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Monday, April 18, 1994

Speaker: The Honourable Gilbert Parent

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, April 18, 1994

The House met at 11 a.m.

Prayers

[*English*]

The Deputy Speaker: I believe there is unanimous consent to have a statement by the Minister of National Revenue. Has that been agreed to?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

CUSTOMS OFFICERS

Hon. David Anderson (Minister of National Revenue): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank in particular the hon. member for Mission—Coquitlam for allowing me to step in before continuing with her motion.

It is certainly with a heavy heart that I rise in the House today on behalf of Revenue Canada and the government to express my deepest sympathies for the families of the two customs officers who died in a tragic accident over the weekend in New Brunswick.

The two officers killed were Inspector David Moore and Superintendent Jim Finnamore, both of Perth—Andover.

They were swept to their deaths Saturday night by a sudden rise in the flood swollen waters of the Aroostook River.

I want to stress that they died not because of carelessness, error or mistake. They died by reason of their high concern for the safety of other customs officers under their command.

Briefly, the facts as far as they are now known are as follows. The customs office at Tinker's Road, which is some 15 kilometres from the Perth—Andover office, was threatened by rising flood waters on Saturday evening. Although the two men had spoken to the customs inspectors who were on duty at Tinker's Road and had been told that the situation was satisfactory, Mr. Moore and Mr. Finnamore decided to check the situation personally. I want to stress that is the type of men they were, dedicated professionals determined to do everything in their power to ensure the safety of their staff.

A short distance from the Tinker's Road office they met an RCMP officer and several provincial government employees who were monitoring the rising flood waters. The customs officers were in fact joined by an RCMP officer for the remainder of the short trip.

Once they arrived at Tinker's Road office, Mr. Moore and Mr. Finnamore met with the two customs inspectors who were working there. After reviewing the situation the four men agreed that there was no immediate danger of flooding at that particular customs post. The two men then left with the RCMP and started back on the road to Perth—Andover, the same road they had travelled less than a half hour before. It was at this point that tragedy struck.

(1105)

An ice build-up on the river suddenly released and a torrent of water swept over the river bank and the adjacent roadway just as the vehicle of the three men was traversing a low point in the road. The vehicle was swept to the side of the road, nose down in the ditch, and was almost totally submerged. All three men were successful in climbing on to the roof of the vehicle. The two customs officers tried to reach land while the RCMP officer stayed with the vehicle. Tragically, they failed to reach the shore.

Shortly after a search was launched for the missing three men. The RCMP officer was located and taken to hospital at midnight. The search continued in the darkness for a further three hours without success.

Yesterday morning at daybreak the search resumed. The body of Mr. Moore was found first and the body of Mr. Finnamore was recovered shortly after.

Coping with such a loss is always difficult, but it is so much more difficult when the loss is sudden as a result of a series of events that cannot be explained.

David Moore is survived by his wife Kelly. James Finnamore is survived by his wife Frances and their three children, Tamara, Brent and Peter.

Yesterday I spoke with both widows to express my most profound sympathy for their loss and to tell them that the department will do all that it can to support them and to help them through this very difficult time.

Private Members' Business

David Moore worked for the department for six years and James Finnamore was an employee of Revenue Canada for almost 18 years. We have lost two fine men, highly professional public servants, dedicated to their work and to the people of Canada. They will be missed dearly at home. They will be missed by those with whom they worked, who are both their colleagues and their friends.

I know all members of this House will wish to join with me after the statements of other party representatives to stand for a few moments to reflect on this tragic event and to remember these two fine individuals who died in service of this country.

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre de Savoye (Portneuf): Mr. Speaker, very briefly and on a serious note, the members of the Bloc Québécois agree fully with the comments of the hon. Minister of Revenue. We wish to convey our deepest sympathies to the families and friends of Mr. David Moore and Mr. Jim Finnamore.

[English]

Mr. Elwin Hermanson (Kindersley—Lloydminster): Mr. Speaker, I join with members of the government as expressed by the minister and my Bloc colleagues in expressing the grief and sympathy of Reform members in the tragic deaths of Inspector David Moore and Superintendent Jim Finnamore.

I grew up beside the South Saskatchewan River and know first hand the beauty, the benefits and also the danger associated with our waterways. In fact, I remember as a young boy when my father lost an employee to the river. We sense the shock and pain and sorrow those involved in this situation are experiencing.

I have also visited the Perth—Andover area and I can envision the landscape and the beauty of the Saint John River valley and the rolling hills in western New Brunswick. I have met with some people in that region and I am sure they share in the grief caused by this accident. I am also confident that the community is rising to the situation and will give comfort and support to Kelly Moore and to Frances, Tamara, Brent and Peter Finnamore, as well as to other loved ones.

With my colleagues I express appreciation for the lives of Jim Finnamore and David Moore and our sympathy and prayers go out to their families and other loved ones.

The Deputy Speaker: I would ask that we rise and have a moment's silence.

[Editor's Note: The House stood in silence.]

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

(1110)

[English]

NON-CONFIDENCE MOTIONS

Mrs. Daphne Jennings (Mission—Coquitlam) moved:

That, in the opinion of the this House, the government should permit members of the House of Commons to fully represent their constituents' views on the government's legislative program and spending plans by adopting the position that the defeat of any government measure, including a spending measure, shall not automatically mean the defeat of the government unless followed by the adoption of a formal motion.

She said: Mr. Speaker, in the time available to me today I would like to explain my motion so that members of this House will clearly know what they are being asked to vote on.

As this is a votable motion, declared so by the procedure and House affairs committee, it will be the first time, at least as far as I can determine, that members will have the opportunity to express themselves on the issues of confidence and flowing from that the issue of freer voting in the House.

I would also like to address the history of voting in this House, a history which has been characterized by political party discipline or voting along party lines. I will refer to the experience in other jurisdictions such as Great Britain where there has been a noticeable relaxation of the party whip.

My research indicates that in Australia and New Zealand, while party discipline is somewhat less than in Canada but more than in Great Britain, there are clear avenues for backbenchers, private members, to influence the policies of their party.

I will conclude by dealing with the criticisms of allowing freer voting by members of the House of Commons. I must admit that I am surprised there are any criticisms because of the support this issue has received in the last two Parliaments. When I first spoke on this subject on January 21, the hon. member for Broadview—Greenwood took issue with my arguments and more recently at a meeting of the House of Commons committee on procedure and House affairs I was amazed by the arguments raised by members opposite.

I believe it is necessary that these be addressed, fears put to bed so that all members of the House may join together to support this motion. The motion refers actually to three matters: relaxation of the confidence convention, freer voting and representation of constituents' interests.

By relaxing the confidence convention I mean that only votes that are explicitly labelled as confidence votes when lost by the government bring about the government's resignation. There is a myth that has been spread about this place for many years that

the government cannot lose votes. If it does it must resign, either forcing an election or putting the Governor General into the position of calling on someone else to see if she or he can form a government.

Intellectually, we all know this is nonsense. Yet it is the practice followed in this House, and my motion would narrowly define the confidence convention. The result of a narrow definition of this convention should be that members, especially government backbench members, should feel freed from the strictures of party discipline to occasionally vote against the party line.

In fact, the beneficial effect of this motion applies to all members, both government and opposition. Government members would feel free to vote against the party line because losing an occasional vote will not mean the defeat of the government. Once this type of thinking is understood by the party leadership, those voting against the party line should also not be subject to retribution or punishment. At the same time we in opposition should feel free to vote with the government members from time to time. The government cannot always be wrong, even this government. It is incumbent on us in opposition to recognize this fact and from time to time vote with the government even though our party leadership may try to convince us otherwise. I also want to make it clear that I am speaking about freer voting and not the declaration of free votes which is done under the direction of party leadership.

(1115)

Finally, why or when would the break come with party discipline? My motion reads that it would be done "to fully represent their constituents' views". This is one example of when it may be done but there are others. However, I want to deal with the issue of representing constituents' views because there seems to be a lack of understanding of the position of the Reform Party on this matter. Let me be very clear.

Unlike some elections in the past, the 1993 election was significant in that the three recognized parties that are now in the House set out for Canadians platforms which to a great extent detailed how the parties would deal with the major issues as these issues presented themselves in the fall of 1993.

They were what Canadians voted for when they voted on October 25, 1993. To a great extent, we believe that when an issue arises which was in the party platform then the member is obligated to vote the party line. I could argue that the Liberal red book may be long on theory and grandiose but very short on implementation plans and there is room for departure from the party line. However, I am not here to discuss Liberal Party policies.

Private Members' Business

My main point is that issues will come along which are new, issues which are not found or addressed in party platforms. Two such issues come quickly to mind; cigarette smuggling and constituency boundary redistribution. On these issues and issues like them members should feel less inclined to blindly support the party line.

As well as breaking with their party to represent constituents' views, members could also be representing their own views based on common sense logic which the individual member may bring to the issue in question.

There is a feeling that if members are suddenly freed from party discipline there will be chaos with complete unpredictability in the system. Members will be voting every which way and Parliament will become unworkable and the country ungovernable.

This is not where this motion leads at all. It simply recognizes that on occasion members without fear of retribution from party leadership may vote against the party line. The government will not fall. The sun will still rise in the east and I believe the interests of Canadians will be better served by their elected representatives. Is that not what we are all here to do, serve the Canadian public to the best of our abilities?

Enough about the content of my motion. Now I would like to deal with the history of this matter, a history which began long before most of us got here. It began with a feeling of dissatisfaction among the Canadian people which was detected by the Canadian Study of Parliamentary Group in a Gallup poll it commissioned in 1983.

A question was asked as to how MPs should behave when voting. The response was that 49.5 per cent felt members should vote according to their own judgment. By way of contrast the view that the member should vote as the party wishes received very little support. The national average in the survey favouring the MP as party loyalists was only 7.9 per cent.

The frustration with MPs following the party line which the public expressed in this survey found its way into the 1985 report of the special committee on Reform of the House of Commons. This committee believed that "the purpose of reform of the House of Commons in 1985 is to restore to private members an effective legislative function, to give them a meaningful role in the formation of public policy". One of the main methods by which this goal was to be accomplished was by attitudinal change. This would result in a relaxation of the confidence convention, allowing members to occasionally vote against the party line without fear of bringing down the government or retribution by the party leadership.

The report of the McGrath committee was quite clear on the subject of the confidence convention and freer votes. The committee stated that "once elected, members of Parliament are legally and constitutionally entitled to act independently". In

Private Members' Business

the House they can speak and vote as they like. "If they choose to deviate from the party line they are free to do so provided they accept the political risks".

(1120)

It was these political risks that the McGrath committee through its recommendations was trying to minimize. The committee went on to describe the ideal situation. "Rigid discipline is hardly compatible with a philosophy of a democratic political party, and reasonable latitude consistent with loyalty to the party should be permitted the individual members of any party".

This was the middle ground which the committee sought and it is the middle ground that the motion before the House today seeks to establish: loyalty to a political party, but not blind loyalty, loyalty combined with the latitude to vote against the party line on occasion.

The McGrath committee offered five observations on the confidence convention and this is one of them.

In a Parliament with a government in command of the majority the matter of confidence has really been settled by the electorate. Short of a reversal of allegiance or some major cataclysmic political event the question of confidence is really a fait accompli. The government and other parties should therefore have the wisdom to permit members to decide many matters in their own deliberative judgment. Overuse of party whips and of confidence motions devalues both these important institutions.

We are fortunate in this Parliament to have two members of that committee still with us, the hon. member for Winnipeg Transcona, and the Minister of Foreign Affairs. It is my hope that both will find time to speak on the motion before it comes to a vote.

More recently in April 1993 the House management committee recommended:

Members of Parliament should be made more aware of a confidence convention and the observations of the special committee on Reform of the House of Commons. With few exceptions, motions proposed by the government should be considered as motions of confidence only when clearly identified as such by the government.

However, the committee which was made up of many members who are still in this Parliament, such as the Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, the Minister of Health and the hon. member for Saint-Léonard were realistic in its prediction of the effect of this recommendation. It stated:

The Canadian parliamentary system does have extremely strong party discipline, one that is perhaps stronger than in many other systems. The committee endorses the idea of freeing up voting in the House but we hesitate to create unreasonably high expectations. It is not a procedural issue. Ultimately it is up to the individual members and Parliament.

Why did these groups of members of this place in previous Parliaments feel relaxation of the confidence convention and freer voting were so important? I believe that these members properly read the mood of the Canadian public.

With the advent of the information age, the public is better informed about political institutions. The work of the members of these institutions, and as a result the public, is less willing to follow without questioning the lead of elected representatives. They expect their representatives to be well informed and represent the best interests of their constituents. This well informed public does not respond to leadership the way it used to. The actions of Canadians in the referendum on the Charlottetown accord is ample evidence of their refusal to be blindly led.

