr. McIntosh: You know the reason.

Mr. Skoberg: I suggest that the people of that area are quite prepared to accept the principle of this bill but at the same time expect fair and just treatment from the minister responsible for the implementation of the regulations. The people of that area will give fair play if they receive the same treatment. I believe that deep down the hon. member for Swift Current-Maple Creek agrees with me that we have in our constituencies the fairest minded people of all of western Canada. They are prepared to accept change if they know what the change is all about. But this government has failed completely to tell the house and the country about the change. They sat on their laurels and said nothing. They debated, they criticized, but they did nothing to let the people know what this measure is all about. According to *Hansard*, the Secretary of State (Mr. Pelletier) in fact suggested that a member of this house was not interested in this bill and would have nothing to do with it. I believe that this is a disgraceful statement for a minister of the government to make. I can assure the minister and the government that the people of Canada are entitled to decide,