

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

PROVISION RESPECTING STATUS AND USE— APPOINTMENT OF COMMISSIONER, ETC.— REPORT STAGE

The house resumed consideration of Bill C-120, respecting the status of the official languages of Canada, as reported (with amendments) from the Special Committee on the Official Languages Bill, and motion No. 7, Mr. McQuaid.

Mr. Eldon M. Woolliams (Calgary North): Mr. Speaker, in supporting this amendment, and taking into consideration what the minister said, I think it may be well to refer briefly to what the Public Service Employment Act really says. I should like to read three of the sections. Section 10 reads as follows:

Appointments to or from within the Public Service shall be based on selection according to merit—

In that regard I think the minister was right.

—as determined by the Commission, and shall be made by the Commission, at the request of the deputy head concerned, by competition or by such other process of personnel selection designed to establish the merit of candidates as the Commission considers is in the best interests of the Public Service.

Section 11 reads:

Appointments shall be made from within the Public Service except where, in the opinion of the Commission, it is not in the best interests of the Public Service to do so.

Section 12 emphasizes this and reads as follows:

The Commission may, in determining pursuant to section 10 the basis of assessment of merit in relation to any position or class of positions, prescribe selection standards as to education, knowledge, experience, language, age, residence or any other matters that, in the opinion of the Commission, are necessary or desirable—

For promotion.

All we are asking here is that members of the Canadian Armed Forces and members of the R.C.M.P. be protected in the same way because, as I understand the wording in the Public Service Employment Act, they are not included and do not have the same protection as those in the public service. Surely that is not too much to ask. I have spoken to members of the R.C.M.P. across the nation and have found there is real fear that there will

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be some discrimination with regard to promotion, particularly of those who have not had the opportunity to learn and to become fluent in both official languages.

I agree with the last speaker who said that everyone should have the right to be arrested in his own language. I think there is some merit in that. I believe it would be very difficult for a member of the R.C.M.P. from the province of Quebec who spoke only French if he were sent to Banff for the summer, just as it would be very difficult for an English speaking member of the R.C.M.P. to be sent to the province of Quebec.

Mr. Pelletier: No, no.

Mr. Woolliams: The Secretary of State (Mr. Pelletier) disagrees. I like to have his attention because he will not speak on this bill. He wants the Minister of Justice (Mr. Turner) to be his mouthpiece. Be that as it may, I will proceed with what I am saying. I think it would be very difficult.

When my good friend says that my party is against bilingualism, I would remind the house that before the Secretary of State had even been heard of the late R. B. Bennett was the first prime minister to put the English and French languages on the dollar bills of Canada and, flowing from that decision, all the documents that came from all departments of government were printed in both the languages. So I think we have to get some of the history straight. Second, a former prime minister, the right hon. member for Prince Albert (Mr. Diefenbaker), brought in simultaneous translation in the House of Commons. Before that time those of us who were not totally bilingual had to guess what was said. Some hon. members shake their heads, but that was before they left other parties to join the Liberal ranks and take advantage of that great opportunity.

When someone suggests that men such as myself who believe in Conservative principles may be against bilingualism, they are historically incorrect and incorrect in so far as our philosophy is concerned. The Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. Stanfield) has stated over and over again where he stands on the bill.

An hon. Member: What about Diefenbaker?

Mr. Woolliams: Every Member of Parliament has a right to his own views. I know that people from different regions hold different views. I listen to my good friends, the French Canadians, I like to hear them speak