

Official Languages

the Public Service Employment Act will continue to govern the recruitment and promotion of public servants in Canada. That is the purpose of the clause.

Mr. McQuaid: Mr. Speaker,—

Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton): Mr. Speaker, I think the hon. member knows me well enough to be sure that I will entertain all questions at the conclusion of what I have to say. Certainly I have made it clear in speeches in the national capital, western Canada and elsewhere that I will not hold office in a government that adopts legislation which in any way limits recruitment to the Public Service of Canada to one or two provinces because there happen to be in those provinces facilities to help one learn and speak a second language.

Mr. Woolliams: In that case you had better resign now.

Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton): I am satisfied, and I introduced figures at the second reading stage of the bill to illustrate this quite conclusively, that since 1965-66, since the policy of bilingualism in the public service was adopted by the former Pearson administration, the number of recruits from English speaking provinces not only has not decreased but has increased in great measure.

Mr. Nowlan: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, I would not want the minister to mislead the house. I think he should check his records. I think he will see that what was referred to previously was the number of applications from each area. I do not think the house has been told how many of those were accepted. There is a great difference between those who apply and those who are accepted. The difference between applications and recruits is the difference between black and white.

Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton): Mr. Speaker, not only am I prepared to stand by the figures as to the number of applications that were received and accepted, but I am also willing to produce those figures. The figures bear me out not only as to the number of applications made but also as to the number of applications accepted from western Canada and the Atlantic provinces. They bear me out quite conclusively.

Surely for the sake of national unity we want a public service that reflects in its make-up every region and province of this country. The Public Service Commission is

[Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton).]

sensitively aware of this problem and intends to continue to administer public service promotion and recruitment to the public service in such a way as to ensure that the public service properly represents all regions of Canada.

The hon. member referred to clause 36(3) of the bill and the amendment which was proposed by the government at the committee stage. That amendment was accepted. That amendment said that any reference to any of the institutions of the government or Parliament of Canada shall be deemed to include the Canadian Forces and Royal Canadian Mounted Police. In other words, the word "institutions" shall be deemed to cover those bodies. We said at that time that we believed that "institutions" as found in clause 2, the declaratory clause of the bill, and in other clauses is clear enough but that in order to satisfy doubts we were quite willing to have it spelled out. In the opinion of the law officers of the Crown, at any rate, nothing in clause 36(3) which was added to clause 36 in committee changes the purport or intent of the bill.

Having laid down a little background, Mr. Speaker, I now want to analyse the amendment proposed by the hon. member for Cardigan (Mr. McQuaid). As I divine his object, and I am basing my opinion on what he said this afternoon in the house and what he said earlier before the special committee, he wishes to spell out in the bill a requirement that the definition of merit not be supplanted in the selection of personnel of the Canadian Armed Forces, the R.C.M.P. and federal agencies by any addition to the definition already inserted in the Public Service Employment Act covering those employees to whom that act applies. In other words he is saying, "You have a merit principle which applies to those agencies and departments that are covered by the Public Service Employment Act. Section 12 of the act applies to them. But you have not covered those agencies of the federal government to which that act does not apply."

Mr. Woolliams: That is quite right.

Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton): The hon. member for Cardigan is saying, and I hope I am putting his words fairly, that "we want to ensure that the merit principle applies to other agencies, namely the armed forces and the R.C.M.P."

• (4:10 p.m.)

The amendment which was proposed by the government at the committee stage in relation