The public also expects its elected representatives not to be blindly led. As well the public feels disenfranchised when members are forced by the threat of dire consequences to a member's political future to vote in a fashion which is perceived by the public to not represent the public interest. Lack of independence in voting is equated with lack of influence in the policy making process. Those involved in the political process make the argument that the influence of the private member is exercised in caucus or in private meetings with ministers. For the public this is not good enough any more.

The public wants to feel that its views are taken into consideration more than just every four or five years at general elections. The public also wants to see a public demonstration that its views are being heard and acted on. This public demonstration most often occurs in the act of voting by an MP.

This exercise of independence by members of the House of Commons has occurred to a great extent in Great Britain and their system of responsible government has survived. In the period between April 1972 and April 1979 there were 65 defeats of the government in Great Britain. These defeats were important because they helped destroy the myth that had arisen to the effect that any government defeat endangered its continuance in office.

They were also important in that they influenced the behaviour of subsequent members of Parliament by established a precedent. MPs from all parties became less willing to accept party dictates on matters of policy and voting. Those who defied the party whips discovered they could do so with little negative sanction and were encouraged to do so more often. Others were influenced in turn by their example.

(1125)

In Canada our experience with cross voting is more limited but in the sixties and seventies we did have experience with governments losing votes and not resigning.

Private Members' Business

Therefore I believe I have established that a relaxation of the confidence convention and freer voting has been the subject of study and positive recommendations of at least two parliamentary committees, many members of which are still sitting in the House today. As well we know of at least one other jurisdiction where what would be the results of my motion has been put into action with no dire consequences. Responsible government still prevails, political parties still exist—they have not been deemed obsolete—and most important of all, the public through its members in the House of Commons has some real influence over the policy making process.

I would like to address some of the criticisms that have been levied against relaxation of the confidence convention and freer voting in the House. It is argued that freer voting would have a negative effect on the future well-being of political parties. Political parties are vitally important to the system, especially at election time, for the development of policy and the support the leader can give individual candidates. Also between elections political parties can give tax receipts for contributions.

I cannot stress it enough; freer voting will not have a negative effect on either the continuance of political parties, nor on their ability to meld together various divergent viewpoints. Freer voting does not mean that on every issue members will be voting in unpredictable ways. As I stated in the beginning of my speech, on issues where the party platform is clear, members would be expected to support the party. It is in those other areas outside the platform where I believe freer voting should be allowed.

It is also argued that the government will be criticized for bringing legislation forward and then telling members that defeat of the measure will not be deemed to be a vote of non-confidence in the government. It will be argued that the government is wasting House time with proposed legislation that it does not care about.

I believe that instead of being criticized for such an attitude the government will be praised for allowing all elected members to take part in the policy influencing process. Too often governments have taken the House of Commons for granted, paying lip service to obtain support on critical votes and lapsing back into a dictatorial demeanour.

Another argument presented against freer voting is that if dissent is allowed the government will not be able to make tough decisions because members will duck making unpopular but necessary decisions. While the possibility of dissent may make it tougher for political parties to take potentially unpopular stands, it also presents a challenge, a challenge to inform the public of the necessity of an unpopular decision. It may also force political parties when they are developing an election platform to be as forward thinking as possible so most issues are

covered in the party platform and there are no surprises for the public after the election.

Another point often made is that there are plenty of other avenues open to a member to show his or her displeasure with party leadership than voting against the party line in the House of Commons. While at first glance this may seem to be true, there are in reality few effective means available to members to express dissent.

For example, a private member's bill takes a very long time to become law under the best of circumstances. Question period, because the list is controlled by the party leadership, is a difficult time for a dissident government backbencher. Such a member may get to ask one tough question and that is it.

The criticisms regarding the relaxation of confidence convention and freer votes are simply not valid. What is valid is the need for the political courage necessary to start freer voting. Leadership on this issue must come from the government. Once this has been shown, opposition parties must agree to allow dissent so that all members are free to express views which may differ from those of their political party leadership. This will require a change in attitude and political courage. However if this results in more members playing a vital role in the influencing of public policy then dissent will have been worth the time spent to reduce party discipline.

I look forward to the debate on this motion and I urge all members to support it as it will send a clear message to Canadians that we are not afraid of the party leadership punishing us for exercising independent thoughts and actions, as has been done in the past. We want to play a meaningful role in influencing the formation of public policy which addresses the needs of all Canadians.

(1130)

The Deputy Speaker: Colleagues, because of the statements earlier, the private member's debate will last until 12.08 p.m.

I would ask all members to please refer to people who are still in this House by the names of their constituencies or titles rather than by their proper names.

Mr. Ted McWhinney (Vancouver Quadra): Mr. Speaker, after hearing the thoughtful address by the member for Mission—Coquitlam, I was unfortunately reminded of a recent movie entitled "Back to the Future".

The ideas of the Reform Party on the Constitution seem sadly out of date, as if they had been reading pre-1914 textbooks. Without any derogatory reference to the member for Mission—Coquitlam, I would rather have heard the other Jennings invoked. I refer to the Jennings whom you know, Mr. Speaker, and I know and who taught briefly at the University of British

Private Members' Business

Columbia before going on to greater fame in other arenas, Sir Ivor Jennings.

It is a fact that by the 1920s and the 1930s it had been recognized generally throughout the former British Empire and the British Commonwealth that the defeat of a government on a measure does not automatically warrant its resignation. It requires a qualitative judgment.

Indeed, to speed matters up I would remind the House that in the spring of 1968 when the government of the day, the Pearson government, was defeated by accident—the failure of some members to return in time from other places—it was not felt necessary for the government to resign.

I appeared on nation-wide television with the then NDP leader and others and we concluded that the precedents that Canada accepted at that stage did not require an automatic resignation.

In the 1979 episode when Prime Minister Clark was defeated, as it was said, by bad counting, his whip had failed I think to count up the numbers in government and opposition, Mr. Clark concluded that perhaps he should resign. He went to Government House. It is believed that the Governor General tried to suggest to him that the precedents did not require that particular course of action.

As we know, Mr. Clark's request for dissolution was not granted immediately. The Governor General suggested he return to Parliament and he phoned him later.

I am simply saying that the issue of confidence is not interpreted today in 19th century terms. It is a matter for a qualitative judgment. Here again I regret that the Reform Party has not paid enough attention to Canadian parliamentary practice.

The Prime Minister rightly reminded us in an address to the House of Commons on January 20 that the House is not a group of independents who have been elected on their own. We are dealing with a team. Law-making today is a sophisticated process of give and take, of exchange and discussion. It is a dialectical process of law in the making.

To cite only my own experience in the brief time that I have been a member, I receive the views of my constituents as a member. I communicate them to the members of my provincial group. We meet once a week. We meet also once a week in a regional caucus with members from all four western provinces. We meet again in a national caucus and we discuss. There is a give and take. There are the all-party committees. That is the reality of law in the making today, that members do not have to participate by simply voting yes and no. If they do that they are voting after the event.

The dynamic process of law-making today requires contributions, give and take discussion while measures are evolving. That is how one influences the law. I think that is how we have to undertake to interpret our role as members in a modern contemporary sense.

It is to say that constitutional law is in full evolution. There is a danger with the best of intentions that the member for Mission—Coquitlam has of attempting to legislate constitutional conventions. The life of constitutional conventions has not been logic. It has not been legislation. It has been experience. It is this and error testing process. The interesting thing about law making today is that all parties participate in the all-party committees. To cite only the two to which I belong, the members of the Reform Party have contributed significantly and constructively. I have welcomed that. I have seen the changes in measures that might otherwise have been drafted or put forward differently, and that is to be welcomed.

(1135)

It is not a matter of saying that members do not represent their constituents or do not fully represent their constituents' views. Any member who does not do this has been neglecting his or her function today as a member to consult regularly with the constituents, to bring it back to the provincial caucus, to speak out in the regional caucus, to speak out in the national caucus, and to discuss it in the all-party committees.

That is the life of Parliament today. That is the reality of law making. It is not the way it was in 1914. It is not the way it was before the other Jennings wrote his beautiful works. These works have been studied in Canada and they are part of our practice.

I would welcome the Reform Party joining with us in moving forward into the future and recognizing the changes that have been made and not trying to legislate and therefore stultify and I think arrest a process already in creative evolution today.

Mr. Bob Mills (Red Deer): Mr. Speaker, I feel that the private member's bill before us today could be one of the most important that we will have in this 35th Parliament.

I think that all of us recognize that there is something wrong with this place and that is the reason we have to re-examine the very structure of the way it operates.

First, we have to look at what people are saying. I believe that to simply put our heads in the sand and not listen is a disservice to those people. People have lost confidence in this place. They believe that they send their MPs and they get gobbled up down here. Sometimes we have referred to that as Ottawa fever or whatever we want to call it. It leads to a situation where we have messages being taken from Ottawa to the constituency with the reverse seldom ever occurring.

I think that the election results probably were a good indication of where that sort of thing occurred.

Private Members' Business

What about the MPs themselves? They come here and they follow the party line. There is little free thinking. Attendance drops off. Mr. Fisher, in speaking to our caucus prior to us coming here, put it very well when he said that most or a lot of MPs become good constituency people. Really that is giving them the benefit of the doubt that in fact they must be working in their constituency because they are certainly not working here.

We have to try and find the answer. Some say it is in committee work. For others, it is that they had better toe the party line or be kicked out. Freer votes, I believe, are a solution to at least part of this problem. This was recognized in the throne speech in 1991. It was said that freer votes were definitely a way to make this better.

The famous red book in 1993 suggested that MPs should be given a freer vote and count for more in committees and in the House. So it goes. Freer votes have been dealt with by many, many people but have not been instituted as yet.

Why have we come to this conclusion? Why do we feel this way? Maybe we can examine a little deeper some of the reasons. The first one might be in committee work itself. It is said, as I have said, that you can make a difference in committee work and that it does not have to be just that old party follow the line sort of thing.

(1140)

I have seen discussions occur in committee work. In our committee we had a two-day seminar where we looked at the areas of interest to our committee. Members got a feel for where the members of Parliament on that committee really were at.

When it comes right down to it, it seems that we will go back to the organizational phases of the committee. Here we should have looked at things like merit. We should have looked at where they were from in the country and whether there was fair regional representation. We found that the party whip or his assistant came along and made the decision that Bloc members should be the vice-chair of every committee.

It did not matter whether we had representation from all parts of Canada or not. We have been looking at the estimates. The party position seems to come through loud and clear. I suppose when we do our reports, again we will have a party position or that of the chairman, vice-chairman and so on because of the majority situation.

Opposition members will be left to do little else than submit a minority report and one does not really know whether anyone looks at it or not. What does that do? It makes one wonder why one really works so hard on committees. Let us look at the House.

In the House we sit and listen. I know that members are aware of the excellent ideas, the good research and the good speeches that are given here by all parties. Does it really matter because we always come back to voting the party line? I suppose the best example that was brought out to me was when I moved an amendment to a motion to exclude the Senate from joint standing committees.

I felt that was something the electorate was saying about the other place. Most MPs feel that way about the other place. Again we voted the party line. Again we could not have a free vote. We could not say what we or the people of Canada thought. Instead, we thought about the spin doctors of party politics.

How can we develop a national pride and trust in politicians if we are always going by party line? How should we decide a vote? How should it really go on any bill? We should listen to the speeches. As I have mentioned, the quality is certainly there. In committees we should go into the depth of the issues, look at the details, the facts and the solutions. All members should then be made aware of what occurred. That would be how they get their information.

We must get the constituents involved. We must have town hall meetings from day one. We should have phone blitzes, TV shows and householders that are not simply political propaganda or what MPs feel is good material. It should really count for something. We should really be trying to inform the electorate.

I am really impressed with how the general public communicates with its members of Parliament. Those people have given some thought. They expect their member to vote their will, not simply the party line of thinking. Members can see why many politicians and many members of the public have lost faith in the system we have here.

The procedures of Parliament as I would see them then would result in a bill being introduced. It could be stated up front whether it is a confidence motion. The committees would report in detail on the bill. The members would speak and other members would come to listen. It would count for something. The members' speeches would have some meaning.

Members must have the opportunity to communicate with their constituents. Finally, when the vote occurred it could be passed, modified or defeated. That would not change or put any aspersions on the present government. In order to make this happen, we must re-educate a number of people.

(1145)

We must re-educate members of the media. They cannot look on every defeat of a bill as being a defeat of the government. They must see the positive side of having all of that extra input.

The government must not think of things as being a defeat or a win or a lose situation. The opposition of course must not take advantage of the situation where a bill is defeated and hold that

Private Members' Business

over the government. Instead it must be looked on as a constructive measure for the good of the country.

The public must realize the MPs they elect really do have a say in what happens. Then they will be more careful in their selection of their MPs. They will make sure it is someone they can trust to represent them and not just the party position.

