

*The Budget—Mr. Nasserden*

get at the root of the matter and offer solutions acceptable to Canada as a whole.

That was their aim and to prove it, let me say that the government did mention on many occasions it would not wait for the commission's report before passing badly needed legislation.

On June 25, 1963 the Secretary of State—at that time the hon. member for Outremont-Saint-Jean (Mr. Lamontagne)—said in the house, as reported on page 1548 of *Hansard*:

As far as the federal administration is concerned, as I said before, we do not want to wait for the commission's recommendations, before taking action. We want to achieve as soon as possible perfect equality for the two official languages, not only with regard to verbal or written communications with the public, but within every department.

He more or less repeated his statement in a speech delivered on June 12, 1963.

Therefore, the aim of the commission was—and I think that is how the commissioners interpreted their terms of reference—to seek out the deep-rooted causes of uneasiness in Canada. That is why the commission embarked on a vast research program. That is why the work of the commission is taking such a long time and why its recommendations will probably not be forthcoming before some months yet.

As the commission travelled across Canada, it became quite clear, from public hearings, that, generally speaking, Canadians did not know their country; they know their own region, their own province, but not the country as a whole. Each part of Canada developed towards the other parts prejudices which are now deeply-rooted, because people do not know what is going on and ordinary media of information do not usually fill in this gap.

Public meetings have proved that in this vast country which extends over 3,000 miles, people need to know one another better, to know what is going on in the western provinces, in British Columbia, in the Prairies, in Ontario, in Quebec and in the Maritimes. Our country is not only vast but it is divided by all sorts of barriers: geographical barriers—those who have crossed the Rockies know how much they constitute a barrier; distance barriers—those who have crossed the Prairies know how much these vast stretches of land constitute a barrier. There are also linguistic, ethnic and religious barriers.

Here is a vast country which does not know itself in depth, which often knows itself only through prejudices. Hence, it is important that the commission be allowed to investigate all these aspects of Canadian life,

that it report on what it has heard and also on the results of its own research, because to investigate on bilingualism and biculturalism, Mr. Speaker, is not easy. Some people may think—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rinfret):** Order. I regret to interrupt the minister, but I think that his remarks do not exactly relate to the subject before the house. He referred to budgetary expenditures at the beginning of his remarks, but I think he now deals with the principles which governed the initiatives of the royal commission on bilingualism and biculturalism.

I think the minister is departing from the subject under consideration, because tonight we have to vote on a very definite amendment. I think the minister should confine his remarks to the financial considerations concerning the Budget.

**Mr. Marchand:** In all deference, Mr. Speaker, I know that the royal commission on bilingualism and biculturalism has been very costly. Members of the house and the general public have complained about that. I simply wanted to tell the house why this commission had been so costly, to give the reasons and to emphasize the importance of the work of this commission in terms of the money voted. I simply wanted to prove to the house and the public that if only a few millions are needed to settle this problem of relations between ethnic and linguistic groups, I would not consider it costly and that this should not have significant repercussions on the budget as a whole.

[English]

**Mr. E. Nasserden (Rosthern):** In rising to take part in this debate, Mr. Speaker, I should first of all like to make a comment or two with regard to the statement we have just had from the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration (Mr. Marchand). What he has said was that this has been one of the most costly commissions in the history of Canada. He has tried to justify the action of the government, action taken in the face of opposition put forward during the period when this matter was first under consideration. I say to you, sir, that this commission has ignored the hopes and aspirations of more than one-third of the population of Canada, those of ethnic origin other than French or English, the two founding races of our nation.

We on the opposition side of the House of Commons believe that rather than emphasize