

Official Languages

regional differences must be rationalized if we are to know true unity. One method of achieving this could be by large scale exchanges of young people between one region and another. This idea has been tried on a limited basis and the results have shown that it works. When I think of the millions of dollars that have been spent on the B and B Commission I cannot help but think how much more could have been done for national unity if the money had been spent on projects such as youth exchanges between regions.

Canadians of all ethnic backgrounds are Canadians, and they must be able to feel so wherever they go in this country. To the extent that this bill will help Canadians of French origin to do so I believe it to be a good measure. However, I wonder whether the bill is likely to achieve this end. I think the bill will only succeed in entrenching English-French differences while reducing the potential for progress that is represented by the third group. It is even more unfortunate because I believe that the best way in which the historic differences between the two founding peoples can be bridged is by the intervention and intercession of the third group. I see the great number of Canadians of racial origins other than French or English as a catalytic agent that, with good will and good sense, could be made a successful neutralizer of ancient divisions and a base upon which to build a sound, cohesive, multicultural mosaic.

I wonder what the Fathers of Confederation wanted when they proposed the Canadian constitution. I think it would be well for us to review some of the thoughts of our only living Father of Confederation, the man who once said that he is "heart to heart, mind to mind" with the Prime Minister. That man is Joseph Smallwood, Premier of Newfoundland, often billed as the only living Father of Confederation. In a recent proclamation during Canada Week he said:

This I believe:

That Canada under God is one of the most beautiful and one of the greatest countries in the world;

That Canada is potentially as great as her people are great;

That Canada is one nation, indivisible, where no race or creed has special rights, and where all are equal, English and French, Italian and Russian, Portuguese and Ukrainian or whatever the ethnical origin may be;

That Canada is not a melting pot but a country where peoples of many racial origins can live and work together as unhyphenated Canadians, yet maintaining cherished traditions and distinguishing cultures;

[Mr. Mazankowski.]

That our system of government is a good system, and the best to ensure that all Canadians have equal guaranteed rights and equal opportunities; That there should not be a rich Canada and a poorer Canada, but that material well-being and the good life should be as equal as can be.

To me, Mr. Speaker, there is somewhat of a conflict between the ideals of that living Father of Confederation and the aims of this bill. I can only hope that those who are responsible for its administration will pay particular attention to these clauses of this proclamation in order that we may truly work together to promote and preserve unity within this country, the country I love—Canada.

Mr. F. J. Bigg (Pembina): This is one of the most important bills ever to come before this house, because the future of this country may depend on whether or not we make the principle of this bill work. If I thought only about the legality of this bill I might worry about it, and I have studied a little constitutional law. I am not at all sure that the Minister of Justice (Mr. Turner), or the hon. member for York South (Mr. Lewis), are entirely correct in their assessment of the legality or constitutionality of this bill. I beg hon. members of this house to consider it from a more important angle.

Is there anything in this bill which might tend to bring us together? You might consider these to be strange words coming from me because from time to time, in my rather rasping voice, I speak in this chamber on controversial subjects and I am considered in some respects to be a backer of lost causes. I have been told more than once to get off my white horse and come down to earth. At this time I want to do just that for a few minutes.

• (5:30 p.m.)

There is something of value in this bill and that is the spirit behind it, if nothing else. Let us go back perhaps 100 years and figure out what it was the Fathers of Confederation meant when they gave the people of French origin the right to their own language. Let me beg of those people of French origin, not only in this chamber but across Canada, to remember the second group of people who granted these rights. I am sure if they remembered this fact half the problems of Canada would disappear.

This agreement was signed by gentlemen. They had faith in the future and great respect for that great Gallic race alongside of whom they had lived for something over 1,000 years. They had reason to respect that race. The