

Official Languages

jobs. Instead of becoming head of the income tax office in Montreal an English-speaking civil servant could become head of the income tax office in Toronto, Winnipeg, Edmonton, Vancouver, Halifax, St. John's, Newfoundland or any other major city throughout the land.

Mr. Alexander: Perhaps I was not paying too much attention to the exposé and explanation of the minister, for which I am very grateful. I should like the minister to explain to me what would happen after a man had given 15 years of his life and was the best suited for a specific job but found that his capabilities did not allow him to become bilingual. Would he be the one considered for that job notwithstanding his ability to become bilingual? That is a very simple question, and I hope the minister can answer it in simple terms.

Mr. Pelletier: Mr. Speaker, I used very simple language, but I suspect the hon. member does not understand because he does not care to understand. What I said was very simple.

Mr. Muir (Cape Breton-The Sydneys): Let the Minister of Justice (Mr. Turner) take on this question. At least he would be a gentleman.

Mr. Pelletier: Mr. Speaker, I am sure the hon. member for Hamilton West (Mr. Alexander) understood my opening remarks in which I said that the amendment before us would lead to impossible complications. I used the example of a unilingual French speaking civil servant who might be qualified for the job as head of the income tax office in Toronto but could not speak a word of English. I posed the question to him in simple terms. I am surprised that the hon. member needs my help to understand a very exceptional case that he might judge from a common sense point of view.

An hon. Member: Just because the seals are flapping does not make it right.

Mr. P. B. Rynard (Simcoe North): Mr. Speaker, I have a few comments I should like to make in respect of this bill and the amendment posed by the hon. member for Crowfoot (Mr. Horner). Tonight we have been given an example of a situation where two ministers differ in opinion. The Minister of Justice (Mr. Turner) stated that the hon. member for Crowfoot (Mr. Horner) moved an amendment which had a lot of merit. On the other hand, the Secretary of State (Mr. Pelletier) has said

the hon. member's amendment was so poor he did not think he had even read the bill. Perhaps they should get together to see which of them is right.

Someone remarked that the Minister of Justice is a fine fellow. I would say that, on occasion, he has a lot of good sense. He has tried to make a good job of a poor argument. He always tries to gild the lily, even though it may be a poor lily. He did that tonight. The minister pointed out that there were some 370,000 public servants of whom approximately one sixth would be bilingual. He went on to say that 75 per cent of them would never move from their original localities. Do these people not get an opportunity to move to the top, 25 per cent of the jobs in Ottawa because they do not have the opportunity to become bilingual? I should like to know whether this is not straight discrimination against them. Perhaps the minister can also indicate why he does not accept the amendment of the hon. member for Crowfoot, in view of the opportunity given to civil servants in Ottawa who are or can become bilingual to obtain an increase of 7½ per cent in salary. Why in the world should the people in my riding or other ridings be discriminated against by not being given that opportunity to become bilingual?

• (9:20 p.m.)

I am perturbed because the government did not consult the provincial premiers before bringing in this bill. Education is basically a provincial matter. I do not know why the government did not consult the provincial premiers and then come to the house with a plan that it knew could be put into operation across Canada, with the ground rules well laid.

I am interested to learn that the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) is involving the government in shared-cost programs. Just the other day he said the government was getting out of this type of program. He promised the provincial premiers that there would be no more high-jinks like medicare. Yet, as I understand this bill, it will involve a multi million dollar program for French language education in English speaking provinces and English language education in the province of Quebec.

More schools and teachers will be required. In fact, this program will require a third school system. From where shall we get the teachers? A feasibility study has never been undertaken to obtain the facts. The B and B Commission brought in a report, but it did