

*Official Languages*

I do not fear the governor in council—from it—we trust him but since the making of national unity is a national endeavour as well as that of bilingualism, according to the wording of the languages bill, in which every province must co-operate closely, permanently, it goes without saying that each province and the Northwest Territories should have a representative on this Bilingual Districts Advisory Council in order to express the opinion of their citizens about the analysis of the results of the census which has just been taken, according to the preamble of clause 14.

Mr. Speaker, at the beginning of clause 14, one can read, and I quote:

As soon as possible following the completion of each decennial census, or, in the case of the decennial census taken in the year 1961, forthwith after the coming into force of this act,—

And here, Mr. Speaker, is what I would like to bring to the attention of this house:

—the coming into force of this act, the Dominion Statistician shall prepare and send to the clerk of the Privy Council a return certified by him showing the population of each of the provinces—

This is exactly how clause 14 begins—

—of each of the provinces and census districts in Canada, categorized according to the official languages spoken as a mother tongue by persons resident therein as ascertained by that census.

Following production of that return by the Dominion Statistician, it is proposed to entrust the Privy Council with the setting up of that Bilingual Districts Advisory Board which will conduct inquiries and gather statistical data in each province.

If we accept the introductory statement to clause 14, as the minister is urging us to do, the analysis of the statistics in each province would enable the government to follow population movements between censuses and to determine whether conditions have changed in bilingual districts and whether the creation of a new bilingual district has become necessary. It seems to me desirable for each province to be represented, but not, as the hon. member for York South suggested, by two citizens from Ontario because this is an English-speaking province, or by two persons from Quebec because this is a French-speaking province. It should rather be, as the hon. member for Cardigan pointed out, and rightly so, by one representative from each province, who could analyze the statistical data and determine to what extent that bill may apply.

Mr. Speaker, I should not like to delay the debate any further, but I wanted to make my views known with respect to clause 14. Even though we support that bill, in which we take

pride, the fact remains that clause 14 leaves much to be desired. And I shall quote it in part:

—shall appoint not less than five and not more than ten persons, selected as nearly as may be as being representative of residents of the several provinces—

And I would like to conclude my remarks on this point.

Mr. Speaker, you will notice as I did the broadmindedness, the compliance of the government when it says:

—persons, selected as nearly as may be as being representative of residents of the several provinces or principal regions of Canada—

Mr. Speaker, it seems to me that this is too vague. At times, five members will constitute the Board, at times six, seven or ten members. Who will decide? The Governor in Council. Who is interested in that question? All the residents of Canada, all the Canadian citizens, essentially, all the equal partners in confederation.

If the provinces are equal partners in confederation, Mr. Speaker, the number of members on the Advisory Board must not be determined, in the establishment of bilingual districts, simply upon the mood of the governor in council according to whether he will feel great one morning or will base his decision on the result of the census.

If the provinces are equal partners, if each of them has its say in connection with bilingualism, national unity, it seem obvious to me—and the government and its representatives should recognize it—that each province, in that capacity, should have its say, and not have the right to veto. It is not necessary to have, as the Secretary of State pointed out in the committee, another constitutional conference, a second parliament, or to duplicate the work of the committees, because this committee considers a very specific matter, that of the establishment of bilingual districts.

Mr. Speaker, it goes without saying that the provinces must have their say, because it seems to me—and this is my last argument—that we are studying the Constitution at this time. Everybody hears of the famous constitutional conference. What outcry would be raised not only among opposition members but even among government members, if, upon creating such a constitutional conference, the government said: There will be between five and ten representatives of the various Canadian provinces at the constitutional conference.