

Official Languages

delegated to someone who, albeit well-intentioned, albeit objective, albeit a man of competence, reasoning and objectivity, would still be a New Brunswicker. Sometimes in Nova Scotia we do not accept holus-bolus what someone outside the boundaries of Nova Scotia proposes.

The bill is not based on regions. It is based on Canada. Canada consists of ten provinces, the Northwest Territories and the Yukon Territory. To go back to the federal-provincial conference when, quite rightly, the papers made much of Mr. Smallwood's position, Mr. Smallwood as a Canadian came forward and stated his proposition long before some of the other premier's did. No one then said that his words were hollow because Newfoundland does not have a bilingual district. Why, then, should a member rise in this house to say that the inoffensive amendment of the hon. member for Cardigan, suggesting that each province be represented from coast to coast, should not be accepted because we are going to revert to regions? This bill is supposed to unite the country. Yet in respect of the first amendment put forward concerning the board that is supposed to implement the bill and supervise it we are dividing the country.

The very words spoken on this side of the house reflect some concern that, instead of pulling this thing together and getting on with the principle and away from some of the nitty-gritty and some of the detail, the Secretary of State and others, perhaps ideally in the classroom and academically, think it might be nice to have the phrase "not less than five and not more than ten" to reflect the regions. One result of this, Mr. Speaker, will probably be that some members on this side of the house from east and west, probably because of the size of the areas they represent, will be left out of this advisory board. We would like to contribute and participate.

One thing that has been paradoxical in respect of this parliament since the election a year ago is that the politics of participation have become the politics of non-participation in so many areas.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Nowlan: In the last election the Prime Minister did not promise much but I will give him credit that the one area in which he did promise something was that there would be an official languages bill. But he did not say there would be a board to which some provinces might contribute and to which other

provinces might not contribute. He talked about participatory politics and said that this would help unite the country. I say that the very composition of this board cannot do anything but create division in the country.

If I had any doubt at all in my mind about this I would ask hon. gentlemen opposite to look at the make-up and composition of their own cabinet. I am only sorry there are not more members from Ontario in the cabinet today because if I need any support at all for any fears or apprehensions I have about the loose and vague wording of this clause it can be found in the cabinet in which there are five members from Montreal and two from the city of Toronto. From the reading I have done I suggest that the ministerial representation is more out of balance than it has been since confederation. I suggest that on a population basis metropolitan Toronto is the most under-represented area in our country. Yet we are supposed to take this on faith and good will and close our eyes to some of the practices of the federal government, close our eyes to the principle of the bill, close our eyes to the title of the bill which refers to Canada, and say, "O.K., not less than five, not more than ten". On an amendment which is so simple on the fact of it I cannot understand why there cannot be some tolerance and moderation because what we have been told, and it is so, is that the advisory board will be so important to the success of the bill.

● (5:40 p.m.)

I hope that the minister will reconsider and that the government will do the same. What is the fear? The government appoints officials to various boards and has been doing so for many years. I understand these commissioners will be appointed under the Inquiries Act at pleasure. Perhaps one might interpret this as meaning that they will be appointed after a decennial census, but as I read the Inquiries Act they will only be appointed at pleasure. If something goes wrong the Governor in Council can always replace them.

It seems to me that government appointed boards have been operating fairly effectively in the last two years. There do not seem to be too many problems in respect of division of opinion, certainly very few about which the public hears anything. The amendment is an attempt to extend the clause to include all provinces, but it seems to have run into a roadblock. I sincerely suggest that unless there is a moderation of the clause by the amendment, which I submit is sensible and relatively simple on its face, then the many