

Financial Administration Act

Mr. Graftey: Mr. Speaker, I have no intention of talking this bill out. I am here to support the principle of the bill. I am not here to label any one party with being against national unity; I am not here to say that one party stands for national unity any more than another. I am here to ask certain members of parliament from certain provinces to stop going about this country and trying, for example, to label our party as being against the interests of certain provinces. The reason behind it is no doubt for short term political advantage; but it is not good for our country at large.

I say that one of the greatest paradoxes—and again I repeat what I said in the French language—is that certain members of parliament have supported centralizing legislation, with its uniform effects, in this country while at the same time they preach what is, as far as I am concerned, a divide and rule doctrine. Let us all agree, once and for all, that we support the principle and the sentiments behind this legislation.

I resume my seat at this time, Mr. Speaker. I support this bill. I am sure the hon. member for St. Jean-Iberville-Napierville (Mr. Dupuis) would like to tell his fellow citizens and mine that I helped talk out this bill; but I am not doing that.

(Translation):

I support this bill which is so important, Mr. Speaker.

(Text):

Mr. Hazen Argue (Assiniboia): Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate the hon. member who has just introduced this bill for bringing it before parliament once again. I think it is a sensible measure; I think it deserves the support of hon. members of this house.

I had an opportunity on at least one former occasion to vote for a similar bill, and I am prepared to vote for this bill today. The principle of the bill is merely to recognize in these particular federal negotiable instruments, the bilingual nature of our country.

I think this is a good bill. I think it is a sensible bill. I hope a vote may be taken before six o'clock.

Mr. M. D. Morton (Davenport): I can understand the impatience of some of those who are sponsoring this bill. Although we have agreed on the principle of the measure, which the house acknowledged in January of 1958—the house accepting in principle the extension of bilingualism at that time—I would point out that the enthusiasm, and impatience perhaps, of those who are pressing this principle does not necessarily hasten the completion of the purpose of this measure.

As has been pointed out by previous speakers, although this principle may be acceptable

to most of the leaders in this country it is not necessarily acceptable to all the people of this country, and it might not be well, through impatience and enthusiasm, to force the issue and thus set back the object which many hon. members have in mind. I think more can be done through continuous education than by arbitrary legislation. There are places in this country which possibly have not accepted bilingualism, though I feel that the principle has won much greater acceptance in the last few years.

I recall attending a conference of the Canadian education association at Quebec city a few years ago at which bilingualism was discussed, and it was pointed out at that conference that in the province of Quebec an extended program was being arranged whereby the English language would be taught in most areas of Quebec as teachers could be found. It was also pointed out that a similar program was being instituted in Ontario. I feel that true bilingualism will be brought about as a result of programs of this type.

There is, in fact, no urgency about the question of whether cheques are printed in the two languages. It is, as has been stated, an extension of the principle of bilingual currency. It is also an extension of the principle contained in section 133 of the British North America Act where the right to use both languages in parliament and in our courts is laid down. I plead with those who are anxious to go further to take into consideration the views of those who have not, perhaps, fully accepted their opinions; I appeal to them to continue to exercise the opportunities available to them in debate and public discussion.

I believe that in the past, because of petty politics, prejudice has been caused which has done harm to the acceptance of bilingualism. The radical nationalists or racialists on each side have tried to whip up a fury against their opposite numbers by trying to call attention to the extension of the influence of the other. Throughout our history they have, I think, done a great disservice to this country by continuing to force their prejudices upon the people as a whole.

I recall discussing this problem during the war with my colleagues from Quebec. We discussed very frankly the problems which have arisen in the past between English speaking people and French speaking people. I was born in New Brunswick and I have been in contact a great deal with the Acadian French. We always got along very well. A very true comment came out of the discussion as far as Quebec is concerned, and I think it applies to other parts of the country as well—that had the people been left alone to