

Official Languages

view of the date of adjournment, would Your Honour give some thought—and hopefully there will be some discussions on the matter among the house leaders—with regard to deferring the votes in one or two groups so that the house may know well in advance when the votes will take place. I ask Your Honour to consider this now before we come to the end of the first motion, and in the meantime I hope that the house leaders will be able to meet.

Mr. Speaker: I am in complete accord with the suggestion made by the hon. member for Peace River. It was my intention to suggest to hon. members that perhaps there should be an exercise of the Chair's discretion in this way and that the vote or votes be deferred until negotiations between the house leaders take place.

Mr. Woolliams: I rise on another point of order, Mr. Speaker. I take it, because it was the procedure followed on the bill on the Criminal Code, that the amendments now on the order paper have been examined by you and are in order, so that we can prepare ourselves accordingly?

Mr. Speaker: I might say that if my recollection is correct in connection with the bill on the Criminal Code, rulings were made on amendments as they were reached, although we considered groups of amendments and rulings were made on those. But I might say, if it would be of assistance to hon. members, that these proposed amendments have been examined as closely as possible and in so far as the Chair can judge they appear to be in order. However, this should not be taken as a ruling because it may well be that hon. members on one side or the other may want to raise a point of order when these amendments are moved and, of course, arguments either for or against the procedural points would have to be considered by the Chair at that time. I might say that in a preliminary way it appears that the amendments are in order.

At present the Chair will put for the consideration of hon. members the motion proposed by the hon. member for Cardigan (Mr. McQuaid).

Mr. Melvin McQuaid (Cardigan) moved:

That Bill C-120, an act respecting the status of the official languages of Canada, be amended by deleting subclause (1) of clause 14 thereof and substituting therefor the following:

"(1) As soon as possible following the completion of each decennial census, or, in the case of the

decennial census taken in the year 1961, forthwith after the coming into force of this Act, the Dominion Statistician shall prepare and send to the Clerk of the Privy Council a return certified by him showing the population of each of the provinces and census districts in Canada, categorized according to the official languages spoken as a mother tongue by persons resident therein as ascertained by that census, and as soon as possible thereafter the Governor in Council shall, pursuant to Part I of the Inquiries Act, appoint not less than twelve persons, being representative of residents of the several provinces, the Yukon and the Northwest Territories, as commissioners to constitute a Bilingual Districts Advisory Board for the purpose of conducting an inquiry as described in section 15."

He said: Mr. Speaker, this is a comparatively simple but, in our opinion, very important amendment to the proposed bill. If hon. members examine clause 14 of the bill as it is now drafted, they will notice that the clause provides in subclause 1 that as soon as possible following the completion of each decennial census the Governor in Council shall, pursuant to Part I of the Inquiries Act, appoint—and these are the important words:

—not less than five and not more than ten persons, selected as nearly as may be as being representative of residents of the several provinces or principal regions of Canada—

It goes on to say that the Governor in Council shall appoint them:

—as commissioners to constitute a Bilingual Districts Advisory Board for the purpose of conducting an inquiry as described in section 15.

This board will be set up to conduct an inquiry into whether or not any particular area should be designated by the board as a bilingual district. The government, in its wisdom I suggest, during the committee stage of the debate on this bill accepted a proposal submitted by us that this inquiry should include at least one public hearing when the advisory board sits in the various areas to determine whether or not a particular area should be constituted as a bilingual district. Having conducted a public hearing, presumably it will decide whether or not a district should be established as a bilingual district. Our suggestion is that in carrying out a function as important as the actual determination of whether or not an area should be established as a bilingual district this advisory board should be composed of representatives from each of the provinces of Canada and from the Yukon and the Northwest Territories.

We hear a great deal from the government these days about participatory democracy. Surely this is a way in which the provinces will now be able to really participate in the