

provide justice for a minority, and that aims rests on the guarantees provided to the people of French Canada by the British North America Act. No one could question such an aim. It is highly laudable. However, I have a feeling that there is a great gap between the aim of this bill and the situation that will be created by application of its terms. It may well be that this bill will be self-defeating, will aggravate the very situation it seeks to soothe. It may create new issues, fresh points of friction and thus drive a new wedge between the races rather than draw them closer together.

The Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau), speaking in this house on October 17 when the resolution was introduced, said among other things:

I believe that there will be widespread agreement among members and their constituents in all parts of Canada that this bill can be of great importance in promoting national unity.

I am not among those who agree that this bill will promote national unity. On the contrary, I believe it will be destructive. No member is more anxious than I, Mr. Speaker, to see national unity strengthened and to bring an end to the wasteful and distasteful feuding between the two principal language groups in Canada. I simply cannot bring myself to believe that legislation is the means by which this can best be brought about. I will go further and say I believe legislation is the very worst way to go about it. Unquestionably, more can be done to ensure language rights to both French and English speaking Canadians on a voluntary basis than by means of legal compulsion.

In learning a second language, the learner must want to learn and use it. If he or she is compelled by law to learn it simply to prove a point, that compulsion will only breed a stubborn determination never to use the language if it can be avoided and, at least, to master it no more than is absolutely necessary. Compulsion will spread a slow poison that will ruin relations and postpone real unity indefinitely. Race relations and linguistic rights. Cultural recognition and mutual appreciation depend upon the human mind and spirit, not on intricate legal machinery, coercion and paper guarantees.

This bill is a breeding ground for resentment and bitterness. The setting up of special areas, the formal conferring of special rights and the establishment of the elaborate policing apparatus necessary to make these

devices work, will only harden minor differences into inflexible opposition and open the door to endless wrangling.

The Prime Minister made another interesting comment in his speech of October 17. It is a remark that highlights the real facts of today's North American world. He said:

The most important example of this diversity is undoubtedly the existence of the two major language groups, both of which are strong enough in numbers and in material and in intellectual resources to resist the forces of assimilation.

This might be true perhaps if we were considering the French language and the French community in terms only of Canada. The fact of the matter is, Mr. Speaker, that we can no more limit the question to an area within an arbitrary line, such as our international boundary, than we can stop air from circulating. Whether we like it or not, both English and French Canadians are an integral part of a North American, not a national, society. The inescapable effect of this is that that society is an English language society. In the North American society, the French speaking group represent only 2 per cent.

We can retain political sovereignty. We can continue to develop as a distinctive nationality and nation. But we cannot escape the overwhelming force of social, cultural and economic evolution that does not stop at international boundaries but covers all the continent.

May I call it ten o'clock, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. In view of the sustained interest in the house on this question and the desirability of completing second reading stage and getting the bill to committee, I wonder if the house would be prepared to give unanimous consent to continue the sitting either until midnight or the debate shall be brought to an end, with the understanding there will be no vote taken later this evening? A vote would be taken following orders of the day tomorrow.

Mr. Horner: No unanimous consent.

Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale): The hon. member for Crowfoot refuses unanimous consent.

Mr. Horner: As a result of that side of the house not giving consent earlier today—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Béchard): Order, please. It being ten o'clock it is my duty to put the questions to be debated at this time.