

Official Languages

with the rules, to restrict his remarks as much as possible to the amendment before us. That, of course, applies generally to all hon. members, and I think it is in the interest of our proceedings that we all observe this fundamental rule.

Mr. Woolliams: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The reason I raised this question is that this amendment is so fundamental to the civil rights of Canadians. What is the use of me making a speech tonight when the government refuses to listen? They sit in their offices and they refuse to listen to the evidence we put forth on the dangers of this bill. I can put it very simply. When I was a young man I learned something very quickly. I learned that if you wink at a pretty girl and she does not look at you, you are wasting your time. We may be wasting our time talking to the empty benches of the Liberal party. Members of the government are irresponsible in their failure to be here tonight during the debate of such an important measure. May I bring to your attention, Mr. Speaker, that I am now well within the rules when I speak. It is hon. members opposite who are the executive, and this is their responsibility. Who brought in this language bill? It was not the Conservative party, nor was it the N.D.P. or the Cr ditistes. It was the Liberal party.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Woolliams: And they should be here to listen to the arguments and suggestions for amendments which will protect the minorities, the majorities and the ethnic groups in Canada. In that way, they have failed in their responsibility. I think I have made my point on this amendment, and I need not say any more.

Mr. David Lewis (York South): Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Paproski: Here comes another one who will follow suit.

Mr. Lewis: —I intend to deal with the amendment to the bill that is before us. I want to say that it is easy for members of this house to emphasize and to repeat that they are in favour of the principle of this bill, then speak of ways which will make this bill unworkable in the minds and hearts of the Canadian people.

Mr. Paproski: The great Saviour has spoken.

Mr. Lewis: Hon. members have been making all sorts of remarks.

[Mr. Deputy Speaker.]

Mr. Paproski: Why don't you move over?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. I must remind hon. members that when a member has the floor he should not be subjected to repeated interjections. I think it would be in the interest of all members if we tried to observe that rule.

Mr. Lewis: Mr. Speaker, I assure you that I do not mind the interjections if hon. members want to make them. I say that many barbs have been thrown in our direction because we insist, as I do, that we believe in the future of this country and in the need to remove a grievance which has haunted this nation for years. I intend to speak in favour of those things which will make this bill workable and desirable for the people of Canada, whether or not the government or the hon. member for Cardigan (Mr. McQuaid) or anyone else happens to agree with them.

I heard a great deal about the rule of law in a lecture that was delivered, I presume, for me. Let me say that I am a lawyer of some years' standing, and although probably I am not the best lawyer, I have some knowledge of the law and I have some knowledge of legal philosophy and jurisprudence. I say, as a lawyer, that it is not only in the courts of a country that the rule of law can obtain and it is not only evidence which is taken according to certain rules that is admissible evidence before tribunals in democratic countries.

Members of the Conservative party look with horror at the part of clause 30 which says that the commissioner may take evidence, whether or not such evidence or information is or would be admissible in a court of law. Let me tell them that there are literally dozens of laws on the statute books of Canada, federal and provincial, which have precisely that provision. There are dozens of laws on the statute books of the mother of our democracy that contain this kind of provision, whether they are statutes pertaining to the labour relations board or any other board. The hon. member for Simcoe North (Mr. Rynard) says that I am wrong. Let me tell him—

Mr. Rynard: I just said that two bad laws don't make a good one.

Mr. Lewis: Let me tell him that the statute in Ontario—and I am sure it is the same in every other province—which set up his particular professional organization—if I remember correctly and I do because I appeared