

Official Languages

application of this bill? We have some suspicions in that regard. We see the Secretary of State (Mr. Pelletier) sitting ever-watchful. It is common belief that the administration of this bill will come under his jurisdiction, that it will be he who will appoint the commissioner and that it will be to him the commissioner will report. So, we have these fears. I believe the amendment I am proposing is a very good one. I hope the Secretary of State can support it, because I think it brings about that degree of security which the Minister of Justice wanted to ensure. He stated that this bill would really ensure that the merit system would be upheld. There is not much point in my reading clause 12 of the Public Service Employment Act. It was read earlier this afternoon and spells out the merit system very clearly. In his speech earlier in this debate I believe the hon. member for Peace River (Mr. Baldwin) spelled out quite clearly what I believe should have been done. I believe this paragraph should be emphasized. As reported at page 9111 of *Hansard* he said:

But here it is not that simple. Having examined the issues, having read the bill carefully and having studied the constitutional background, I am convinced that we are enacting an administrative measure. Virtually all those things the government seeks to have us approve are things which the government of its own volition could bring about without the concurrence of this house or the other place. We might well have had, and I should have preferred this, a resolution of this house to the other place expressing the views of hon. members and saying that in their opinion there are two official languages in this country and that it would be desirable for the people of this country, so far as it lies within the constitutional jurisdiction of the federal government and in co-operation with the provincial governments, to work toward the greater acceptance of the two official languages. A resolution like that could easily have been concurred in.

I agree with that statement, but here we have the situation in respect of a commissioner and bilingual districts. Along with that there is a great deal of fear among the members of the public service and applicants for employment in the public service because of the question in their minds concerning whether they must become bilingual. The Secretary of State said, "Certainly; wake up to the fact that bilingualism is going to be or should be a necessity". Then, we have the Minister of Justice saying that bilingualism is not quite a necessity yet. He tabled facts this afternoon supporting the argument that a unilingual person could be hired by the federal government. Today's *Ottawa Journal* indicates quite clearly that the government is prepared to spend millions of dollars teaching, I imagine,

the official languages to civil servants and Canadians all across Canada. The objection I have to that, of course, is that this money might be spent only in the bilingual districts. If one does not live in a bilingual district he may not reap the benefit of that expenditure.

I do not intend to speak any longer on the amendment. I think it is self-explanatory. I believe it spells out quite clearly what most people have been concerned about. I know I mentioned it earlier in a speech I made on this subject on October 17. At that time I said that western Canada has a growing fear that it is being left out of the policy decisions of parliament. Western Canada also has a growing fear that it is being left out of the administrative decisions of the federal government. That fear will only be strengthened and increased twofold if this amendment is voted down. If this amendment is supported, western Canadians and Canadians from the province of Quebec or from any other part of Canada whether or not they are bilingual, will be able to feel secure in the knowledge that they may apply for a position if they meet the qualifications for that position and provided they express a willingness to learn the other language. This to me does not seem to cloud the issue. Rather, it would seem to clarify it.

The minister said that in this bill there is the intention to ensure that the merit system as laid down in the Public Service Employment Act shall be followed. I seriously ask the Minister of Justice to persuade his colleagues to accept this amendment. I understand the vote on the amendment is to be deferred until this evening. I hope that during the supper hour he and his colleagues can find time to discuss this amendment and find a way to support it.

Mr. Andrew Brewin (Greenwood): Mr. Speaker, I just propose to state in a few words the reasons I cannot support this amendment, although it is very attractive in form and has been presented very moderately and excellently by the hon. member. The reason we cannot support it is really that we think it is totally inconsistent with the principle of the whole bill. It cuts out the guts of the bill. The hon. member for Swift Current-Maple Creek (Mr. McIntosh) has risen in this house a number of times during the debate to say that he is against the other amendments and because he is against the other amendments is against the whole bill. So far as I am concerned, however, there is more than one way to skin a cat. One way is to be against