national unity. Because I had the pleasure of being my party's spokesman on this subject before I became leader, as well as since I have been leader, I have had occasion in several debates to underline to the Prime Minister that he is making an error if he thinks that the institution of bilingualism, if properly applied and universally used, will solve the problem of national unity in this country. It is just not so.

● (2050)

Therefore, I was glad to hear him say this afternoon that he admits that there are other issues, economic and social, in this country and that the question of language in the public service of Canada is only one aspect of national unity. That is an admission that I welcome, and I only hope that the government keeps it in mind.

The adoption of this resolution is now guaranteed. The Leader of the Opposition said that he would vote for it, and I am sure that all or most of his colleagues will. I, too, support this resolution, though we will have to see what we shall do about the amendment. There may be one or two of my colleagues who have some doubts—I do not know—but by a decision of our caucus I can tell the House, as leader of the caucus, that this party supports the resolution. Therefore, the resolution will pass and I can only hope that this debate, and the resolution when adopted, will remove the justified grievance which French-speaking Canadians, not only in the province of Quebec but right across Canada, have had.

I have heard a good many of my friends across the country expressing the fear that these bilingualism guidelines for the public service are going to mean that some English-speaking Canadians may not be able to get certain jobs or advance in their jobs in the same way as before. And that may happen in some cases. But I cannot really feel that this is seeing more than the one side. Those of us who are English-speaking and who see that side ought to remember that the French-speaking Canadian has not had an opportunity to advance in the public service of Canada, not only for a century but for two centuries: not only since confederation but for a century before confederation that was the situation in this country. I therefore hope that we will now solve that problem.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, it is obvious that some members object to the resolution because they feel it is a reversal of original views.

It is important that English-speaking Canadians inside and outside the civil service become conscious of the fact that some members and other French-speaking Canadians deplore the dilatory measures taken to develop linguistic equality in the civil service and ask an acceleration of the process.

This finding, Mr. Speaker, is important because it shows the difficulties and duties which we have to face. Some impatient individuals are taking part in this debate. Some question the requirement of linguistic equality in the civil service, while others are impatient because of the slowness in establishing such equality.

For almost a century, Mr. Speaker, a great number of Canadians as well as Parliament and the federal government have not given enough attention to the requirement of establishing linguistic equality in the departments and agencies of the federal government. The federal public service—I know because I lived in Ottawa from 1935 to 1950—had become almost entirely unilingual and English-speaking. This failure has inspired a certain rancour among French-speaking Canadian, but it is important to notice also that this failure has also produced a tradition of unilingualism that some English-speaking Canadians hesitate to change.

Today, Mr. Speaker, justice is struggling against tradition. Such a struggle always produces some reactions and fears that make difficult any logical discussion and reasonable solution.

That is the problem. It can be solved only through patience, respect and understanding. To people who are impatient before the slowness in establishing bilingualism, I say that it is impossible to correct within one or two years the injustice of two centuries. The task inevitably risks being subject to painful discussions; it requires a long education in various regions of this country and changes of attitude and tradition among people who were not even aware of the existence of such a problem and who, therefore, do not understand it.

In such a situation, rancour and bitterness cannot help us, Mr. Speaker.

[*English*]

I take the liberty of saying to my English-speaking fellow Canadians that they ought to recognize the injustice to French-speaking Canadians that has existed up until now, and that all of us must show a measure of understanding and appreciation of the need for change in the public service. Even if we do have some doubts from time to time, even if it has not been our habit to hear French spoken, and even if we have to accept something that we had not thought about before, we should accept these things now. The disgrace is not that we accept it now; the disgrace is that we did not think of it before.

Going about this country we all have our own experiences. When I hear Members of Parliament of all parties sometimes expressing the view that their constituents are fearful of bilingualism, I really doubt this is so. I learned a long time ago that when someone comes to me and says that he is expressing the opinion of the public, what he is really saying is that that is his opinion which he wishes were the opinion of the public.

Let me cite three of my own experiences, Mr. Speaker; it will not take me very long. Two and a half years ago the hon. member for Selkirk (Mr. Rowland) was at his nomination meeting in, I think, his own city of Selkirk, Manitoba. The audience at that meeting represented practically all national and racial origins in this country. There were people from French-speaking families, people who came from every European background you can think of, and there were even a few Anglo-Saxons, people whose origins were British.

A hardnosed member of the audience rose to his feet and put to me a question about bilingualism. This was at a time when debate on the subject was raging in this House. I spoke in reply with some passion, I must admit, but straightforwardly, without bending a word or hiding my