

*Official Languages*

In my humble opinion there would have been more willing concurrence in such a resolution than there is in some aspects of the more difficult legislation we are dealing with now. I think a resolution and certain administrative acts would have met the situation, and I believe something like that ought to have been done. However, it was not done and we are compelled now to deal with this measure as we find it. It will have to go to committee and a great many improvements will have to be made to it. We will be compelled to examine in committee ways and means of improving the bill. As the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Stanfield) stated, it must be carefully examined from the viewpoint of constitutionality. I express no opinion here. I have been away for some time and have not had an opportunity to examine carefully the amendments proposed by the Minister of Justice (Mr. Turner); therefore I will not express an opinion at this time.

• (3:40 p.m.)

In committee there should be every opportunity for hon. members to hear expressed the views of the law officers of the Crown. They should be permitted to state their reasons for the foundations upon which they expressed their opinion to the government that the bill is *intra vires*. Provincial governments which still express doubts as to the legality of the bill should have an opportunity to state their case before the committee. Those who may have a genuine concern as to the effect this legislation may have upon the government service should also be permitted to express their opinions. Hon. members, including government members, should be given complete freedom to propose such amendments as they see fit. There should be no attempt to speed up the proper digestive processes of the special committee which will be dealing with this measure, as it is far too important for the future of our country.

The other defect I find in the bill is that it fails to take into account the tangible and intangible rights of other minority groups in Canada, including the Indian and Eskimo people. Until the end of the last world war, hundreds of thousands of people came to Canada from other lands where the mother tongue is neither English nor French. This is particularly true in western Canada and parts of northern Canada. A great deal of the opening up and development of the west is due to the accomplishments of people from European countries such as the Ukraine, Poland and

[Mr. Baldwin.]

Germany, and also the Scandinavian peninsula.

If one reads the history of the development of the west it will be found that for a period of time after the Hudson's Bay Company was persuaded to give up many of its holdings there was not that attention to the development of the soil and other resources of the west that was hoped for. It was only when shiploads of these immigrants came to Canada that development proceeded. These people had great resourcefulness, courage and determination. People such as those from the Ukraine were fiercely independent. They have a real culture and great musical talent. This country owes a great debt to these people who have helped to make western Canada the land which it is. I know that these people accept the fact there are two official languages in Canada. Practically all of them have opted for English as their working language. In many instances, inspired by their pride of ancestry and spirit of independence, they have retained their literature, language, art and culture. This has been recognized in some of the western provinces because I know that the Ukrainian language is now being taught in the high schools of Alberta and Manitoba.

I do not go along with the idea that there should be equality to the extent that the dissenting report of Professor Rudnicki of the B and B Commission suggested. However, I still feel it would not have been too difficult to have gone far beyond the modest scope of this bill which merely pays lip service and says in fact that if these people have another language than French or English they may continue to use it. This is most inadequate. Many of the problems now faced by this government and this country, because of the inability to understand and accept parts of this bill, arise from the fact that nothing was done in this instance.

For example, I think it would have been well to have accepted the belief that these people had made a contribution. It might well have been done in the form of a new preamble to the constitution. I sometimes wonder what dry legalistic mind conceived the present preamble to the British North America Act. The time is ripe when this parliament should delegate to literary and historical personages the task of writing a true and proper preamble to our constitution which will pay more than lip service, not only to the people who form the two great groups whose mother tongues have been official languages