Freer votes will mean that MPs will express the views of their constituents better. It will take government right back to the people. Some of executive power will be moved out of cabinet hands to the true representatives in the House. It will allow for a much greater accountability of MPs because members will not point to a party line when voting against the wishes of their constituents. MPs should always be responsible to the wishes of their constituents.

We have greatly underestimated the ability of the electorate to get involved, become informed and thus participate in direct democracy. The more complex form of representative government got us into the \$500 billion deficit and other serious problems we now have. Let us let freer direct democracy get us out of those problems.

Mr. Stan Keyes (Hamilton West): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the House for giving me the opportunity to speak to motion M-89 of the hon. member for Mission—Coquitlam. Right off the top I want to say I do not accept the position of the hon. member's party on confidence.

I would like to address the three points put forward by the hon. member, the first being relaxing the confidence convention, the second being history, and the third being the aspects of freer voting.

The first concerns relaxing the confidence convention. If there is one conclusion that can be drawn from 300 years of political thought it is that there is not one correct interpretation of confidence. Reform's view is that confidence need only be expressed in formal votes. I think this is a mistake in the thought process.

To quote the hon. member's remark to "feel free to vote with the government members from time to time", I assume she was speaking of the opposition. I asked the table clerk to provide me with the number of votes we have had since the beginning of this 35th Parliament. We have had 31 votes and not once from day one has anyone from that hon. member's party broken ranks.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Keyes: And some of them applaud. Well, congratulations to that party and the solidarity it shows behind its ideology and its ideas about how this country should act and look.

On the position of history, like my colleagues in this House I am privileged to serve my constituents. I am privileged to serve the constituents of Hamilton West. They know Stan Keyes. They know what he stands for. They know what he has no tolerance

for. They know his deeply held beliefs, his deeply held convictions.

(1150)

The hon. member opposite is sadly mistaken if she thinks I or anyone else on this side of the House can be blindly led. If I supported a government objective that went against any of my well known principles I would be laughed out of this office, out of this House, out of this job. I remind the member for Mission—Coquitlam that I was re-elected.

The third point was the issue of freer voting. Since the opening of the 35th Parliament Reform MPs have repeatedly called upon the government to accept the doctrine that "the government not consider the defeat of a government motion including a spending measure to constitute an expression of non-confidence in the government, unless it is immediately followed by the passage of a formal non-confidence motion".

This is directly related to the Reform Party's desire to see increased direct democracy within the Canadian federal system. Reform has long argued that direct democracy is manifested through citizens initiatives, binding referenda, a recall mechanism and free votes in the House of Commons. Let us look at that for a second.

This weekend the hon. member's party, the third party of this House, tried a little experiment in direct democracy. According to an Ottawa newspaper: "Reform leader Preston Manning learned democracy does not always go as planned when a majority of people watching a televised town hall meeting last night voted in favour of allowing doctor assisted suicides. To quote Mr. Manning, care has to be exercised in making a simplistic interpretation of the results".

Well what about the simplistic, shallow, minimal amount of time presented by both sides of that argument. It is very easy to get on national television to present arguments pro and con on any matter and then ask everyone on the basis of those arguments to phone in, if they can afford to have a touchtone phone and there are many Canadians who cannot. That process shuts out how many Canadians who either cannot afford to have a phone or have a dial phone so they cannot participate in that party's direct democracy. Then a decision is made based on those arguments by dialling whatever number for whatever decision a person wants to make, yes or no, right or wrong, pro or con.

How does one prevent the process of stacking in such a process? We know what stacking is. Some of us here in this House went through the abortion debate. Stacking means the ability of one organization to overcome the organization through organization. It is the ability to put the process together better than the other guy because maybe they have more money than the other guy. This is where the faultlines and cracks are in this party's ideas.

Private Members' Business

Is the decision that will be made by the caller on the particular weekend based on all the facts presented to them? Or has that decision been made as a result of what could be a very moving, a very powerful statement made by one individual over another?

We have heard some of the debate in this House. Some of the members have the most powerful arguments, the most powerful delivery. If we get into a passionate subject where life or death is involved we know what kind of arguments can be put forward. Because one is presented more passionately than the other, does that make that argument the right one and there can be no other conclusion but to vote for that particular person's point of view? "I will not even hear the other side. That guy was so good I am voting yes", or "I am voting no". It is a dangerous policy.

(1155)

To secure freer votes Reform would release the government from demonstrating that it retains the confidence of the House except for those occasions when the House is asked to express itself on a formal confidence motion. Members in turn would be able to vote as they choose on any given issue secure in the knowledge they would not be subject to party discipline.

According to Reform these two practices would allow members to better represent their constituents, particularly when issues arise where constituents clearly indicate they do not support the member's party's position on that issue.

In the leader of the Reform Party's point of view when confronted with such a situation that member's choice is clear: "If push comes to shove in my view", says Mr. Manning, "the will of the constituents will prevail over my personal view or my party's view". Mr. Manning however then goes on to say: "I am not talking about turning members into a voting machine where all they do is go home on the weekend, count noses and come back here and stick up their hands. The relationship between a member and his constituents has to be one of dialogue".

Both the Prime Minister and our government House leader have indicated the government's desire to see more free votes in the House. What we have not done is to accept the Reform's interpretation of free votes. While not rejecting Reform's view completely, the Prime Minister and government House leader both have argued there are valid and longstanding reasons for the government to approach confidence from a more comprehensive perspective.

The Prime Minister for example has referred to the mandate given the House in the recent election: "This House is not a group of independents who have been elected on their own. We too are members of a party and we had a program. It is the red book and it will be implemented".

That is what we stand for here as a group. It is not the individual vote; it is the collective. It is the understanding of what we believe to be in the best interests of our constituents, of our riding, of our province, of our country. That is what we are doing here.

This motion cannot be allowed to undermine that Canadian democratic process. I am sure the people who elected me would not approve.

Mr. Ian McClelland (Edmonton Southwest): Mr. Speaker, when talking about freer votes in this debate it is important to keep in mind the fact that when the pendulum swings it does not always have to swing to either extreme.

What we are looking for in this Parliament and the single factor that would probably distinguish this Parliament thus far from the last Parliament, is that there is a great deal more balance. The government has gone out of its way to try to provide that balance and provide input in government from opposition and from the Liberal backbenches as well.

I am reminded particularly of the opening days of this session. So many of us were brand new to this House. We were very nervous about what we were doing, myself included. We had the opportunity to engage in a couple of very important debates over quite a few days. It gave us the sense of belonging and participating and an opportunity to actually do something.

Here we are with this notion of freer votes. Before we talk about the mechanics of exactly what free votes or freer votes are, we should look at a couple of things. One would be our party's history in this House.

As the hon. member who spoke to this motion just a moment ago so rightly pointed out, it is somewhat paradoxical that we are talking about the need for freer votes yet since we have been in this House all of us have voted together.

Basically all of us voted together from all parties. That has to be because we were all elected on the particular platforms with the particular ideology we were promoting. It is only reasonable to assume we would follow through as our ideology was presented in Parliament and vote according to however it was we said we would when we were elected.

(1200)

It is interesting also, in conversation with others who have been in this House much longer than I, that very often a vote when in opposition is opposed. The role of opposition is to oppose the government, to be a check and balance to government to try and ensure that government thinks through all of its policies.

This government has a very substantial majority and that substantial majority flows through to the committees. The essence of this place is that we as members of Parliament have the ability to try, as others have said before, to influence the way

Private Members' Business

government would think about its agenda. However, the reality is that the government agenda is the agenda that will come through this House.

What we are talking about is not to change things 100 per cent, but merely to create the atmosphere in which members feel free to exercise their own independent best judgment, not just in the House but in committee. Even more important is before it gets to committee, when it is still a germ of an idea in someone's head, when the formulation of policy is put together, before we get all the political capital organized in a particular mode of action so that if that course of action is changed in any way it becomes a vote of confidence in the government or in the person who initiated the action.

That is what has us in this position today as a nation. It does not matter whether all of us are 100 per cent right all of the time, because we are not. That is the beauty of this place. There are 295 members here and the collective judgment and wisdom of all of us here today is infinitely better than the individual wisdom of the smartest and most intelligent among us.

We find ourselves in a situation in which in this Parliament or in business if the leader happens to come up with an idea or says something that seemed like a good idea at the time we all scurry about trying to justify whatever the leadership or the leader or a particular person might have said, even if it is a slip of the tongue. God help us, we cannot in any way endanger this person by saying that if this person is not 100 per cent right all the time then perhaps this person does not have the ability to lead.

I am not suggesting that is true of any particular party. That is just as true in our party. We have to be careful and we have to guard against that. This is human nature. It happens in business, it happens in politics and it happens everywhere.

The real job of all of us is to question and to say to the leadership: "Do you really think that is what we should be doing? I know we started out on this and perhaps the bill is in second reading already, but do you not think it might be a good idea if we changed it?". I guess that is what we want, the flexibility, the wisdom and the freedom to change and learn as we go along.

Our experience here has been kind of fun because we have been talking about freer votes and when the votes come up members opposite watch to see who among us is going to be the first not to vote along the party line. We are looking forward to being the first not to vote along the party line because we know that sooner or later we are going to have to otherwise certain members are never going to give us peace. We are going to do it sooner or later somehow.

However, the reality is that we have to follow the principles that got us elected in the first place. We gain from experience. I

am gaining from experience as we go along. I am certainly not shy to admit the fact that many of the preconceived ideas that I had about how this place worked I have changed since I arrived here. I see how this place works and I am learning every day, as we all are.

(1205)

I would like to conclude my comments by quoting someone I think is of particular value to this House and whom we might all keep in mind as we go into the future. There are two people whose names are brought up many times in this House. One is the famous Edmund Burke. In Edmund Burke's letter to the electors of Bristol he pretty much debunks the whole notion of representative democracy. He was in support of delegate democracy through which once every election the electors decide who they are going to vote for and they vote for that person and for better or worse that person ends up in Parliament and they get their next crack at him four years hence.

Members opposite would know that this famous letter to the electors of Bristol was written in 1776 or thereabouts and had to do with the treatment of the British patriots, the sailors who were called pirates. They were captured, taken to England and held there for three years, given a fair trial and hanged. He did not think that was a good idea and said so. His electors thought it was a good idea and they said so. He wrote the letter to the electors of Bristol saying: "You not only have my body, you have my mind. If you do not like what I am doing turf me at the end of my term".

Interestingly, they did turf him at the end of that term and he went on to be re-elected in a rotten borough.

The other person, a contemporary of his, was Thomas Paine. Thomas Paine was the adviser to Thomas Jefferson and helped to frame the famous Declaration of Independence. He wrote in his work *The Rights of Man* that the greatest tyranny of all is the tyranny of the presumption of ruling beyond the grave, and that each generation has the right and the responsibility to govern for its times and should not bind any future generation to its decisions any more than this generation should be bound by decisions made by past generations.

I would ask that as this debate unfolds we consider that our generation and this Parliament are setting the foundation upon which future parliaments will base decisions. If we can relax the rules of discipline it would be for the benefit of all Parliament and all parliamentarians and we need not be concerned about going all in one direction or another.

Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Public Works and Government Services): Mr. Speaker, I have two minutes so I shall try to be very effective.

I believe that the motion is well intentioned but it does contain a number of flaws. As a result of that I cannot possibly support it.

Let me raise a few of those points because this does raise some very important questions. For example, in one of the comments there was a statement that the government's agenda is coming through. Of course the government's agenda is coming through. It must, it has a majority, it has a moral responsibility for making absolutely sure that what it says it will do and the way it interprets that will be carried out.

There is a suggestion that direct democracy is important and I think most of us would agree that it is. We must make awfully certain that direct democracy does not replace the judgments that we have to make as duly elected members of Parliament.

One can see the danger. For example, the opposition party that brought forward this motion had direct involvement recently, last night, on direct democracy. The leader said that perhaps he would support this and needs to check this out to make sure it is not flawed. That is another flaw.

The other thing is when we start changing something like a budget we know that if we change one part there are repercussions for other parts. We simply cannot unravel one little part without considering the implications for the other.

I may have time for a final point. I am a little worried that this could lead to ransom by a minority group.

(1210)

The Deputy Speaker: The time provided for the consideration of Private Members' Business is now expired. Pursuant to Standing Order 93, the motion drops to the bottom of the order of precedence on the Order Paper.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

SUPPLY

ALLOTTED DAY—OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

Mr. Bob Ringma (Nanaimo—Cowichan) moved:

That, in the opinion of this House, the government should:

(a) amend the Official Languages Act to reflect the philosophy of "territorial bilingualism", which holds that French should be the predominant language of Quebec and English the predominant language of the other provinces, and that federal government services should be available to official language minorities in their own language in any part of the country where there is demonstrable local public demand;

Supply

(b) continue to facilitate the use of English or French in the debates and other proceedings of Parliament, in the records and journals of Parliament, in federal courts, and as the languages of federal legislation; and

(c) refrain from expending monies on those aspects of language which fall under the sole jurisdiction of the provinces.

