

*Official Languages*

the Ralliement créditiste is going to vote with all its might against that amendment through which, as I said, some members of the Progressive Conservative party are trying to serve their own ends and purposes by playing politics.

Mr. Speaker, some of the representatives here are neither French- nor English-speaking. For instance, the hon. member for York South (Mr. Lewis), is not British at all nor a Frenchman from France and he states plainly, wherever he goes throughout Canada that he supports the recognition of two official languages. I believe the hon. member for York South serves the cause of national unity in taking such a stand.

I think that we promote national unity, like the government, when we do not sing two different tunes, one in the West, the other in the East, when we hold the same beliefs across Canada, when we say that we are one Canada. And I repeat again that there is only one Canada and not two nor ten.

Since the bill is under study, it is important that the principle of the recognition of both official languages be accepted without the question having to be submitted to a court. Nothing in the bill compels an hon. member to learn French or compels me to learn English. However, the legislation is to the effect that he, English-speaking, and I, French-speaking, must be equally respected in Canada. What we want is respect for the individuals.

The hon. member said that when he spoke like that, he was thinking of the welfare of the future generations. Now, having heard these explanations, I think that if we continue in the same direction, the future generations will be just as backward as the hon. member for Cumberland-Colchester North was a while ago when he proposed his amendment.

There are limits, Mr. Speaker, to playing politics about a serious subject. I admit that we should be discussing other things than official languages at this moment when the economy is going downhill. However, since the bill has been introduced and since the government does not want to withdraw it, we favour the principle that both languages be officially recognized in the whole of Canada. We want English to be equal to French in the province of Quebec and that French be equal to English in Ontario, in Nova Scotia and in the other provinces so that Canadians will be united and our national unity will come true. Let us stop saying that this subject must be submitted to the Supreme Court of Canada so

that judges may decide whether hon. members can make decisions by themselves or whether they are in a fog, as the hon. member for Cumberland-Colchester North clearly seems to be.

[*English*]

**Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton):** I wish to speak briefly on this amendment, Mr. Speaker. I tried to persuade Your Honour not to admit it but now it is before us I should like to speak briefly to it.

I shall not go deeply into the constitutional arguments because I agree with the hon. member for York South (Mr. Lewis) that this is not the forum in which to decide whether this bill in its finality is constitutional or otherwise. Only the courts can do that. But I shall summarize the arguments I attempted to adduce on second reading in the strongest terms that on the best advice we have, the advice of the law officers of the Crown and others, supported by that of the law officers of most of the Attorneys General across Canada, this bill is constitutional and within the competence of parliament to enact.

Two constitutional arguments have been raised against it and they were referred to this afternoon by the hon. member for Cumberland-Colchester North (Mr. Coates). The first is that the 1949 amendment to the B.N.A. Act, which is now found in section 91(1), prohibits this legislation. That article says: that the parliament of Canada has, among other powers, the power to amend from time to time the constitution of Canada except—and there are some items listed—as regards the use of the English or French language. The answer to the argument that this bill transgressed section 91(1) of the B.N.A. Act is that it does not amend the constitution in so far as it affects the use of the French or the English language.

The second part of the argument against the constitutionality of the bill is that the legislation contravenes section 133 of the B.N.A. Act. Section 133 reads:

Either the English or the French language may be used by any person in the debates of the Houses of the Parliament of Canada and of the Houses of the Legislature of Quebec; and both those languages shall be used in the respective records and journals of those houses; and either of those languages may be used by any person or in any pleading or process in or issuing from any court of Canada established under this Act, and in or from all or any of the courts of Quebec.