

Official Languages

and growth which alone can provide the equality of opportunity and equality of return that is every Canadian's right. Let us, in the name of reason, not start rationing rights and apportioning reserved areas for any Canadians. We need to create new work and new opportunities in this country; we need to overcome regional disparities; we need to make this one nation in economic fact as well as in name. Only by these means can we assure every Canadian his rights and protect him in respect of them.

● (2:50 p.m.)

In my opinion this is unnecessary legislation that will create more problems than it will solve and will sow more division and greater animosity than we have at the present time. It is my belief that the only way to unite this country, with the diversity of its people, is by encouraging every Canadian, be he French, English or of any other racial origin, to want to speak the other languages, to want to share in another's cultural heritage, to want to see justice done and rights preserved. Only then will we attain our goal. We can never hope to meld our people into one distinctive Canadianism by legislative compulsion or by building new barriers within the country.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I believe it is contrary to our political traditions to set up officials as enforcement authorities who, because of the nature of their task and the powers conferred upon them, will almost inevitably degenerate into policemen or, worse, coercers of the public. I am afraid that the language commissioner envisaged in this bill will be just such an official.

In closing I would like to observe that the atmosphere in which these discussions are taking place is certainly not one that in my opinion is conducive to unemotional and impartial judgment being passed. If we are all honest with ourselves, if we would only stop trying to be so delicate in talking about these matters, we would state plainly that this bill has come before us in a national atmosphere of racial combativeness and rivalry.

We have but to look at the province of Quebec, the heartland of French Canada, to see how popular bilingualism and biculturalism are there; we have but to consider the recent St. Leonard school crisis and its aftermath; we have but to listen to voices in Quebec City. Can anyone honestly say that we are seeking the same end, that we preach

the same type of gospel in Ottawa as in Quebec? If the spokesmen for the province of Quebec are to be believed, their aim is to have a unilingual province or separate state where the non-French will have to conform in every aspect of life or go under. Their cry is "Masters in our own house". I believe it may now have gone beyond that and could be "Masters in yours, too".

In the light of all that has been said and is still being said, in view of the state of race relations at the present time and in recognition of the facts of North American life, we should drop this bill and get on with legislation which carries some real hope for the future of our country. I have a sincere belief that this bill will not accomplish the desired purpose and therefore I must vote against it.

Mr. Randolph Harding (Kootenay West):

Mr. Speaker, I have been waiting for several days to take part in the debate and have been putting it off hoping that my cold would get a little better. However, it appears that the debate will wind up today and I would not like it to pass without putting my views on *Hansard*. We have had several days of excellent debate on the official languages bill which is currently before the house. As a member from western Canada, I feel that my views on the proposed legislation should be given in the House of Commons. Right at the start I can say that it is my intention to support the legislation. I shall outline my reasons for taking this stand.

I have listened with a great deal of interest to the debate of the past several days. I greatly respect the views of those who have indicated that they intend to oppose the legislation. I frankly admit that they made some good and valid points, especially with regard to the powers of the proposed administrator. I believe that the government, and especially the minister in charge of the bill, should endeavour to bring in amendments so that some of the clauses dealing with the administration of the legislation can be made more palatable as far as the house is concerned.

However, the basic issue at stake is not whether there are several flaws in the bill; the big issue is that of Canadian unity. If by this bill we can take one small step toward achieving a Canadian unity, then every member of the house should support it. I have found that no matter where you go in Canada you will, with very few exceptions, find people who are unhappy with many aspects of the official languages bill, and they will tell you so. But if in the long run this is one of