He said: Mr. Speaker, in making this motion, before we get started I would really like to get the attention of everyone whose minds are already made up.

There will be a lot of automation out there saying if a Reformer is getting up and talking on the Official Languages Act it has to be bad. The Official Languages Act is not working well. Whether one favours it and *carte blanche* says it has to be good or whether one says maybe it really should be changed, please give a listen to what we are going to say here. Do not prejudice it. Let us go along with the lines of what is good for Canada and what is good for Canadians.

My basic premise here today is that the Official Languages Act has not been working well. It is divisive for us as a country and it is too expensive. It is not just this member for Nanaimo—Cowichan saying so, each and every commissioner has had problems with it. So has the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism. So have people across the country. So has the Bloc Québécois and so have *les gens de Québec*, *ainsi que les gens de la Colombie-Britannique*. We have all had problems with it. What are we going to do about it?

Listen to the debate this afternoon and as you are doing so I ask you to please put your own minds in gear and ask how we can do it better.

Let us go back in history and I hope to paint you the picture—

The Deputy Speaker: Would the hon. member please put his comments to the Chair. Please try not to use the word "you".

Mr. Ringma: Mr. Speaker, I will try mightily to do that.

Let us collectively look at history and ask how we can improve things. In 1608 New France was founded by Champlain. In 1752 Acadia was conquered by the British and therein was the first and most horrid example of linguistic intolerance. As soon as the Brits conquered Acadia they kicked out all the Acadians. They said: "We do not need your language. We do not need you—out". That is the worse case we have had. Maybe in one sense historically we have improved things, at least from that point.

(1215)

In 1759 New France was conquered. By the standards of that day, the Brits really made some improvement. They said: "Fine, there will be a tolerance not only of the French language but of the religion". Let us remember in historical perspective that religion has been part of the language equation.

Supply

Moving on to 1774, we had the Quebec Act which confirmed the rights of French-speaking people and Catholics. In 1791 we had the constitutional act which created a legislature for Lower Canada. Because French became the language of legislation, francophones essentially became politically active for the first time.

Between 1820 and 1840 we started to have problems again. The rapidly rising English-speaking minority worried the French dominated assembly in Lower Canada. As a result, they adopted a series of intolerant laws regarding the districts and the eastern townships, denied them representation and invoked a head tax on immigrants from Britain.

Between 1837 and 1838 we had real problems, including a bit of open rebellion and almost warfare. It is important to note that from 1840 to 1880, as the proportion of English speaking and French speaking people balanced, people felt a little more secure. Things quietened down nicely in those 40 years up to 1880.

It allowed the British North America Act to be passed in 1867. So quiet were things that the BNA Act was hardly mentioned at all. People were comfortable with it. It did of course guarantee in section 133 that both languages would be used in Parliament, the Quebec legislature and in laws.

I am trying to paint a picture of the see-saw of what has been happening in Canada and the emotions that went with it. From 1880 to 1920, the proportion of French speaking people in Canada and Catholics—we might as well put in—started to rise thus sparking fears in English Canada and among the Protestants that their status would be reduced to a minority position.

As a result, one province after another adopted laws that were restrictive of the educational rights of francophones and Catholics; New Brunswick in 1871, P.E.I. in 1874, Manitoba in 1890 and again in 1916 and Ontario in 1912. Here we can speak with shame. Regulation 17 in 1912 was the most restrictive educational law in Canadian history. It made it unlawful for any francophone child to be educated in his own language beyond grade three. That is bad news but it illustrates that pendulum swing.

Where were we after that? From 1920 to 1960, once again that stability was achieved. There was stability in the language environment. What did we see in Quebec in 1963? We saw rising nationalism. All right? There is going to be a reaction to that. Lester Pearson therefore established the royal commission on bilingualism, the B and B commission. It filed six volumes up until the year 1971.

That commission endorsed territorial bilingualism which I will address in detail in a few minutes. Territorial bilingualism is really a compromise between the territorial principle and the personality principle. Incidentally the findings of that commission were essentially compatible with Reform principles as we espouse them officially today.

(1220)

The spirit of thought of that commission is in this quote: “A bilingual country is not one where all inhabitants necessarily have to speak two languages. Rather it is a country where all principal public and private institutions must provide service in two languages to citizens, the majority of whom may very well be unilingual”. Think on that. It is not bad.

In 1969 the first Official Languages Act was passed. That is what we are critiquing today. Twenty-five years later there is unhappiness with it.

This Official Languages Act favours the personality principle in which individual minority language rights are to be extended as widely as is politically feasible with the result that onerous obligation to respect these rights are placed on the majority populations and, of course, particularly on taxpayers.

It is clear that in passing that act Pierre Trudeau did what he believed to be a just and generous gesture. He repeatedly states that the law’s goals of justice and national unity are inseparable. One can understand that. But Trudeau’s technocratic view of society is also built into the act, one of its key features being the creation of a supreme language bureaucrat, the Commissioner of Official Languages. That was 1969.

In 1972 Quebec, fearful that its French language was in decline, said it had better pass a law. That was bill 22, the Official Language Act for Quebec.

In 1977 the Levesque government passed bill 101. These are now getting to be famous or infamous in this country, bill 22 and bill 101.

We go from there to 1982. This is a very important date as well in that the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms gave recourse to those offended by bill 22 and bill 101 and allowed them to appeal the injustice, shall we call it that, of the Quebec legislation.

In 1988, finally the Mulroney government rescinded the old Official Languages Act and introduced a new one, the current one, which somewhat extends the scope of official bilingualism and in fact perhaps to too great a degree.

I would like now to define territorial bilingualism because this is really what we are talking about here. It is a compromise position between the legitimate desires and concerns of linguistic minorities and the legitimate concerns of linguistic majorities. It is one of four distinct and clearly articulated philosophies designed to bring justice to the matter of language policy.

These policies are, first, the personality principle. This is really the one championed by Pierre Trudeau. He believed that the key to a just system is that all individuals wherever they might be located in the country have the right to communicate and receive services from the government in their preferred official language. That is what we are trying to put in place in Canada today. We say it is not working and cannot be afforded.

The next principle is the territorial principle which should not be confused with territorial bilingualism which we will come to.

The territorial principle holds that language rights should be territorial and non-portable in nature. In the case of Canada it means that everyone living in Quebec should be expected to live and work in French and everyone in the other nine provinces should be expected to live and work in English.

(1225)

This principle has been successfully implemented in Switzerland but it will not work in Canada because our minority populations in Quebec, New Brunswick and Ontario are so much larger than in Switzerland.

Next we hit territorial bilingualism, not the territorial principle but territorial bilingualism. As I said, it was first proposed by the royal commission on B and B, since adopted by the Reform Party. It is essentially a compromise between the extremes of territorial and personality principles.

Under this model, language rights and minority language services would be extended only to those minorities large enough to survive over the long term. Smaller minorities would not receive full rights on the basis that the burden imposed on the majority population, which has to foot the bill for all of this, outweighs the benefit being received by the minority.

This model has been successfully employed in Finland in dealing with its Swedish-speaking minority. If practised in Canada the model would extend full minority language rights to the large francophone communities in eastern and northeastern Ontario, to the Acadians of New Brunswick, as well as to the anglophone community of west end Montreal. The rest of the country would be unilingual.

The fourth principle or style of language policy is what we might call asymmetrical bilingualism advocated by the Bloc Québécois which calls for full and generous language rights to be extended to francophones living outside Quebec and very few rights to be extended to anglophones living inside Quebec.

The logic of this asymmetry is that French is in danger of extinction in Canada and can only survive on an equal footing with English if it receives preferential legal treatment. Most English Canadians find it unbelievable that someone would actually advocate such a position. Nonetheless, it is genuinely believed by many to be the only true and just language policy.

There we are. We have a situation that has hurt Canada and that we must collectively address. I leave it to this House to listen closely to the ensuing speakers. Be critical of yourselves,

Supply

be critical of us, but at the same time be positive. What can we do to be just and furnish proper services to everyone across the country where the numbers warrant? Where numbers warrant is a little buzz phrase that is fought with difficulty. I think on that one we have to get down to brass tacks and put numbers on it and say: "This is where the numbers warrant and this is what we can afford or we cannot afford".

We must address all those points. I would ask the House to think in positive terms as we go through the speeches that follow. We must think about our history which I have gone to some length to expand. It really has been a back and a forth. One group gets stronger and the other group gets afraid and starts putting in restrictive legislation. This is not good news. Let us try and balance it out and be together.

That is all, Mr. Speaker. I would ask everyone, you and others, to consider seriously the adoption of this motion to amend the official languages to reflect the philosophy of territorial bilingualism.

[Translation]

Mr. Eugène Bellemare (Carleton—Gloucester): Mr. Speaker, thank you for this opportunity to comment on this motion. I have met the hon. member for Nanaimo—Cowichan and I have always found him to be a reasonable person, that is until today.

(1230)

Today, I find the hon. member for Nanaimo—Cowichan to be far from reasonable. I feel great disdain for someone who seems to want to destroy our country, or distort its long history.

As a fourth generation Franco-Ontarian and as a member of a minority, I find the Reform member's comments abhorrent. To him, language is a financial question, or at least that is what he claims. He seems to be suggesting that majority groups should trample on minorities. He speaks of the French language in Quebec and of the English language everywhere else.

What can francophones outside Quebec aspire to? How can they live in our country, a country that Mr. Ringma, or his parents, probably adopted some time ago? How can they live here? How should I respond to a Reform member's surreptitious attack on my language, considering that the Bellemare family has been in this country since the 17th or 18th century and that my ancestors fought first for France, and later for Great Britain, and defended Canadian institutions of British origin? French-speaking Canadians fought in both world wars. They fought against the United States to protect their country. We want to be a part of Canada, but the Reform member feels that we are not entitled to belong, unless we agree to be assimilated and become, as in my case, an anglophone.

Supply

The hon. member spoke of generosity. Does he really understand the meaning of the word? Does he really know what he is talking about when he speaks of education within and outside Quebec? Does he truly understand this country? He compares Canada to Switzerland and Belgium. Again, does he really understand our country?

Since I will be speaking on this issue a little later, I will conclude by saying that the Reform member should not have worn a dark suit to address this House today, but rather a white sheet.

Mr. Ringma: Mr. Speaker, I find that really sad. It is damn sad. Right at the beginning, I tried to explain it to people, but they have to listen. I said what we are proposing. Obviously, some members did not listen at all and then they attack me, saying that I want to destroy Canada. That is an insult. I must also say that it is awful, what they are saying to the effect that I am attacking the French language. That is false.

(1235)

I challenge you, Mr. Speaker, and those who did not hear what I said to find those words. When you read *Hansard* tomorrow, or even the blues this afternoon, you will see that we are making an effort to keep Canada united, to preserve the rights of francophones and the rights of anglophones in Quebec. We want everyone to keep their rights, but we do not want it to cost us too much.

Mr. Jean Landry (Lotbinière): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask a question. How do members of the Reform Party explain the economic decline of francophones outside Quebec and what policy do they propose to reduce the gap?

Mr. Ringma: Mr. Speaker, it is very hard for me to explain why francophones' standard of living is falling; I am not an economist and I do not know the reason. It is all a question of money.

Perhaps it is because our economy is in decline and in a very precarious situation now. Foreign governments look at the situation in Canada and think that there is probably a problem between Quebec and the rest of Canada. Also, Quebec is considered to be too hard on anglophones. A lot of money is going out now, the economy is suffering and Quebec too, I suppose.

That is all I can give as an explanation for that question.

[English]

Hon. Warren Allmand (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce): Mr. Speaker, I listened very closely to the hon. member and I am afraid what he proposed is not very clear.

If I understand correctly he rejected a territorial language policy which would have all of Quebec French and the rest of the provinces all English. He seemed to propose a territorial bilingualism in which he said he would accept the extension of the provisions of the Official Languages Act to the minorities in

eastern and northern Ontario, into northeastern New Brunswick and into the west island of Montreal and that there would be unilingualism for the rest of the country.

If I understood him correctly, he was rejecting official bilingualism for any part of the west, including Manitoba. He was rejecting it for the eastern townships where I lived as a child in Sherbrooke and have roots. He was rejecting it for the Gaspé. He was rejecting it for the Outaouais, Aylmer and Papineau county and so on. Is this what I understand?

If that is what he is proposing, it is not as bad as the territorialism which would have all the provinces English except Quebec, but it approaches that. I want to be absolutely clear in what he is proposing. "Where numbers warrant" seem to be exceptionally large "warrants", leaving out francophone minorities in different parts of the country and anglophone minorities in Quebec where they have had long historical roots. I think particularly of the Gaspé and the eastern townships.

Mr. Ringma: Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to address the question which is a very legitimate one.

