

I doubt that it will help the discussion any. Indeed, the government says it accepts, in principle, and not only in principle, but that it accepts the representations concerning the setting up of at least 30 districts as recommended by the Commission. Still, it rejects the majority recommendation of the Commission for I have noticed that at least three commissioners failed to agree with the idea that Quebec should include only six districts, and that Montreal, because it was already giving adequate services in English met the requirements of the Official Languages Act.

I therefore feel that the minority members were right, that the government also was right in accepting the recommendations of the minority members on that question, taken as a whole. As far as I am concerned, with regard to bilingual districts, I am afraid, and this is the personal opinion I expressed during consideration of the recommendations of the Dunton Commission, that we are creating some sort of linguistic reservations or ghettos. That danger is very real!

In addition, I have always felt that the Dunton Commission report, the principle of this Fox Commission, as well as the attitude of the government, rather reflect the way of thinking of central Canada.

● (1220)

[English]

What is good for central Canada, and particularly certain portions of central Canada, is good for all of Canada seems to be the guiding rule. No greater mistake can be made, in considering the affairs of this country, than that Canada is a very complex country. I suppose that is the most trite sort of statement that can be made, but it is very true. These decisions which are tailor-made, shall we say, for a 200 or 300 mile radius of Ottawa, but apply to Edmonton, Calgary, Regina or Vancouver, do not necessarily conform with the spirit, aspirations, characteristics and rights of the rest of the people of Canada.

While my party and I accept fully the principles of the Official Languages Act, I would say that we must proceed with a great deal of caution. I would have thought that the government, having seen the reaction to the original proposition and the views of Mr. Spicer—whom, after all, they have appointed to monitor the progress of the Official Languages Act—must realize that in many parts of Canada the creation of bilingual districts may create more problems than tend to solve them. It will certainly set a lot of people on their ears.

Then, going beyond the recommendations of the commission that bilingual services will be provided in capital cities to serve the whole of the province, the government has said that there will be some sort of subcategory of bilingual districts in major urban centres where at least 5,000 people normally use the minority language as their language of communication. I invite the hon. gentleman to try that in a city such as Edmonton. We are not going after precise figures on ethnic origin as appeared in the census, but, as I say, this is going to create more problems.

The last comment I would like to make is this, because I see, Mr. Speaker, that you are nodding. Let me point out that we have a report of this large size that has been considered *in extenso* for some considerable time on this

Bilingual Districts

important question, and surely a matter of seven or eight minutes, or even ten minutes, to use in making comments on it is well within the acceptable limit. However—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member raises a very important point. I do not want to unduly restrict members in making their comments, but I would like to point out that the minister spoke for ten minutes. The hon. member for Edmonton West (Mr. Lambert) has now been speaking for 12 minutes. Since there are two other hon. members to follow, who will probably take close to that time, it does not leave much time for questions before the lunch adjournment. However, there will be time after two o'clock to continue with questions, if necessary.

Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West): I did not want to abuse the time of the House, Mr. Speaker. I am fully aware of the time limitation and was coming to my last point.

Some hon. Members: Good.

[Translation]

An hon. Member: Oh, oh!

Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West): We are not discussing Quebec here, but Canada.

[English]

The question that comes to my mind is that in the furnishing of bilingual services in the capital cities, according to the concept of the late Mr. Pearson that government services should be bilingually functional, there might be a tendency to move, as there has been within Ottawa, to minimum requirements in making positions bilingual. If there has been some difficulty in Ottawa with regard to that matter, I can assure the House that in Vancouver, Edmonton and other areas there will be a great deal more fuss about it, and I issue a word of caution. It is not a case of "full steam ahead, and damn the torpedoes." I think the end result and the objective of what parliament set out to do under the Official Languages Act is worth a great deal more than some of the impatience of those people who would say, "Let them have it with both barrels".

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member for Edmonton West (Mr. Lambert) has pointed out, we were presented this morning with a report of some 272 pages. Actually, the volume is larger than that because of the numerous maps and other pages in the book which are not numbered. I have not had time to count the total number of pages.

Mr. Drury: You can go by its weight.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): The minister suggests we might go by the weight of it. I suggest that our rule about statements from ministers and the opportunities for reply and for asking questions is a good one and it is working very well. But I think that in a case like this, when we are given such a weighty document—weighty in more ways than one—it might have been more courteous on the part of the government to table the document one day and make the statement and have the comments on the