

poll like that and they came in for the Tory party that they were right and justified, I am sorry for what would happen to the Liberals; they would look worse than they did in 1958.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Andrew Brewin (Greenwood): Mr. Speaker, I will be extremely brief. No doubt the parliamentary secretary will be pleased to hear that.

However, I would like to open by saying how pleased we all are in this House to have with us once again the hon. member for Calgary North (Mr. Woolliams) and to hear him in such excellent form as he has displayed this morning.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Brewin: I wanted to speak on third reading because I had hoped to speak on second reading, but I was indisposed at the time and was unable to be present in the House. I do want to take the opportunity on this third reading debate to express my wholehearted approval of Bill C-42 with the amendments in it which have been introduced by the committee. It seems to me to represent what has been long overdue, a measure of recognition of justice toward minority groups.

As some of you may know I have had something to do with the courts of law. There is nothing much more pathetic than a person who is in the unfamiliar circumstances of being charged and tried on a criminal offence. Such a person is deemed to be innocent, of course. But there he is in unfamiliar surroundings. Add to that the difficulty that the matter may be entirely conducted in a language which he does not comprehend. Denying him the right of the use of one of the official languages in that trial, in my judgment is a serious interference not only with the rights of minority groups but a serious interference with a person's individual right.

I think this act does justice to both of those things. It is 110 years or more since Confederation and it is high time that we established beyond doubt this right of a person, no matter to which official language group he may belong, should that person be in court tried or charged with a criminal offence he should be able to have part of those proceedings at least in a language that he can comprehend. Therefore I welcome this bill.

I understand why it is necessary that the bill should not come into effect without a proclamation which involves the approval of the province in which the bill is to be administered. Normally speaking I am not sure that I would be in favour of that, but in this particular case it is necessary. As the hon. member for Calgary North has pointed out so clearly, the administration of justice is a provincial right even though criminal law is a federal subject matter. However, may I be permitted to say that I hope the various provinces of Canada will give hasty consideration to agreeing to a proclamation so that throughout all of Canada people will have this right to a criminal trial, partly at least, in the language of the person charged.

Criminal Code

Most of the members of this House know by now that I have indicated my intention not to be a candidate again. Therefore I will not be able to address this House too often in the future. I believe, as I think all members do, most sincerely and wholeheartedly in Canada and our federation. I want to add to that statement of conviction that part of my feelings on the matter is based on my experience of 16 years in this House, which is not very long compared to some hon. members, but it is still a fair chunk out of one's life. My experience during that time has been one of warm, close, and friendly association with people whose original language is different from my own.

I have had the experience of travelling across Canada with hon. members. As well, I have recently been on a trip to South America with the hon. member for Montmorency (Mr. Duclos), and a trip across Canada with the hon. member for Sherbrooke (Mr. Pelletier). I have had the closest co-operation with various people on the Standing Committee on External Affairs and National Defence, including the present chairman, the hon. member for Saint-Denis (Mr. Prud'homme). I am sure other members can give similar examples. With that co-operation, working across party lines and working for the constructive benefit of Canada, we can maintain, improve, and expand the welfare of Canada and the strength of this country.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

● (1252)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Adrien Lambert (Bellechasse): Mr. Speaker, I should like to take part briefly in this debate on Bill C-42. Since Fridays seem to be great days for understanding in the House, and this one being no exception, we are looking forward to such an experience. I listened with much attention to the hon. member for Calgary North (Mr. Woolliams) who made a fine speech, evoked heart warming memories which are likely to bring us all close together, create a better atmosphere and better feelings between Canadians from various provinces.

Mr. Speaker, during the debate on second reading, I indicated how pleased I was finally to see a bill being introduced to make sure that Canadians living in other provinces would be tried in their own language. I am aware of the fact that this bill may prove difficult to apply at first, but with consultations and good will, this bill may certainly become a fact of life. Of course, there will have to be consultations, but with the communication such as those we have today, I think we have much more chance than, say 40 or 50 years ago, of reaching our goal more quickly.

Because of this, Mr. Speaker, it is a fact, as I indicated early in my remarks, that I fully supported Bill C-42 and that I shall continue to do so. I am sure that if my colleagues were called upon to speak today, their comments would be in a similar vein. Therefore, if there is a vote, I shall certainly support this bill.

Motion agreed to, bill read the third time and passed.