The examples I used were just that. They were examples and were not meant to throw away the St. Boniface area of Winnipeg or the Gaspé or Aylmer or anything of the sort. It was illustrative of the sort of the territorial bilingualism that we should discuss in detail.

The critical matter, and the hon. member mentioned it, is the phrase "where numbers warrant". That is what is in the act today and that is the matter that is giving us such problems. For example we could adopt the policy of the Canadian Association of Municipalities which puts a number on it. It says either 10 per cent or 5 per cent and one can go from there. If the phrase "where numbers warrant" is inadequate, let us put numbers on it and let us collectively agree where we will provide minority language rights.

(1240)

[Translation]

Hon. Michel Dupuy (Minister of Canadian Heritage): Mr. Speaker, just as the importance of official languages is being questioned in this House, I am happy to have this opportunity to clear up some misunderstandings and set the record straight. Official languages issues have always been sensitive. They arouse passion, give rise to rumours and myths and are very seldom approached in a rational manner. Today I would like to set the record straight on official languages and contribute a few thoughts to the debate.

If I may, I would like to start by giving some historical background in order to establish the basic principles behind the Canadian policy on official languages. Official languages in Canada are rooted in both the past and the present. Since French and English have been evolving side by side for several centuries, the Official Languages Act and the policy underlying it do not in themselves represent a new concept, but show the high

Supply

regard in which the Fathers of Confederation held the notion of association.

In fact, the foundation of the official languages concept dates back to the birth of this country. In 1867, considering this notion as essential to the survival of Confederation, our forefathers passed the Constitution Act whose Section 133 recognizes everyone's right to use French or English in the debates, acts, records and journals of the Parliament of Canada and the legislature of Quebec, as well as before any Canadian or Quebec court.

I should point out that the current policy on official languages is based on this legislative framework.

[*English*]

Provision for the payment of a bonus to candidates who could write in both of Canada's official languages was first made in the act amending the Civil Service Act in 1888. This bilingualism bonus, which is still paid today to employees whose position requires knowledge of both official languages, is received by only 30 per cent of public servants. Most employees of the public service are not bilingual and do not automatically have to become so to have access to other jobs, contrary to popular belief.

By the end of the 1800s the key federal institutions gradually began to reflect the linguistic duality of the country. In the provinces however the situation was quite different, particularly where education was concerned. Although the language question initially was not particularly controversial, the open mindedness displayed by the federal public service toward the official languages does not seem to have extended to the provinces.

The politicians of the day did not show the same wisdom as the Fathers of Confederation and did not respect the spirit of Confederation in language and education, a situation that the minority French speaking communities would denounce and would later try to remedy.

In 1927—I mention this in passing—the first bilingual postage stamps were issued to mark the 60th anniversary of Confederation and this practice would subsequently become standard.

(1245)

The federal government translation bureau was established in 1934 and was to change the face of the Public Service of Canada. However, official acceptance of the general principle that every citizen should have the right to receive federal services in the language of his or her choice and that the federal public service should reflect the makeup of Canadian society came only in the 1960s with the Heeney report and the report of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism.

[*Translation*]

The Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism was a turning point for official languages. It noted that Canada was undergoing the most severe crisis in its history. So, it recommended among other things that governments contribute to the development of official languages minority groups and that the civil service be bilingual with regard to both provision of services and language of work.

Following up on the royal commission's recommendations, the government of the day adopted the Official Languages Act in 1969, thereby making French and English the official languages of Canada.

I would like to stress one point at this time, especially after hearing remarks made by our colleagues from the Reform Party.

[*English*]

This act did not seek to make all Canadians bilingual. Its main objective was to establish the equality of status of English and French in the public service. It provided for the delivery of services in both languages so that the government could better understand and be better understood by the public. Whatever may be said, this is still the case today. No one wants to force any member of the public to speak both English and French.

The progress made possible by the passage of the Official Languages Act did not come without some difficulties along the way, but it proved to be very positive. Francophones have been the first to benefit from the act. It declared that the official languages, French and English, are the very essence of our identity as Canadians and that it is important to promote their development in all the provinces and territories of the country. This to my mind represents unprecedented progress.

After its adoption in 1969 the Official Languages Act gathered ground in the provinces. That same year New Brunswick declared itself officially bilingual in a unanimous resolution. We are now at the 25th anniversary.

A few years later other provinces followed suit. They relaxed their legislation and gave back to French speaking Canadians the right to education in their language, something that had been prohibited at the turn of the century as I mentioned earlier, notably in Manitoba.

[*Translation*]

During the seventies, Canadians showed a growing desire to live in an open and tolerant society, a society concerned with allowing individuals to live in their own culture and language. Young people, for instance, proved to be increasingly interested

Supply

in second language training, which they considered as expanding their personal and cultural horizons.

This wind of change blowing across the country made it possible to take the promotion of official languages a step further. So, in 1982, the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms enshrined the official status of the French and English languages in the Constitution. Section 23 recognized the right to receive primary and secondary school instruction in the language of the minority where—as pointed out earlier—numbers warranted. To this day, this represents one of the most valuable gains made by linguistic communities which perceive education as the best way to ensure their development.

The purpose of that section was to redress historical injustices French-speaking minorities had suffered in certain provinces.

[*English*]

Following the promulgation of the charter however many questions were raised. What was meant by “where the numbers warrant?” Did it mean that official language communities had the right to manage their own schools? What was the actual scope of section 23? French speaking parents turned to the courts to find the answers to their questions. From then on the management of schools became their rallying cry.

(1250)

In the wake of the charter the federal government decided to update the Official Languages Act in 1988. It conferred on the secretary of state the mandate to foster the development and vitality of minority official languages communities and to promote the use of French and English in Canadian society. This mandate is now my responsibility as Minister of Canadian Heritage.

During the same period the decision by the Supreme Court confirmed the right of francophones to manage their own schools. Yet despite the clear decision of the Supreme Court the constant pressure of French speaking communities and the repeated offers of support by the federal government, several provinces were slow to take action to respect their constitutional obligations.

[*Translation*]

In order to foster dialogue and encourage provinces, which assume responsibility for education, to do something regarding the teaching of the French language, the federal government adopted concrete measures to support the implementation of school management and post-secondary education in French.

This initiative resulted, among other things, in the implementation of several management projects across the country, as well as in the setting up of the community college network, something which was long-awaited by Ontario francophones.

Moreover, in spite of the fact that we are going through a difficult economic period, the Canadian government has decided to spare school management from the recent budget cuts so that, at last, school boards can get down to business.

We hope that the management of French-language schools by francophones will soon become a reality and we are working hard to that end.

We made significant progress regarding the promotion, spreading and teaching official languages, and this includes the legal recognition of their status.

This is not the time to back off, because there is still a lot to do. Minorities are always vulnerable, but minorities speaking one of the official languages within each province make an essential contribution to our identity and our national unity, and they deserve the government's support.

The Department of Canadian Heritage subsidizes 350 groups which work to promote official language communities in our country. These groups provide direct support to the communities and form dynamic organizations within our society.

In co-operation with the federal government, these groups are active in almost every field, including literacy, the economy and, of course, education.

Under co-operation agreements signed with each province and each territory, the federal government also helps these jurisdictions to provide education in the language of their minority.

This co-operation translates, for example, into the construction of new educational institutions for francophones, such as the Cité collégiale, in Ottawa, and the École de droit at l'Université de Moncton, as well as the development of new teaching programs in French and the setting up of independent school boards.

It must be pointed out that, without the federal government's support in the field of education, provinces would have to absorb all the costs related to such initiatives.

Moreover, federal funding helps over 2.7 million students learn French or English as a second language, including 300,000 students enrolled in French immersion.

Surveys even show that three out of four Canadians want their children to learn French or English as a second language.

[*English*]

Why do so many Canadian parents and children want to learn the second language while here we are discussing the relevance of promoting official languages in the country? They do so because they see a definite advantage to be gained. During a period of economic change countries simply cannot isolate themselves and linguistic duality is an undeniable strength.

(1255)

Having worked in the world of diplomacy and international relations I can assure you that questioning the whole official languages policy amounts to ignorance of today's world. Markets are joining together to form large economic units that will in the future set the rules of the game. Developments in information technology such as satellite rebroadcasting have radically altered the concept of space and time.

The success of our country is closely linked to our ability to communicate in the languages and appreciate the cultures of other people. In a world where an estimated 6,000 languages are spoken in some 200 countries, Canada is not alone in having more than one official language. Having two world-class official languages can only be of net advantage to us because no fewer than 25 of those countries have French as an official language and 33 English.

Apart from being personally enriching, knowing both official languages makes our country better able to build up commercial relations with various countries. It is no surprise that our main competitors such as Japan and Europe are attaching increasing importance to teaching second languages in their schools. They are making the change to a modern world. Should we not?

The official languages question however is not solely confined to financial aspects. Linguistic duality is one of our fundamental characteristics as a society, as attested by our common history. Seeing that about 96 per cent of the population has French or English as its first language, no one can deny the coexistence of the two main languages in this country.

At a time when spending is being cut some ask whether we should not simply abolish the official languages policy. Others persist in bringing up the cost of the official languages policy and do not pay attention to its true value.

[*Translation*]

For my part, I am quite convinced that, more than ever, we must promote the use and promotion of both official languages and make sure that they are taught throughout Canada. The key to the development of any minority community, and our country as a whole, is education. All the efforts, energy and time spent by francophones to take control of their own schools must come to fruition.

Through special measures regarding management and post-secondary education, we have made progress on issues of priority concern to francophones, and we intend to continue in that direction. We will work towards fostering the economic development of francophone communities, which will require the participation of other departments and agencies.

Supply

I intend to call upon my colleagues to promote both official languages, which is part of my mandate as Minister of Canadian Heritage. We must renew our partnership with official languages communities and revamp our approach. Finally, I am looking into exploring new and fairly novel avenues which would give these communities almost unlimited opportunities, not only internally, but also internationally; I am thinking, in particular, about the information highway and the whole field of telecommunications.

Why not use the information highway to offer and diversify education services to francophones in remote areas? Could we not take advantage of this new technology to set up a French-language network for francophones, thus giving them their own electronic space? Those are questions I intend to explore with my colleagues and associates. I want to look at the future, and at how the official languages can contribute to the full development of Canada. But I am already convinced that having two official languages is an undeniable asset for our culture and our presence on the world scene.

(1300)

Mr. Pierre de Savoye (Portneuf): Mr. Speaker, the Reform Party has put a motion before the House today, and for the benefit of our listeners, I would like to start by reading the motion and then comment on a number of aspects I feel are particularly important and which I think each and every one of us should give some serious thought. The motion reads as follows:

That, in the opinion of this House, the government should:

- (a) amend the Official Languages Act to reflect the philosophy of "territorial bilingualism", which holds that French should be the predominant language of Quebec and English the predominant language of the other provinces, and that federal government services should be available to official language minorities in their own language in any part of the country where there is demonstrable local public demand;
- (b) continue to facilitate the use of English or French in the debates and other proceedings of Parliament, in the records and journals of Parliament, in federal courts, and as the languages of federal legislation; and
- (c) refrain from spending monies on those aspects of language which fall under the sole jurisdiction of the provinces.

Mr. Speaker, when this motion was presented by the Reform Party, the mover of the motion said, and I quote:

[*English*]

—the Official Languages Act is not working well.

[*Translation*]

I agree with what he said. In fact, I believe the Commissioner of Official Languages himself pointed out that the legislation was not as effective as one would expect it to be.

The hon. member for the Reform Party went on to say that this act—

Supply

[English]

—is divisive and too expensive.

[Translation]

Well, we in Quebec do not feel that this act is particularly divisive or that it creates dissent. It is too bad the hon. member for the Reform Party seems to think there is a measure of dissent and divisiveness, and I suppose that later on he could perhaps explain how he arrived at this perception. He also said the Official Languages Act was too expensive.

According to the Commissioner of Official Languages, this legislation costs 0.3 per cent of total federal spending. If less than one-third of 1 per cent is too expensive, how low must we go to meet the criteria of the hon. member for the Reform Party?

At this point, I would also like to set the record straight on something that was said by the previous speaker. He referred to the “asymmetrical bilingualism advocated by the Bloc Québécois”. The position of the Bloc Québécois is clear: bilingualism must be the rule in all federal institutions. There are also a number of obligations in this respect that must be met at the provincial level. However, neither the Bloc Québécois nor any other party can influence the will of the provinces.

Incidentally, I would like to draw your attention to the fact that today, New Brunswick is celebrating 25 years as a bilingual province.

An hon. member: That’s right!

Mr. de Savoye: Thank you.

(1305)

For all this bilingualism enjoyed in this country since 1969 and all the goodwill in that respect, we must nevertheless realize—as the Commissioner of Official Languages indicated—that access to federal services in French has not always been satisfactory. Francophones outside Quebec should be able to receive services in their language not only from federal agencies but also from provincial ones. And that is where the shoe pinches.

