

*Human Rights*

regime and, at all times, free to express my opinion, I support this bill introduced by our Prime Minister, the champion of minorities and human rights, and also because I recognize that all individuals, regardless of race, origin, colour, religion or sex, have inalienable rights.

Thus it is in upholding the rights of every citizen across the country that we shall build a strong, great and more united Canada.

(Text):

**Mr. Laurier Regnier (St. Boniface):** Mr. Speaker, I deem it a great honour and privilege to take part in the discussion of the bill of rights. It is my opinion that we shall never have peace in the world and unity in Canada unless we can educate and develop more men of good will. The nations of the world are at present spending a large proportion of the fruits of their labour and toil in preparation for possible aggression on account of the lack of men of good will in sufficient numbers to rule our human destinies with freedom and justice. Not only are the peoples of the world maintaining armies and developing war machines which can annihilate life itself on earth but life lived under such perpetual tension becomes to many almost unbearable. A bill of rights under the circumstances is really a beacon toward which not only Canadians but people of all nations can look and take courage and inspiration for freedom and peace.

To my mind this is the most important legislation that this parliament or any parliament can pass. The bill by implication proclaims that one cannot be a true citizen unless he is imbued with the principles embodied in this bill of rights. The true citizen must be desirous of freedom and justice not only for himself but for his neighbours and for all citizens of the world.

Canada was blessed at an important turning point in its history, namely the capitulation of Quebec in 1759, with a number of men of good will as governors from Great Britain. These men through their sterling qualities of heart and mind have made it possible for Canadians to preserve the integrity of the land that we are able to enjoy today. Some of these men deserve to have their names proclaimed as perhaps the real architects of a united Canada. I refer to the first two governors, Governor Murray and Governor Carleton.

The great governor James Murray was the author of the ordinance establishing a civil court in Quebec. This ordinance admitted and allowed the French law and custom in all causes in the courts between natives of Canada and provided also for Canadian advocates to practise in this court. His high

quality of heart and sense of justice are apparent in a letter written by him to the lords of trade dated October 29, 1764. I quote:

My lords:

Little, very little, will content the new subjects but nothing will satisfy the licentious fanatics trading here but the expulsion of the Canadians who are perhaps the bravest and the best race upon the globe, a race, who could they be indulged with a few privileges which the laws of England deny to Roman Catholics at home, would soon get the better of every national antipathy to their conquerors and become the most faithful and most useful set of men in this American empire.

I flatter myself there will be some remedy found out even in the laws for the relief of this people. If so, I am positive the popular clamours in England will not prevent the humane heart of the king from following its own dictates. I am confident too my royal master will not blame the unanimous opinion of his council here for the ordinance establishing the courts of justice, as nothing less could be done to prevent great numbers from emigrating directly, and certain I am, unless the Canadians are admitted on juries and are allowed judges and lawyers who understand their language, His Majesty will lose the greatest part of this valuable people.

I have the honour to be with the greatest truth and regard,

My lords, your lordships'

James Murray

I should also like to quote a letter written by Governor Carleton in reply to a complaint of five members of the council, which letter is dated October, 1766. I quote in part:

But that there may be no further doubt I hereby make known to you, and I both have and will, on all matters which do not require the consent of council, call together such counsellors as I shall think best qualified to give me information; and further, that I will ask the advice and opinion of such persons, though not of the council, as I shall find men of good sense, truth, candour and impartial justice; persons who prefer their duty to the king and the tranquility of his subjects to unjustifiable attachments, party zeal and to all selfish mercenary means.

Again, in a letter to Lord Shelburne dated December 4, 1767, Carleton writes in part complaining of the legal system:

How far this change of laws, which deprives such numbers of their honour, privileges, profits and property, is conformable to the capitulation of Montreal and treaty of Paris; how far this ordinance, which affects the life, limb, liberty and property of the subject, is within the limits of the power His Majesty has been pleased to grant to the governor in council; how far this ordinance, which in a summary way declares the supreme court of judicature shall judge all cases, civil and criminal, by laws unknown and unpublished to the people, is agreeable to the natural rights of mankind, I humbly submit this much is certain that it cannot long remain in force without a general confusion and discontent.

These two men have laid by their good will, love of justice and freedom a solid foundation upon which a great and united Canada can prosper. Most of the speeches