

*Official Languages*

that these amendments are the result of consultations which he had with the attorneys general of the various provinces, mainly the western provinces, who were opposed to some provisions contained in the bill, as introduced by the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) on first reading.

We remember how, at the last federal-provincial conference, several premiers or provincial attorneys general raised objections, especially with regard to the setting up of bilingual districts across Canada under Bill C-120.

I trust the amendments the Minister of Justice brought in this afternoon with regard to those bilingual districts will dispel the misgivings of the attorneys general or premiers of some provinces who had raised objections concerning the setting up of those bilingual districts.

I must add that I too, had certain fears for, if we were to consider what districts could be set up in the province of Quebec, that province alone, according to the spirit or the letter of the law, could constitute one single bilingual district.

I feel that the Quebec premier was right in some of his remarks about bilingual districts. I trust the amendments proposed by the Minister of Justice this afternoon will meet with the approval of the provincial attorneys general and premiers who raised objections in this regard.

We, members of the official opposition, have studied in depth the bill now before the house. From time to time, as parliamentary procedure allows, we shall introduce amendments or try to complete those introduced by the Minister of Justice, to clarify the provisions of the act and try to avoid the major objections that might be raised not only by the members of our party but also by the members of the party in power, with regard to certain provisions of bill C-120.

Mr. Speaker, as a French-Canadian from Quebec, I am in favour of the principle of the bill now before us. In my opinion, the bill confirms a reality. It is the confirmation of the Canadian duality. It confirms the fact that we must aim at making every effort in order to work together to establish here of a bilingual and bicultural country.

In my opinion the legislation introduced by the Prime Minister, namely Bill C-120, is not a legislation the philosophy of which is alien to that of the Conservative party, because during our convention in Toronto, we had included in our political platform a provision

relating to the recognition of the linguistic rights of all Canadians. Obviously, Bill C-120 puts in concrete form this section of our political program.

I for one, as a Quebecer, am in favour of the principle of the bill before us, as I just said. I am for it, Mr. Speaker, because we are obviously witnessing a new development not only in Quebec but in the other provinces as well, especially among the young people of the other provinces. In my opinion, young English-speaking Canadians find that to build a new Canada it will be necessary to know at least one second language. I do not mean to know it perfectly, but try to learn the second language, a language which was the basis on which the Canadian Confederation was established.

We meet this enthusiasm again among young English Canadians, and God knows that it is a great comfort to us, since we can hope that the old prejudices of some English-speaking people are starting to disappear. We can make the best wishes for the Canada of tomorrow and hope that it will be a Canada where the two main groups can live side by side, exchange ideas and discuss the problems now facing Canadian unity.

The principle of Bill C-120 is acceptable to the members from Quebec, because at the last federal-provincial conference, in its opening statement, the government of Quebec, speaking on behalf of all French Canadians, expressed its faith in the establishment of bilingualism and biculturalism in Canada.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to quote an excerpt from the brief submitted by the government of Quebec at the Confederation of To-morrow Conference. On page 23, one reads and I quote:

Whatever their immediate functions, it appears essential to us that in the Canada of to-morrow, federal institutions take clearly into consideration, in their structure and direction, the binational character of the country.

● (4:30 p.m.)

We believe also that the federal capital of Canada should reflect the linguistic duality of the people.

First of all, it would be desirable that the proper means be taken to insure a real, efficient and equitable participation of the French-speaking Canadians in the federal public service. Improvements have recently taken place in that respect, but it would be advisable to speed up the process and, above all, to provide accurate machinery through which the reform could be quickly translated into facts.