

end the same, but we believe that everybody should start the same."

• (1500)

He got a huge round of applause, as well he should from the Liberal crowd because he was speaking the very essence of Liberal philosophy—equality of opportunity. Of course, neither he nor anybody else in that room seemed aware of the obvious contradiction inherent in that statement, which was this: how can everybody start the same—we all start as children—unless everybody else more or less ends the same? After all, the people who have children are parents. I do not think you could ever sort it out, but more people are beginning to ponder this assertion.

At any rate, it should not surprise us that the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) should translate this touchstone of Liberal philosophy into the whole question of language equality in Canada and, specifically, language opportunity in Canada. All the measures that flow from this basic premise, this basic outlook are founded on this approach which is based on opportunity. That is why, of course, I find them insufficient. I will come back to that later.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I should like to bring to the attention of the House other distinctions because there are, as I said before, extremely important distinctions to be made here.

[*Translation*]

When I looked a little closer at what was suggested in the resolution before us, I found it wanting in some respects. In a sense, I agree with this resolution, but in another I say not only that such a resolution is a step backward, as it is claimed in certain parts of the country, but that it is ill-timed. How? Inasmuch as it fails to suggest any aims, objectives which will eventually give us what this resolution is striving for, namely linguistic equality in the public service.

From experience, I know very well, Mr. Speaker, that it is possible for us to urge people to do this and that, to act in a certain way but if we keep on urging without acting, we remain at a standstill; like preachers in the pulpit, we are urging the faithful to behave in a certain way, because at the end there is the eternal paradise, and not the alternative which I shall not mention here today.

I am coming to this, Mr. Speaker:

[*English*]

Somebody said, "The other place". I am referring to the other other place, Mr. Speaker.

[*Translation*]

I am coming back to this: If we want to establish on a sound basis equal language rights in the Public Service, we will have to tackle directly and eagerly the problem of recruiting, because if we simply play with the rules before us, we will never achieve anything, or it will be too late.

I would like to talk again about this issue of recruiting in a moment, when I deal with other differences, as I promised a few moments ago.

However, first of all, I would like to touch on another aspect of this issue of bilingualism. Although the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) said yesterday that we would deal specifically with the resolution on official languages

### *Official Languages*

today, we should never ignore the fact that because we are here in Ottawa, in this parliament or in the public service of Canada, we are not separated from the rest of the country. There are certain facts to be recognized, to say the least, Mr. Speaker, that are a little disturbing. I have already acknowledged them, but I think it is important to reiterate them and draw the attention of parliamentarians to them.

• (1510)

It may be possible for us today to promote bilingualism gradually within the public service, but the fact is that in Canada, we are going backwards.

A few years ago, our fellow citizens were proposed this objective of a bilingual country, of a country where not only everybody could feel at home, where not only every citizen would be entitled to live and act in the language of his or her choice and only in that language, if he or she only spoke one, if, as the Right Hon. Mr. Pearson and the Prime Minister had suggested strongly in their statements, we had established an objective in order to come one of these days to a situation in which a large number of Canadians might be personally bilingual. And I do not speak of institutional bilingualism but I say "personally bilingual".

I myself have always believed that this is a real objective, but I must admit that we do not take throughout this country measures which will enable us to achieve it. On the contrary, we are moving backwards. I quoted a few figures recently and I will quote them again because they are very important.

Throughout Canada, especially in English Canada, one can see that the number of students learning a second language in our schools is gradually decreasing and there are reasons for it, Mr. Speaker. A few years ago, university authorities decided that it was no longer necessary for students requesting admission to universities, to be able to speak, read or write a second language. And all universities, one after the other, dropped this requirement. Finally, high schools, Departments of Education in most provinces also dropped this requirement at the secondary level.

Let us see what is happening in Canada! In 1970-71, of all the young people who could have taken courses in French or another language except English, in English Canadian schools, only 55.7 per cent took such courses. And now, in 1972-73, that percentage has gone down to 47 per cent. Mr. Speaker, that percentage will still be more dreadful next year, because I know that in my province of Ontario, now there is a rule that says that no student needs to take a second language to graduate from a secondary school.

In a sense, Mr. Speaker, "the Ship of State" is becoming bilingual. The process is slow but sure, and our ship is moving landwards rather than seawards.

And although it ploughs through the waters, it is slipping back, running a ground. We are not going forward, Mr. Speaker, but backwards. First, it is important to know that if we are to consider this resolution, we must not debate it apart from the facts existing in our country.