

*Official Languages*

yet another in a series of concessions to Quebec. It is taken as further proof of the government's exclusive interest in central Canada. It is one of the prime reasons for the growing feeling of alienation from the rest of the country that is becoming so prevalent in western Canada.

Perhaps this is one of the reasons that in the series "Canada 70" conducted by the *Toronto Telegram* we find a majority of 52 per cent of those polled in western Canada placing their attachment and dedication to their region rather than to Canada as a nation. Is it because that part of the country has been overlooked, ignored and discriminated against? I submit that perhaps it is, and I suggest that as a result the bonds of Confederation are more precarious today than at any time in our history. However well intentioned, legislation that produces results such as this cannot be anything but harmful to national unity.

As I have said before, one of the weaknesses of the bill, and the one that seriously affects the majority in western Canada, is that it is vague in its guidance to minority ethnic groups throughout the country. It provides no reassurance or guarantee as to their status in the national pattern of living. It simply states that their rights will not be taken away but fails to open any doors to future cultural development or promise them a share in the cultural development of Canada. It excludes them and, I maintain, reduces them to a position secondary to that of those of English or French background.

If we are truly serious about maintaining and promoting the mosaic concept, positive measures must be taken to encourage, promote and preserve the cultures of the minority groups. There is nothing in this legislation to suggest any encouragement, only a minor clause to indicate that there are other languages and cultures.

My leader suggested a preamble to the bill in his remarks as recorded at page 8792 of *Hansard*. We moved an amendment and it was rejected. I submit that with this attitude it will only be a matter of time until the third group will be forced to assimilate into either the French or English melting pot, giving up their cultural and linguistic heritage which forms such an important and refreshing part of our society.

The just society announced by the Prime Minister finds no echo in this bill. The multicultural whole that was to be the new Canada under his government has been

reduced to a severely restricted dual culture nationality. The Canadian mosaic is shattered by this bill, and the pieces will be swept out and forgotten when this measure is enacted.

Many of the people of racial origins other than Anglo-Saxon or French are Canadians by choice. They have fully accepted our Canadian customs, our Canadian institutions and our Canadian heritage. They have always demonstrated an intense loyalty to this country. Yet with this legislation we now tell them that by an accident of birth and ancestry they cannot aspire to a full life as 100 per cent Canadians. We should not forget, Mr. Speaker, that these people of whom I speak are a good third of all our people. Surely it is of the utmost importance to bring this third of the population fully into our national life and not exclude them on a part-time basis.

In my constituency of Vegreville where the population is made up of approximately 50 per cent Ukrainian, 30 per cent English, 7 per cent French and the balance of other ethnic origins, we are going to have a bilingual district. In light of these figures, what justification is there for creating a boundary which singles out a minority group and grants them special privileges? I wonder whether they are particularly pleased about being singled out and granted special consideration when they live within a community of understanding, of brotherhood, and in a climate of regard and respect for their fellowman regardless of culture, race, religion or creed. Their prime motivation is to work together on equal grounds as equal Canadians in creating a community of good will, a community of progress, in a spirit of good fellowship and understanding. How are those of other ethnic groups, who are a majority, to feel about such a measure being enacted? Nothing can be created but a mood of animosity and bitterness detrimental to national unity at the community level.

The government believes that this bill is essential in building national unity. I believe it could be destructive of national unity. I believe we should be trying to get back to the original concept of a multicultural society. I have always felt that one way to do this is to get to know each other better. The greatest enemy of national unity is the regionalism forced upon us by the pattern of our settlement and development and by our geography. It is this regionalism which creates areas of economic disparity. Canada is a nation of regions, each with its own peculiar background, nature and way of living. These