

Official Languages

a sufficient number to have all the interested provinces in the group. Now, I just say this for information.

The Minister of Justice should know this because he was on the committee. He said that the committee's findings should be final in this regard. They are not final as is proven by the premise on which the clause is based. Clause 13 specifically spells out that a bilingual district can be as small as a school district and as large as a census division. The B and B Commission specifically suggested that census divisions are the only way in which it is possible to divide Canada into bilingual districts. To me this is the wrong premise. I believe that clause 15 involves the provinces, and the amendment to clause 14 vastly improves it. I urge the Secretary of State and the Minister of Justice to have a hurried caucus and to agree to support the amendment if they want at least to project the idea across Canada that they are concerned about the suspicions regarding the bill.

It was reported in the newspapers not long ago that the Prime Minister publicly condemned the press for not selling the idea of bilingualism to Canadians. I imagine he shrugged his shoulders and said that he did not do it as well as he could have but that the newspapers have vastly underplayed the issue and have not done a good job of selling bilingualism. In making that statement he admitted that there was a great deal of suspicion about the bill, but he felt it was a false suspicion. However, if he wishes to set that suspicion at rest, he can do so by accepting the amendment we propose as the first step toward alleviating that suspicion. Refusal to do so will only add to the suspicion in my mind and in the minds of thousands of people across Canada that the government wants to pull the wool over someone's eyes in connection with this legislation, that it does not want representatives from all the provinces sitting in on these meetings, that it wants to steer away from certain of the provinces, with the idea that only provinces agreeable to these proposals should be represented.

• (4:50 p.m.)

This is not the spirit about which the hon. member for York South spoke. It is not the spirit he suggested the government should show. Whether it likes it or not, the government is responsible to all the people in all the provinces of Canada, and unreadiness to accept this responsibility indicates that it is unwilling to pay any regard to the unrest and

[Mr. Horner.]

suspicion in the minds of many people across Canada today with regard to this legislation.

Mr. John L. Skoberg (Moose Jaw): Mr. Speaker, in taking part in the debate on the amendment proposed by the hon. member for Cardigan (Mr. McQuaid), let me say first of all that I know full well that the words spoken by the hon. member for York South (Mr. Lewis) were spoken with sincerity. He expects the government to stand up and be counted, and to maintain the respect in which it was held when the last election was conducted. At that time the government was expected, when introducing this legislation, to be truthful to the rest of the nation. I can assure the hon. member for Crowfoot (Mr. Horner) that what the hon. member for York South said very plainly was that as members of this house we would ensure that the rights of every individual in this country are well looked after. I am sure every hon. member of the house, particularly every responsible member, realizes that the hon. member for York South is fully aware of the situation in this country and that he fully understands the general principles of this bill, recognizing that this measure is something the nation must have.

Having said this, let me add that there are members of our party who do not agree that this amendment is a bad one. I am one who believes that the amendment is entitled to support. If we are to be a true democracy, the people of the entire nation ought to be represented on any board which is set up. In this connection I should like to refer to an editorial which appeared in the *Western Producer* of June 12. It outlines clearly the position we are likely to come to unless we broaden the representation on this advisory board. The article states:

The controversy over the official languages bill indicates that Canada is not yet a nation in spirit. It is still a collection of regions whose isolation from one another is both geographic and psychological.

The editorial continues:

There is evidence that much of this regional opposition has been based on misunderstandings. Also, many Canadians are preoccupied with pressing "bread and butter" problems such as inflation, housing and sagging wheat sales. Naturally, they regard cultural legislation as a luxury at such a time.

The government should realize that if it sets up a board of the kind proposed without making provision for proper representation from the provinces across this nation there is bound to be misunderstanding. It is bound to