

*Official Languages*

amendment, or the interpretation we put on it at any rate, is a restriction rather than an expansion of the original section. For that reason, we reject it.

In our view there is another difficulty with the proposed amendment to clause 38 which refers to the right to speak a language other than either of the two official languages, which shall not be restrained or restricted in its natural development in any way. I do not know whether the hon. member for Peace River explained this when I was not present in the house, although I do not think so, but we are puzzled by what is meant by the development of a language in a natural way. I hear a voice from the back giving me some advice, but I could not understand it. In any event, it is our view—much as we agree with the general sentiments expressed by the hon. member for Peace River and our colleagues over here—that clause 38 as originally drafted is preferable in form, broader and less restrictive than the amendment. For that reason we cannot support the amendment.

*[Translation]*

**Mr. Stanley Haidasz (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity given me during the debate on this very important legislation—on the official languages, Bill C-120—to make a few remarks on amendment to clause 38.

Clause 38 is designed to guarantee the rights and privileges of languages spoken by Canadians who are neither of English nor of French origin.

I think I understand very well the feelings of the hon. member for Peace River (Mr. Baldwin). I also received from several Canadians letters expressing their doubts and their fears in that respect.

Mr. Speaker, clause 38 drafted and introduced in this house by the government says:

Nothing in this Act shall be construed as derogating from or diminishing in any way any legal or customary right or privilege acquired or enjoyed either before or after the coming into force of this Act with respect to any language that is not an official language.

*[English]*

There were celebrations commemorating Canadian confederation yesterday and during the weekend preceding July 1, and I am sure many members have taken part in many interesting, exciting and stimulating events. I have come to this chamber fresh from Toronto where yesterday, and the whole of the last weekend, we have had a very stimulating and

exciting time. During that time, thousands of Canadians viewed the exhibits in metropolitan Toronto's international caravan. This caravan displayed the arts and crafts of Canadians of various ethnic origins. More than 33 so-called "world cities" showed us the richness of the Canadian mosaic. I have had the privilege of speaking to many of the participants and organizers of this caravan, and I should like publicly to express words of commendation to the people of the Community Folk Arts Council who organized this event. In particular, I should like to mention Mr. John Fisher, Mr. Leon Kossar and Stephen Vojtech who were among the animators of this exciting event, which showed to all of Canada the rich cultures which this country possesses. It was very different from the dull celebrations which took place in Ottawa yesterday as reported by the Canadian Press in one of the Toronto daily newspapers. I think, for example, that the program which took place in the National Arts Centre did not reflect the multicultural, pluralistic Canada which exists. I think too the Secretary of State (Mr. Pelletier) would do well to find out all the circumstances under which this program was organized.

Let me state that I support the principle of Bill C-120 which will make English and French the official languages in matters having to do with the parliament of Canada, the courts and the public service, as well as federal agencies serving the Canadian people. I think this bill is long overdue and that Canadians of English and French origins might have expected such a measure a long time ago. However, many doubts and fears about this bill have been expressed by Canadians of other than English and French origins. They would like more assurances from the government as far as the future of their languages and cultures are concerned. There is a danger that while avoiding the United States melting-pot we might fall into another disaster, that of two melting-pots. I think it is the duty of the Secretary of State to enunciate what is really the policy of the Canadian government as far as the development of Canadian culture is concerned.

Today, 30 per cent of Canadians are neither of French nor English origin. They have contributed tremendously to the development of the nation. Their children and their grandchildren of tomorrow will be citizens of this country, and they have the right to expect a statement of policy as far as their mother languages and cultures are concerned. In my view, more attention should be paid to the