Let me quote Mr. Jean Dufresne who said, in an article published in *Le Journal de Montréal*: “Mr. Goldbloom, who speaks his mind but at the same time shows a moderation fitting a man whose mastery of French I can only envy, acknowledges that federal services in French have deteriorated so much that, in certain regions, francophones do not even bother to complain any more. In British Columbia and the Prairies, for example, the number of complaints dropped by half last year. Mr. Goldbloom attributes this drop to the clients’ frustration with the little progress made by various institutions.” And he concluded by saying: “Overall, not a very positive report.”

I might add that problems exist not only in British Columbia and the Prairies. Last Sunday, in my riding, I met with Mr. Duval, from Cap-Santé, who showed me a number of things, including UI cheque stubs. On these stubs, you can read:

[English]

—UI benefit statement, date 3003, 1994 from federal tax, Quebec tax, et cetera. It is all in English. This is in Cap-Santé for Mr. Duval.

[Translation]

Something is seriously wrong. The figures relating to bilingualism in the Public Service certainly make you wonder. Take the number of bilingual positions in Quebec for example. Excluding the National Capital Region, there are 15,500 bilingual positions in the province, as compared to 39,500 in the National Capital Region and 8,800 in the rest of Canada. You will tell me that this is in line with the relative numbers of francophones and anglophones across Canada. That fact of the matter is that it is not.

You see, with 900,000 anglophones in Quebec and, excluding the National Capital, there are 15,500 bilingual positions in the province. On the other hand, 968,000 francophones are living outside Quebec, that is to say 68,000 more than anglophones living in Quebec, and to serve all of them, there are only 8,800 bilingual positions, that is a bit more than half the number found in Quebec. In other words, this means that francophones outside Quebec are entitled to only 57 per cent of the level of service provided to anglophones in Quebec. And I am not making this up. I am just quoting figures from the Commissioner of Official Languages’ annual report.

I would also like to mention this other finding by the commissioner. In Foreign Affairs, 44 per cent of francophones report using English as their written language of work and, according to 85 per cent of the sample of employees interviewed by the commissioner, meetings are held only or mostly in English. Bilingualism is not very well, Mr. Speaker.

(1310)

In fact, given the figures I just gave you, we can see that the government’s efforts to conceive and carry out bilingualism programs only work in Quebec. Simply put, we can see that a vast majority of bilingual positions in Canada are located in Quebec and the National Capital Region. Quebec and the National Capital Region account for 55,000 bilingual positions, compared with 8,800 in the rest of the country. Quebec is where bilingualism can be found.

I would now like to move on to education.

Education, as everyone knows, is a provincial jurisdiction and, although the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms provides for certain obligations with respect to minority language rights, we must realize that some provinces still lag behind.

Supply

It is worth mentioning that these rights were made clearer by two Supreme Court decisions in 1990 and 1993. But these rights have been in the Charter for ten years now, and the provinces should have delivered the goods ten years ago.

Nevertheless, francophones outside Quebec had to fight to have their rights recognized and we know that, at least in Ontario, the situation is still not settled or even very clear at this time.

As for the three provinces that legislated in this field more recently—namely Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta—, I hope that, if it took them ten years to come up with a law in line with the Charter, it will not take another ten years for reality to reflect the spirit of the new legislation.

A word on Ontario. The President of the French–Canadian Association of Ontario, Jean Tanguay, recently said that the Commissioner’s report did not reflect the fact that his community is in a state of crisis. He went on to say that, unfortunately, the Government of Ontario continues to deliberately defy the law in matters of school management.

The Liberal member for Ottawa—Vanier said essentially the same thing on the TVA network on March 23: “We asked to manage our own schools because it goes hand in hand with normal management. We still do not have it in Ontario, in spite of continuously asking for it for 30 years.”

Bilingualism in Canada is not well, not because of the law or the Charter but because there is resistance somewhere.

I would like to point something out to the Reform speaker who, as he admitted himself, was unable to come up with a satisfactory answer to a question he was asked earlier about the wage gap between francophones and anglophones.

We know that the income gap between francophones and anglophones keeps growing outside Quebec, while it has declined considerably in Quebec. So why is there a gap and why does it keep growing outside Quebec?

Well, here is the answer. We can observe that it is partly due to the fact that francophone minorities do not control the management of their primary and secondary schools, because we know that education is one of the most important things for success in life. If our francophone minorities outside Quebec cannot have access to education in their mother tongue, they automatically lose the equal opportunity that their English-speaking fellow citizens have.

(1315)

The gap is not small. In 1977, it was 4.4 per cent in favour of anglophones. Not only did it not stay the same but it grew to 10.3 per cent in 1992; that is a tragedy.

I would also like to talk about a statement that the Hon. Prime Minister made in this House last week. Speaking of Quebec sovereigntists, our Prime Minister said: “When they have achieved their objective of separation, a million francophones will probably lose their language.” That was a regrettable statement. Francophones do not have rights because Quebec exists. Francophones outside Quebec have rights that belong to them, irrespective of Quebec. These people, these French-speaking citizens, have their own culture that belongs to them and in no way depends on whether Quebec exists as a sovereign state or not. However, I see that some people are not able to appreciate the rights of these minorities.

Believe me, Quebecers are very strong defenders of French culture in all of North America and especially in Canada from coast to coast and in all the provinces where these communities are established and have grown and developed over the years. They deserve to be supported by this government; more than deserve it, they are entitled to it.

I will say that the sovereigntist forces in Quebec have already announced a generous policy with respect to the anglophone minority. I also consider it unfortunate that the Commissioner of Official Languages believes that English Canada would eliminate the rights of French Canadians outside Quebec if Quebec became sovereign.

At this time, you will understand that it is all the more important for Quebec to unconditionally support all the francophone minorities in the rest of Canada if the federal government abdicates its duty in this area.

To conclude, I have a few questions for the Reform Party. If the present bilingualism policy were abolished, as the Reform Party proposes, what policies would that party propose so that francophones outside Quebec could enjoy the same rights, privileges, guarantees and respect that anglophones in Quebec have? Would they be in favour of francophones outside Quebec managing their own schools? What do they propose as an alternative to respect and support for francophone organizations outside Quebec if the government did not spend money on aspects of language policy that are within exclusive provincial jurisdiction?

I have stated some facts, I have raised some issues, I believe that if the Reform Party wants to follow through to the end, it must do more than propose a notice of motion, it must propose a solution that respects all linguistic minorities in Canada, be they French or English.

(1320)

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, sometimes I find it hard to keep calm when I hear some of the comments being made across the floor.

Supply

First of all, the hon. member claimed that, according to the report of the Commissioner of Official Languages, the Official Languages Act was not working. Nothing could be further from the truth.

I am sure all Canadians watching the House of Commons on television today know the Commissioner of Official Languages is an ombudsman. It is his role to point out any shortcomings, which there always will be, in any society. It is his role to identify them. Not in order to condemn this government or the previous government or anyone at all, but to improve the system.

Similarly, the hon. member opposite raises questions during Question Period not, I hope, to say that the people sitting on these benches are a terrible bunch, but to improve the system and make this Parliament more effective. Well, the Commissioner of Official Languages does the same thing, to improve the act and not to condemn it.

Second, I wish the hon. member opposite would explain his calculations. First of all, he chose to discount public servants working in the National Capital Region as far as minority language services are concerned. Does he not know that in addition to the national role played by public servants in the National Capital area, these people also administer regional programs? For instance, half of all francophones in Ontario, perhaps as many as 150,000, live within a radius of about 100 kilometres of this city outside Quebec. They are not served by regional offices in other locations, they are served by offices here in Ottawa. When the hon. member artificially excludes people who work in Ottawa, does he realize that he is skewing the figures?

Finally, with respect to the future of francophones outside Quebec, one does not have to be a lawyer from Baie-Comeau to realize that there is more to this than protecting the rights of francophones, important though this may be. What has kept us alive as a group in this country is critical mass. I am a Franco-Ontarian, and personally I believe that in my country, Quebec has played a major role in helping my language survive. We must be realistic and look at the facts.

The United States has no Quebec with its critical mass. Did the francophones there survive? No. The French fact is mere nostalgia in Louisiana and nothing at all in the rest of the United States, although originally there were more francophones in the United States than in Canada. Why? Because they did not have the critical mass or percentage. And that is what the Prime Minister means when he says that the francophones in Quebec are important to the survival of us all in Canada. Francophones in Quebec have helped to differentiate us from the Americans. We owe them that. We are a different country largely because of them. And anyone who says that we can take this out of Canada and everything will remain the same is wrong. Never mind about being politically correct. The truth is right there.

Mr. de Savoye: Mr. Speaker, I will respond to this. First, I respect the cultural solidarity mentioned by the hon. member. However, I do not have much respect for his mathematical skills.

Let us take his first argument. Indeed, Quebec is certainly, for French-speakers outside its borders, an important focal point, and it will continue to be unless the Government of Canada tries to enforce a violent opposition to it, which I doubt.

(1325)

Now, for the mathematical part. The National Capital Region is not only the Ottawa side, it also includes, whether you like it or not, the other side of the river, that is Hull and Gatineau. You know that, Mr. Speaker, I am sure. When the hon. member says that bilingual public servants in the National Capital area serve a Franco-Ontarian population, I expect they also serve a Quebec population. Otherwise, this would be tantamount to abuse.

This aside, when I compared Quebec with the rest of Canada, I took care to say, and I repeat, that I was excluding the National Capital area, both from Quebec and from the rest of Canada. I am therefore comparing apples with apples and oranges with oranges. However, the hon. member may find it to his advantage to skew reality. As he said, let us leave political correctness aside and let us show things as they are. We give 57 per cent more service to English-speaking persons in Quebec, than French-speaking persons receive in the rest of Canada.

[English]

Mr. Ian McClelland (Edmonton Southwest): Mr. Speaker, I listened with great interest to the member for Portneuf who is always able to put his thoughts together and present them in such an engaging way.

Does the member for Portneuf think there is even a prayer of a chance that the French fact will be able to survive outside Quebec even to the degree that it does today if Quebec were to decide to separate. Why would the rest of Canada treat the French minority outside Quebec any differently from any other linguistic minority? Why should it treat it any differently in the absence of Quebec?

I would also ask the member for Portneuf to comment on the fact that we feel we have an obligation to represent and to be considerate of the French language minorities particularly in the west. The reality of the situation is that the French language minority in my city is the third, fourth or fifth language. It comes after Ukrainian and now Chinese. How should these minorities be treated vis-à-vis English and vis-à-vis French?

The hon. member also mentioned the disparity in incomes and that the income of French speaking Canadians in Quebec has gone up over the last few years relative to French speaking Canadians outside Quebec. I wonder if that could not be in part

Supply

because of the rise of the entrepreneurial class within Quebec and the outflow migration from Quebec of anglophones.

As a final parting shot, I would like to mention the irony of getting a lesson in minority language rights for the rest of Canada from the perception of the rest of Canada having been a witness to Quebec Bill 101 knowing the rancour and disbelief generated in the rest of Canada by Bill 101. There is some irony to now be getting this lesson in understanding.

[*Translation*]

The Deputy Speaker: Before recognizing the hon. member for Portneuf, I have to tell him that he will have as much time as the hon. member for Edmonton Southwest used.

[*English*]

Mr. de Savoye: I am surprised at being asked how we think this or that could work. We are not the ones putting forward a motion. The Reform Party is putting forward a motion. They should tell us how things would work for the French speaking communities outside Quebec.

(1330)

How will the Reform Party ensure that these French communities evolve and the French speaking people get good jobs and good salaries? They are the ones who should be supplying those answers.

What we are saying is that Quebec, as a sovereign state, will continue and enhance its effort to support all French speaking communities from coast to coast. That has been pledged over and over again. I am not going to explain why I believe these people will make it. They have done so against tremendous odds up to now. Hopefully if the laws of the country continue to support bilingualism and if—this is the second if—they are implemented correctly, which they are not at the time, then these communities will be able to sustain themselves.

However, I am asking the question again. It is not for me to answer those questions. The Reformers are putting forward a motion. Let them support how it will work in the real world for the French speaking communities from coast to coast or do they want them to be eradicated?

Mr. John Williams (St. Albert): Mr. Speaker, before I start my speech I would like to make a comment to answer the final remarks of the previous speaker who talked about when Quebec is a sovereign state it will look after its language policy from coast to coast.

We understand that if Quebec ever becomes a sovereign nation it will not have to worry about coast to coast because the small shore of the St. Lawrence will be the only coast that it has.

The motion put forward today shows that the Reform Party has concern as a federalist party for Quebec, for French and for our language policy from shore to shore, and let it always be from shore to shore.

The Official Languages Act is designed to ensure that the people of the province of Quebec and French speaking people from elsewhere in Canada have the opportunity to be able to participate and enjoy the benefits of this country using their own language. That is why we want to discuss it today because unfortunately the language act is not working.

