

Civil Service Act

Canadians or English Canadians but Canadians, period. But this can only be attained when the word "Canadian" encompasses the aspirations of each of the two racial groups which form our country. To act otherwise and to relegate bilingualism to Quebec only is to divide the two great races historically united in the foundation of the great Canadian family.

(Translation):

Mr. Speaker, if it be granted that bilingualism is the main instrument of good understanding and if, on the other hand, we look into the government's attitude and behaviour towards the two racial groups which make up our country, and more particularly into the attention it has given to those who have made an effort to achieve bilingualism, we are faced with a genuine national scandal.

In a speech I made on this matter last year, using figures taken from the public accounts, I compiled a comparative table showing how the two racial groups have shared in the appointments to the higher positions in the federal civil service, namely those over \$5,000 per year. I shall not repeat those figures, but I would like to repeat the final result. French Canadians who are bilingual in a proportion of 77 per cent hold but 13 per cent of the higher positions. Even if they had never made their generous effort to become bilingual, in proportion to their numbers, they should have been entitled to at least 30 per cent of the higher positions. Although I sincerely wish to avoid using harsh words, faced with such figures I feel compelled to say that we have been shamefully victimized and that, unless a drastic change comes to pass, we shall have to check this one-way trend towards bilingualism, which can only lead to assimilation.

On one occasion during the last session, before the orders of the day I asked the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration (Mr. Pickersgill), who was then secretary of state, to give figures showing the racial representation of the Canadians in the civil service, according to whether or not they were bilingual. The hon. minister replied that it was not possible for the civil service commission to determine whether an employee was bilingual or not. I was astounded by this reply. In a bilingual country, so proficient in the matter of statistics, it was not possible to determine who was bilingual and who was not! I took the matter up again this year and put to the new Secretary of State (Mr. Pinard) the following question, which appears on page 1881 of *Hansard*:

[Mr. Girard.]

1. Has the civil service commission ever asked for a report on the bilingualism of civil servants of the various departments of the government?
2. If so, on what date?
3. What departments have answered?
4. What is the result of this inquiry?

The hon. minister replied that an inquiry had been made, that certain departments had been unable to give complete answers but that he had obtained them at a later date. As for his reply on the result of the inquiry here it is:

A number of departments indicated that information of a reasonably accurate nature was not available; others based their reports upon unverified claims as to language qualifications. It should be pointed out that it is not easy to know whether or not an employee is bilingual. In a number of cases, it is impossible to answer such a question by an unqualified "yes" or "no" because it is a matter of degree requiring a qualitative evaluation. In the light of the information obtained, the commission concluded that it would not be possible to arrive at any reasonably accurate figure as to the proportion of bilingual civil servants.

But, Mr. Speaker, if it was impossible to arrive at exact figures, we would surely have liked to obtain at least the figures which had been given to the hon. minister.

The hon. minister assures me that he has requested that such an inquiry be made, but we are still waiting for the figures. If the delay is due to the fact that the French-speaking ministers have been too generous towards their own compatriots, I understand why the hon. Secretary of State hesitates to supply the figures. However, on the basis of the minister's statement, one thing stands out clearly, and it is this: the civil service commission has no accurate way of determining what civil servants are bilingual.

Mr. Speaker, the bill now before the house would correct that serious anomaly, since it will permit, in the future, to determine who is bilingual. In fact, subparagraph (c) of the bill states that those who will be entitled to benefit from the privilege provided in the bill are:

. . . those who have qualified, by examination, in the knowledge and use of the two official languages of Canada, being the English and the French languages.

Has the minister considered that his reply to my question is not only a serious admission, but confirmation of the fact that the French-Canadians are victims of gross discrimination. In fact, the civil service commission which, by two ministers' own admission, does not know who is bilingual has nonetheless prescribed bilingualism as a prerequisite to employment in the province of Quebec, except in a few rare instances.