

it is doing so because of the restraint program which is on at the present time.

So, generally speaking we give our support to the idea of making two languages work in this country, but just as we do not think English should be imposed upon people in areas which are predominantly French, we think the opposite should not happen either, and that very careful consideration should be given to the way in which bilingual districts are established. However, in the main, the points I read out from this report in paragraphs 7, 8 and 9 applying to the public generally and to civil servants, and in paragraph 10 applying to other languages, should be respected not only in spirit but to the letter.

I have just a couple of other comments to make. Let me put it this way: I think it is a good idea that a French-speaking person in Gravelbourg should have the right to get service from the Canada Manpower centre in the language he speaks. Perhaps it is more important that he should get service. The other comment I should like to make is that having been given in advance a copy of the statement the Acting President of the Treasury Board (Mr. Drury) was going to make, I had my eye glued on him as he got to the last sentence to see whether he could say it without smiling. Mind you, he added a sentence which was not in his text, but for a minister of the Crown to stand up and try to say to us today that these things will be undertaken, but that none of these commitments will involve any increase in the budgetary estimates, is just trying to kid us. Let us not try to kid anyone by saying that bilingualism does not cost money and that bilingual districts will not cost money. That just does not go down.

I confess that these comments are necessarily general. But they are a deliberate attempt to stay away from any bigoted approach to this issue. They are an attempt to support the idea that we have to make bilingualism work in this country, but to press the point that the considerations in the minority statements and in the minority reports, and the considerations advanced today by the hon. member for Edmonton West, should be considered. In fact, there should be further study of the whole matter by the government, with the aim of making whatever is done really work. It must not have the opposite effect.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

● (1240)

[Translation]

Mr. René Matte (Champlain): Mr. Speaker, the least we can do at first glance is to rejoice at the good will of the government which would like to implement the recommendations of the Bilingual Districts Advisory Board. What surprised me, however, was to hear the remarks of members representing the Conservative and the New Democratic parties. I realize, Mr. Speaker, that once again comments were expressed which bring me to think that there is a willingness, either in the official opposition or the New Democratic Party, there is readiness to accept the principles theoretically, but when it comes down to practice, they have all sorts of hesitations, all sorts of tergiversations. I find unfortunate the attitude just expressed by the two members who spoke before me since the only point they welcome is where the government says:

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The government does not admit here the basis of the argumentation of the board. The principles underlying that recommendation are not acceptable to us and the government does not share the argumentation and the conclusions of the board to reduce in Quebec the number of bilingual districts below what could be allowed under the law.

And that is precisely the only point, Mr. Speaker, that will stir up diametrically opposed comments in Quebec, and that is what I wanted to point out immediately before the government gets involved once again in a dispute that could prove disastrous. I wonder why the government does not endorse that part of the report of the advisory board. It should indeed.

I am all the more surprised that although I have had the report before me for only a few minutes, I still had time to see that when the commissioners sat in Montreal eight Liberal members appeared and out of the eight, seven said they were opposed to bilingual districts in the metropolitan area of Montreal.

The government of Quebec also appeared and it said it was against it as well. So the government knows in advance that the province of Quebec is against the creation of bilingual districts on its territory.

Now, it necessarily follows that if the government does not approve the wishes which have been clearly expressed by hon. members from the island of Montreal, who are sitting opposite, we shall have to face huge problems once again. I also would like to remind our Progressive Conservative and NDP colleagues that they seem to forget the main reasons which prompted the government to deal with the matter of bilingualism across the country. Those reasons were not that English-speaking minorities were losing ground in Canada. You have to be realists. The sole reason for that concern today is that Canada as a whole, including the province of Quebec, was becoming increasingly anglicized, since, as the report says, French-speaking people can sometimes hardly order in French in the Montreal area. That is a fact. English-speaking minorities in Canada have no problems, and you know that. Let us stop dreaming and fearing, they have no problem. The only problems are for the six million French-speaking Canadians who are literally lost in a crowd of 250 million English-speaking people in North America. There is the problem! I would even say the government are taking moderate steps in setting up 25 bilingual districts outside Quebec. So, when the hon. member for Edmonton West (Mr. Lambert) or the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) come and tell us: Watch it, a great deal of caution will have to be exercised, I find it appalling that in 1975 my friends have not yet understood that there was only one problem in Canada, and that this problem was to protect the French reality throughout Canada. It is a very well known fact, and it could not be more obvious, that there are people in the province of Quebec who no longer have any hope in that possibility, to the point that they want a unilingual, French speaking, independent province of Quebec. That is a well known fact! Let us wake up, it is no longer time to waver to say if a formula which might preserve the French language should be accepted or not.

Only last week we could once again read in the Ottawa paper *Le Droit* that French speaking-minorities in Ontario were becoming anglicized at an even faster rate. There is the danger. There is no problem for English-speaking