In 1968 the then Prime Minister, Mr. Trudeau, mentioned in the throne speech the need to create some linguistic justice in the country and to forestall what was perceived to be Quebec separatism. In his speech, Mr. Trudeau said:

You will—be asked to consider measures relating to—citizenship, to national symbols, to cultural agencies—Some of these proposals involve the righting of wrongs and others the opening of opportunities long denied. Together they exemplify the essential connection between justice and national unity.

Unfortunately he did not adopt the recommendations of the language commission that had reported up to that point in introducing territorial bilingualism. He introduced a personal bilingualism. As I mentioned, it was to forestall Quebec separatism that was seen to be rising again. Little did he think, back in 1968, as he sat in that seat over there that after 25 years the present Prime Minister would be looking across the floor at 54 MPs who are committed to taking Quebec out of this country. Unfortunately it demonstrates that the Official Languages Act has not worked.

We need change to ensure that they stay in this country, that they do not pack their bags and leave as the 52 people in this House wish to do.

Language fractures a country. In a multicultural, multi-language situation, it is perhaps the most divisive thing that we have to deal with, not only in this country but we see it around the world. A large part of the tensions in Yugoslavia today are racial, ethnic and language oriented. The divisions in the Soviet Union are degenerating into nationalism and cultural ethnic groups and language again. Around the world language is a problem.

(1335)

However, we thought that we were mature enough to work together and achieve some sort of harmony. We thought we could work together and overcome our difficulties. However, the unfortunate thing is we cannot legislate morality and we cannot legislate the way people think.

Therefore, if we are to have harmony in language let us recognize that the road ahead will be difficult. We have to work

Supply

together to bring about acceptance of the need and the recognition that Canadians speak more than one language.

The French and the English go back a long way to 1608 when Samuel de Champlain first landed in this country. At times the French language dominated and the English language has dominated at times. It has see-sawed back and forth and through the accidents of history the English language now dominates. However, we recognize the rights of the French speaking people in this land. We want them to be recognized. We want to ensure that they have a place in Canada.

We want to ensure that the Official Languages Act is changed so that when we have another election there will no longer be 54 people sitting in the House who are dedicated to breaking up the country. We want 295 people in this House who are committed to working together and staying together.

The Reform Party has addressed the problem and it has said, let us go back to the commission that was formed in the 1960s which reported that we should have territorial bilingualism. Obviously the personal style of bilingualism does not work which is why we have these 54 people here today.

Let us recognize that we should change the system in order for it to work better. We want the French to speak in their own language, we want the English to speak in their own language. We do not want to shove another language down people's throats if they do not want it. That is what generates the backlash.

We should also try and defuse language as an issue. From 1867 to 1969 there were virtually no language laws in this country. We have to get back to the recognition that the fewer laws we have in this field the better and the more harmony and desire we have to make it work the better. That is why as Reformers we propose that language become a provincial issue rather than a federal one. Let each province decide which language is going to be spoken in the province, bearing in mind that each must account and accommodate the language where population warrants, that it be French, English or both.

That is why we put this motion today, to elevate the need to talk about this before the 54 Bloc Quebecois get their agenda on track and march right out of here.

If the 54 Bloc Quebecois members take Quebec out of this country they have left behind the thousands of French speaking Canadians in the rest of the provinces. They will be left hanging high and dry with absolutely no support. They will be alienated from the people in Quebec. The Bloc will be doing these people a great disservice. That is why I say to these people, work toward making federalism work rather than packing a bag and leaving.

We have invested a great deal of money over the years. Even Mr. Spicer, the first language commissioner said that perhaps we should add it all up and find out how much we are talking about and what it costs us. He said:

But surely there is merit in keeping more meaningful accounts. Without them, those dealing language reform will have to continue waffling under the recurring question of costs—hearing but being unable to contradict convincingly such deliciously polemical estimates—as “three billion dollars a year for bilingualism.” It would seem more sensible to pull the whole lot of linguistic items together, specify the purpose of each, tote up the terrifying sum, add on ten per cent for indirect or integrated costs, then publish and defend the thing as a high but necessary price for being Canadian.

(1340)

That was Mr. Spicer, the first Commissioner of Official Languages quite some number of years ago. Today we have all kinds of numbers being thrown out. How much does it cost, \$2 billion, \$4 billion? We do not know.

We do know we pay \$50 million a year as a bonus to people who speak two languages in the federal civil service whether that is required of their job or not. We know that we spend hundreds of millions of dollars on other aspects, translation, bilingual commissions; \$200 million for education. The cost adds up, but how much? We do not know.

Mr. Spicer said quite some number of years ago: “Let us add it up. Let us find how much. Tell Canadians what it costs us and let that be the price for keeping this country together”.

As I have said many times, the Reform Party wants Canada to stay together. We want a language policy that will bind us together in unity and understanding. The official language policy as it currently stands will not work and must be changed. That is why we brought the item to the forefront today.

Let us sit down and develop a new structure. Let us not adopt the attitude of the Bloc Quebecois and say: “That's it. If you can't tolerate it, go”. Let us tell the Bloc Quebecois not to be selfish and walk out on this great experiment that has been Canada.

We have said to the Leader of the Opposition, and we have said to other members of the Bloc Quebecois: “Let us sit down and define a new federalism”. They said: “No. If a question is to be put on a ballot on a referendum in Quebec it will be a choice of what we have today or separatism”. They have said that they are not interested in sitting down and making this experiment called Canada work. That is tremendously unfortunate for the 27.5 million Canadians—that includes French Canadians—right across this land and the French Canadians in the province of Quebec who want to be in Canada, who want this country to stay together.

Supply

That is why it is vitally important that we sit down and develop a brand new act so that after the next election a majority government of Reformers will be running the country and not Bloc Quebecois.

Mr. John Bryden (Hamilton—Wentworth): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his comments.

He will agree that when we have these debates we must be very careful that what we say is founded in truth and reasoned analysis and not in rhetoric.

He said several times in his remarks that the presence of the Bloc is due to Canada's official languages policy. I submit to him that the presence of the Bloc is actually due, as is the presence of the Reform Party, to the failure of the previous Conservative government to retain the confidence of the people. It has nothing whatsoever to do with the Official Languages Act.

I would further say that he and a previous speaker have made several references to language as a cause of dissension and some unfortunate incidents in the past. A specific reference was made for example to the Acadian expulsion.

I submit that the expulsion of the Acadians had nothing to do with language. It was a case in the 18th century of what is today known as ethnic cleansing. The Acadians were removed not because they spoke French but because they were of a different religion and because they were an economic and a military liability in Nova Scotia at that time.

I would further say that if he looks back in the past at the type of impartiality that the Reform Party prides itself in he will discover that the history of English people has shown a tremendous tolerance for French. Throughout the middle ages and throughout the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries and even the 19th century most of the upper classes, shall we say, and the well educated people in England and the British possessions spoke French regularly. Indeed, this tolerance for the other language existed into the 19th century. He is blaming language for something for which language is not responsible. Language is basically a form of communication. The better we understand one another's language the better we can understand one another and the better we can overcome the type of tribalism that may be characteristic of the type of principles that the Bloc stands for. The Bloc represents the same type of people that I belong to, other Canadians.

(1345)

The language enables us to reach out to one another. I think we Canadians have to do everything in our power to make sure that as many Canadians have the opportunity to speak both languages as we possibly can.

Mr. Williams: Mr. Speaker, in some ways I think the hon. member should have been over on this side writing Reform speeches because we agree with some parts of what he says.

There is no question in my mind that the language policy of Canada today has in some way created the fact that we have 54 people sitting there today.

In 1968, as I said, there were divisions in this country. There was a desire to achieve linguistic justice in this country. Mr. Trudeau, the Prime Minister at that time, addressed it by introducing a languages act. He went against the recommendations of the commission that said "territorial bilingualism" and introduced the concept of "personal bilingualism". If Mr. Trudeau thought he had separatism in 1968, he had no idea what separatism would mean in 1994 in this very House.

The hon. member also talked about how the English language tolerates French and other languages from around the world. I think that is true. We as Reformers and as English speaking Canadians are bending over backward to try and do what we can to ensure that this country is good for everybody, coast to coast. We only ask that we get the same kind of recognition as Canadians from the people in Quebec who feel that because they have been slighted in some small way that they should pack their bags and leave, which will be the destruction of their own economy and perhaps the destruction of the Canadian economy as well.

Mr. Morris Bodnar (Saskatoon—Dundurn): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member mentioned that the Bloc does not want to make this experiment called Canada work. I wonder in light of some of the comments of the Reform member using such terms as "dominance of English in this country" and "Quebec with only a shore along the St. Lawrence" whether that is an attempt to hasten the separation of Quebec from Canada rather than trying to heal any wounds and whether that is the goal of the Reform Party, to hasten Quebec leaving this country rather than trying to live in a country that compromises and has two official languages.

Mr. Williams: Mr. Speaker, the facts speak for themselves. Seventy-five per cent of Canadians are English speaking and 25 per cent of Canadians are French speaking. In our neighbouring country to the south there are 250 million people who speak English. If the province of Quebec goes alone and forms a separate country it is going to be a French speaking island in the sea of English speaking North America. It is going to be lost in a big sea with no friends. No anglophone group will be there to help it. If its language and economy are to be preserved, it would be far better off in a larger group such as Canada than by itself. If it sets out on its own and feels it is going to preserve French with no friends whatsoever, it is going to be totally dominated by the cultural impact of the rest of North America.

Supply

With regard to the hon. member's other point about the shoreline of the north shore of the St. Lawrence, it is a fact that that is what Quebec would have. It is far better to recognize the facts and call them for what they are than to pussyfoot around and let the people of Quebec or the 54 MPs from Quebec who advocate separation push the Liberals around.

(1350)

They have been pushed around for so long that we have found ourselves in the situation where our country is at risk. Let us recognize the problem, deal with it aggressively and solve it once and for all.

[Translation]

Mr. Michel Bellehumeur (Berthier—Montcalm): Mr. Speaker, I did not intervene immediately for a very good reason; I wanted to hear the comments from both sides on the speech the Reform Party member just made. I think members interpret in various ways and disparage the reason why there are 54 members of the Bloc Québécois in this House. I believe that some members live in a hothouse, totally disconnected from reality.

I would like to ask the Reform Party, and particularly the member who just spoke, where they were at the time of the Meech Lake Agreement and of the Charlottetown Agreement, when English Canada twice said no to Quebec. Where were they then? Maybe they will understand the reason for the Bloc Québécois being present in this House, they will understand why 54 out of 75 members are here to defend Quebec's interests, to advocate and promote Quebec sovereignty.

Since we are drifting slightly away from the Reform Party's motion on bilingualism, it is easy to present various ideas and explanations, but in the member's speech, I never understood, I never saw any concrete measures—we are talking here about Quebec separating from Canada and I think both sides are speaking as if it were a fact, as if Quebec were separated already; but what are you going to do with the francophones? I understand the Reform Party members when they say that they will welcome everybody and treat all minorities very well. But they never made any concrete suggestions. What exact measures will the Reform Party put into place for francophones outside Quebec when Quebec becomes sovereign?

[English]

Mr. Williams: Mr. Speaker, the question deserves one answer. We are working very hard to keep Quebec in Canada. We are proposing a new way of handling the official languages in this country. That will ensure that there is French available for Canadians coast to coast for the people who wish to speak in the French language.

That can be done best by ensuring that everybody, including the 54 Bloc Québécois MPs who want to work for the benefit of their constituents, has an opportunity to work and communicate

in the language of their choice in this great country called Canada.

The Deputy Speaker: The time is up for questions and comments. Resuming debate. I believe the hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage intends to divide her time.

[Translation]

Ms. Albina Guarnieri (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Canadian Heritage): Mr. Speaker, the Reform Party has put before the House today a motion asking the government to amend the Official Languages Act so that French can be the predominant language in Quebec and English the predominant language in the rest of the country. Reformers also want federal services to be available in the official language of the minority where there is significant demand.

Obviously, the motion was drafted by someone who does not understand the Official Languages Act very well or by someone who wants to give a distorted image of the letter and the spirit of the Act.

[English]

Who could deny within the Reform Party or elsewhere that French is the predominant language of Quebec? Who could deny that English is the predominant language of British Columbia, Alberta, Ontario or Newfoundland?

Not only does the Official Languages Act do nothing to change that, it recognizes it. It recognizes it by ensuring that official language minorities have access to federal government services where there is significant demand. This is much of what the motion asks and it is what the act already does. What is new? Perhaps it is only a new attempt to foster resentment and discontent among Canadians.

I would advise the hon. members of the Reform Party to get better acquainted with the official languages policy if they are interested in meaningful debate based on facts, not simply rumours or misconceptions. Perhaps they might read the brochure "Myths and Realities" to see whether they are on the side of myths or realities. Maybe then they will stop fighting windmills and join with the government in tackling the real problems of this country.

