

*National Unity*

institutional bilingualism and what it is supposed to achieve or provide for Canadians has been sufficiently promoted, it is now time to try to convince all Canadians that they have equal opportunities for self-fulfilment on cultural, social and economic levels, individually as well as collectively. There is a wide margin between institutional and individual bilingualism.

One of the greatest assets of Canada is the heritage bequeathed by two nations with different cultures and languages. On the other hand, I believe that the contribution of the other ethnic and cultural groups is an enrichment for the two founding nations. Canadians must become more tolerant and understanding. How many times, alas, have we not been aware of racial and cultural discrimination? And this always against minorities. What can be done? The rate of assimilation as far as my group is concerned, the French Canadians outside Quebec, is frightening. I note with concern that according to the 1971 statistics, 27 per cent of French Canadians have made a linguistic transfer and joined the majority group.

I have in hand the document from the Francophones outside Quebec, entitled: "The heirs to Lord Durham," and I quote:

Comments. The trend is very clear. The regression of the French-speaking groups is dramatic. Nearly half a million Canadians of French origin do not have French as their mother tongue any longer: this is an almost irreparable loss.

This paper is, I think, well written and easy enough to read to make any willing listener understand that the situation is a critical one, a difficult one, a really dangerous one for Canada, my Canada, our country, Mr. Speaker. The rate of assimilation, as I said earlier, is accelerating to a critical point. French as a national language is in process of being relegated to the level of folklore and that, in seven Canadian provinces. Provincial bilingualism exists only in two Canadian provinces: Quebec and New Brunswick. All that is needed to understand the extent of the problems and the challenge that has to be taken up, is to read this document. If the existence, the survival and the promotion of Francophones outside Quebec does not become a Federal and other governments' priority, within ten years we will not have to be concerned about a bilingual Canada and even much less about a united Canada.

It is said in that particular document that 71 per cent of French-speaking Canadians outside Quebec will be assimilated by 1991. What will happen? We are going to die! We do not want to die and we will survive because this government, this Parliament will ensure to minorities in this country the respect and equity they are entitled to. As a matter of fact, in almost every province, these minority groups are represented through their provincial organization, whose role with governments is to let them know what the expectations of their members are. The financial resources of these organizations are not sufficient because of their very minority status and the relatively small number of their members. Up to now, the federal government have had a totally inadequate budget for supporting the work of these organizations. The provinces have only made token contributions to them. Therefore, without voluntary work, fund-raising campaigns and, let us admit it, the great dedication of these French-speaking Canadians, these minorities would soon disappear.

[Mr. Gauthier (Ottawa-Vanier).]

Canada has an identity of its own, unequalled among other countries: a nation with two international languages and several cultures, which can work together because of their heritage and traditional features to produce results of the highest quality. Canada has a third important group in addition to French or English-speaking citizens: I am referring of course to our native people for whom we must show a lot of love, understanding and respect. They are entitled to retain their language, their traditions and their culture. I am referring as well to those Canadians who have deliberately left their country of origin to find a better place to live and a more promising future. These people have personally decided to adopt a new country.

It is true that many of these new Canadians, after deciding to settle down in this country, have generally chosen to speak English. It is also true that immigrants have not always been made aware of the presence of French-speaking Canadians nor have they been confronted with the French language or culture. For reasons which are easy to understand, the Canadian reality will have to be better explained as far as the official languages are concerned, so that they can choose to belong to the language group which seems most natural to them. We should no longer tell immigrants that Canada is an English-speaking country. We should not have them believe that the French language is only spoken in Quebec but we should explain to them that French and English are the official languages and they are considered equally by the Canadian people.

Mr. Speaker, if in the future, immigrants can only choose between French Quebec and English Canada, that would contribute to strengthen the false argument concerning the balkanization of the French language in Quebec while the English language is spoken in the rest of Canada. This argument today is called "separation by attrition".

Mr. Speaker, I would like to suggest a few changes. I believe they are necessary: first in addition to a commitment to federal institutional bilingualism, all provinces should as Quebec and New-Brunswick already do, offer public services in both official languages. Our constitution needs to be rejuvenated. It should include for one thing a declaration of fundamental human rights and liberties. Each province should also adopt a charter which would respect the rights and liberties of its linguistic minorities and be liberal toward them.

Provincial governments are partially responsible for achieving goals of linguistic equality. All Canadian provinces without exception must ensure basic rights to education and must recognize and support by legislation the right of their citizens to be educated in one or the other official language. Moreover, provinces must encourage people to learn the other language and allow them to become bilingual if they so wish. The federal government should call on the provinces to clearly state within a year their intentions concerning the education, the rights and the matter of public communications of their French-speaking minorities. In all provinces there should be at least the right to live in one's mother tongue, the right for parents to have their children educated in the language of their