(1355)

[Translation]

The position taken by the Reform Party on the issue of official languages more than proves they do not understand a thing about government policy. It shows that they do not understand what Canadian identity is all about. We know that the members of the Bloc Québécois want to break up Canada and ensure Quebec's separation. That is very clear. The Bloc deals with its own contradictions as it sees fit, but its basic option is without any ambiguity whatsoever.

Unknowingly, the Reform Party is also proposing the break-up of Canada. They want to break up Canada by attacking our Canadian values and the major policies, such as official languages and multiculturalism, which unite our country.

[English]

Like sorcerers' apprentices our opposing friends would like to throw away long held policies and workable solutions with total disregard for the dire consequences which would fall upon Canadian unity and Canadian identity.

Our task as parliamentarians is to reinforce unity, not uniformity. Our mission is to contribute a sense of a country which respects the many ways of being a Canadian.

Language and culture are sensitive issues in any society. They touch the very essence of how people define themselves and their place in society.

Public debates do not always honour the facts.

[Translation]

The Canadian people want policies that reflect such Canadian values as dialogue, understanding, equity and mutual respect for policies based on a definition of citizenship which includes rights as well as responsibilities, for policies which urge all Canadians to take their place in a pluralistic Canadian society.

However, do not attach too much value to labels like multiculturalism, pluralism, diversity, bilingualism, linguistic duality, official languages that go beyond minorities or to semantics on which people do not necessarily agree. These terms have one thing in common: they all refer to solutions made in Canada. Canadians have tried to develop policies that would reflect the various aspects of their society and the challenges they face.

These very Canadian policies have been used and are still used as models elsewhere, but they were made here, in Canada.

[English]

The *raison d'être* for our official languages policy is clear. The presence of two significant language communities is one of Canada's defining features. Ninety-eight point eight per cent of Canadians speak either English or French and these are the principal languages used by Canadians in their daily lives.

The official use of both English and French within the institutions of the government has roots which even predate Confederation. It is hard to look at Canada without seeing the importance of these two languages within Canadian society.

Approximately one-quarter of Canadians have French as their first official language and three-quarters have English. A majority of both language groups are unilingual. Seven per cent or

S. O. 31

over 1.5 million Canadians live in provinces where their first official language is in the minority.

The value of languages is made clear in public opinion surveys which show that three out of every four parents want their children to learn the second official language.

This has resulted in large numbers of parents enrolling their children in French immersion programs.

The Speaker: The hon. member still has approximately four minutes. The hon. member will be given the floor when the debate resumes.

It being two o'clock, pursuant to Standing Order 30(5), the House will now proceed to Statements by Members pursuant to Standing Order 31.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

JUSTICE

Mr. Paul Steckle (Huron—Bruce): Mr. Speaker, recently a small, close knit community in my riding was shocked at the brutal killing of one of its own, Miss Joan Heimbeker of Clifford, Ontario.

Her parents have lost a daughter, the community has lost a friend and society has lost the potential of a shining young star.

The recent string of violent crime across the country has disturbed the friendly and safe country which we all love. We as Canadian law makers must take concrete action to ensure that there is proper punishment and deterrents to crimes like this.

We must recognize the sorrow and anguish felt by the victims' families and give them quick but fair justice so that they may try to resume their lives without their loved ones.

Canadians look to their government to provide the judicial system with the appropriate laws to deal with the realities of today. Society needs to know that it is being protected from violent offenders and that those violent offenders are given stiff sentences for the crimes they commit.

The return of corporal punishment must be revisited as a deterrent to these acts of atrocity.

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[Translation]

DICTÉE DES AMÉRIQUES

Mr. Gilbert Fillion (Chicoutimi): Mr. Speaker, my constituents and I wish to congratulate Mr. Jacques Sormany, a biology and mathematics teacher at the Chicoutimi CEGEP, who

S. O. 31

competed in the Dictée des Amériques, on March 26, and came first in the Senior Professional category. Mr. Sormany is one of four champions who successfully avoided the many pitfalls of this dictation given by Antonine Maillet.

The three others are: Daniel Albert, in the Junior category; Ronald Cawthorn, in the Senior category, French as a second language; and Vincent Renaud, of Ottawa, in the Senior Amateur category.

Two hundred candidates, divided into four categories, took part in this event. They came from Quebec, Canada, Latin America and the United States. We are proud of Mr. Sormany's remarkable performance.

* * *

[English]

DRINKING WATER

Mrs. Daphne Jennings (Mission—Coquitlam): Mr. Speaker, whose responsibility is it to ensure Canadians, in this case British Columbians, receive accurate and reliable information on the drinking water and the methods used for disinfection?

Is it the municipalities that form the local greater Vancouver regional district boards and have direct input and control of the poisons put in our water systems? Is it the province and the greater Vancouver regional water district that together contribute to the logging of our watersheds and thereby increase the amount of sediment and organic material within our drinking water and that gave our watersheds a new name, tree farm licence No. 42?

Is it the federal government and the environment ministry and the Department of Fisheries and Oceans that could initiate a ban on chlorine and all chlorinated compounds which have already proven extremely toxic to fish? Is it our health departments that should be aware of the many research reports clearly indicating the increase in cancer and heart problems since chlorine has been used in our water systems?

Canadians want honest answers and accountability.

* * *

DAKOTA OJIBWAY TRIBAL COUNCIL

Mr. Glen McKinnon (Brandon—Souris): Mr. Speaker, I am happy to be able to inform the House that full police service will soon be restored to the Dakota Ojibway Tribal Council communities in Manitoba through the implementation of an interim policing arrangement.

DOTC communities have been without full police service since the disbanding of the DOTC police service five months ago. This interim policing service will be made up of RCMP officers and former DOTC officers under the general direction of the RCMP.

The interim policing arrangement will remain in effect until a more permanent tripartite policing arrangement is negotiated by the federal government, the province of Manitoba and the Dakota Ojibway Tribal Council.

I would like to express my thanks to the Solicitor General of Canada, the Manitoba justice minister and the Dakota Ojibway Tribal Council for their efforts. Without their goodwill and co-operation this arrangement would not have been made.

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[Translation]

MULTICULTURALISM

Mr. John Bryden (Hamilton—Wentworth): Mr. Speaker, everywhere in the world—in the former Yugoslavia, in Central Africa, and in the Far East—we see ethnic groups tear one another to pieces because they cannot accept language, religious or cultural differences.

(1405)

Freedom means the right to be different. A country's greatness can be measured by how tolerant it is of differences and how readily it welcomes them.

[English]

On behalf of my colleague from Don Valley North I invite all MPs in this House to celebrate our love of this country by participating in the citizenship ceremony to take place tomorrow, April 19, at 1.40 p.m. in the hall just outside this Commons chamber. I refer to that portion of this building known as the Hall of Honour.

* * *

HEALTH CARE

Mr. Rey D. Pagtakhan (Winnipeg North): Mr. Speaker, yesterday marked a decade of remarkable social achievement in Canada.

On April 17, 1984 the Canada Health Act received royal assent, ensuring the availability of health care to all citizens.

Today we continue to cherish its five principles: universality, accessibility, portability, comprehensiveness and public administration.

Yet there is a need to control costs and still provide adequate funding, to enhance efficient and effective use of resources and to gain a broader understanding of the determinants of health.

Ten years ago a Liberal government triumphed over the dual threat of user fees and extra billing. Today, with the national forum on health chaired by the Prime Minister, this Liberal government shall triumph again and face new challenges with renewed vigour.

We shall succeed because we believe in the five principles of medicare. We shall succeed because medicare is a force for national unity. We shall succeed because Canadians want us to succeed.

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[Translation]

LOUVICOURT MINING PROJECT

Mr. Bernard Deshaies (Abitibi): Mr. Speaker, according to the *Commission de la construction du Québec*, the Louvicourt mining project in Abitibi is the largest industrial project in the province of Quebec.

The Louvicourt project near Val-d'Or is on its way to becoming the largest underground copper mine in Quebec. Roughly \$300 million will be invested until the construction phase is completed. Testing of the concentrator will begin next July, while underground systems will be operational in October 1994.

On behalf of all the residents of my riding of Abitibi, I want to congratulate the Aur-Novocourt-Teck partnership and all those involved in this venture which will employ hundreds of workers and stimulate our region's economy.

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[English]

BOSNIA

Mr. Jack Frazer (Saanich—Gulf Islands): Mr. Speaker, Canadians were relieved and grateful this past weekend to learn of the release of 16 of 17 Canadian UN personnel who had been held hostage by Bosnian-Serb forces.

However, we are still very disappointed and dissatisfied with these tactics and call upon the Bosnian-Serb leadership to order and effect the immediate release of the remaining UN prisoners.

Furthermore, we call upon Bosnian-Serb leaders to honour the ceasefire agreements arranged to stop hostilities in and around Gorazde and to come to the negotiating table prepared and willing to work toward a solution which will result in peace in Bosnia.

Canadians have no wish to take sides in the situation in Bosnia nor do we ascribe blame to any one group over another. Canadians do think that this is the time for all three ethnic communities to come together, negotiate with openness and good faith to end the fighting and build a lasting peace.

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FEDERALISM

Mr. David Iftody (Provencher): Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today to recognize that 12 years ago yesterday, April 17, 1982, on the front lawns of the Parliament Buildings the Canadian Constitution was repatriated.

S. O. 31

A few days ago, last Friday, the Prime Minister at a ceremony at Rideau Hall signed an amendment to that same Constitution with Prince Edward Island.

Yes, federalism is alive and well in Canada and last Friday is just another example of that.

The beauty of the Constitution and that of federalism is that they contain the principles of pluralism, diversity and tolerance in today's society.

I congratulate Canadians today. Federalism and the Constitution represent the very fabric and the will of this great nation and its people.

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THE ENVIRONMENT

Hon. Charles Caccia (Davenport): Mr. Speaker, this is Earth Week which culminates in Earth Day on April 22. This is a time to celebrate planet Earth, its ecosystems and the life forms that inhabit it.

While we celebrate we should also think of ways to prevent pollution and manage natural resources so that our children and grandchildren will inherit a healthy planet and environmentally sustainable resources. We are often reminded that all things are interconnected and in the long term what we do to the soil, water and air we do to ourselves.

(1410)

The United Nations conference on environment and development made this point clear and produced agenda 21, a document for decision makers to keep in mind not just this week but all year round. Our actions must be guided by the knowledge that we only have one planet on which to live. Therefore every day is Earth Day.

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[Translation]

LEADER OF EQUALITY PARTY

Mr. Pierre de Savoye (Portneuf): Mr. Speaker, this past weekend, the media reported that, according to the Equality Party leader, Ottawa should take every necessary measure to keep Quebec from becoming a sovereign state, including an intervention of the army, even following a referendum vote in favour of sovereignty.

We join together to denounce these shameful, irresponsible and anti-democratic comments.

The right of Quebec to self-determination is no longer an issue, nor is the peaceful, legitimate, legal and democratic character of each stage leading our province to sovereignty.

[English]

We expect each and every member of this House to make sure he or she joins us now in denouncing firmly this attitude which

S. O. 31

goes totally against one of Canada's most profoundly respected values, the respect for democracy.

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OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

Mr. Bob Ringma (Nanaimo—Cowichan): Mr. Speaker, today at noon debate began on a motion to amend the Official Languages Act.

The motion put forward by the Reform Party would not eliminate bilingualism or the Official Languages Act but would make implementation of the act more practical and cost effective.

We realize this issue is a sacred cow for the Liberals as they are the authors of the act. However, we call on the government to set its prejudices aside and listen to the points we make in an objective and fair manner.

The Prime Minister often states in this House that Reform is against official bilingualism and wants to eliminate it. This is simply not true. We are merely against the implementation at any cost attitude of the current and former governments.

I ask for hon. members opposite to listen carefully to what we are saying today on this issue and put aside the rhetoric—

The Speaker: The time has expired. The hon. member for Fredericton—York—Sunbury.

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OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

Mr. Andy Scott (Fredericton—York—Sunbury): Mr. Speaker, today marks the 25th anniversary of the Official Languages Act in the province of New Brunswick.

We in New Brunswick are proud of the distinction of being the only officially bilingual province in Canada.

[Translation]

Over the last 25 years, significant progress was achieved by providing government services in both official languages to each linguistic community. Every day, we can witness the cultural, educational, social and economical benefits resulting from this change.

[English]

As the anglophone parents of two young children, my wife and I watch our boys grow up in an environment in which knowing both official languages and embracing both cultures is now the norm.

I know many join me in congratulating New Brunswick for its 25 years dedicated to the promotion of and leadership in official languages legislation in Canada.

YOUTH SERVICES

Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (St. Boniface): Mr. Speaker, the red book said it and we did it: a youth employment strategy which includes Youth Services Canada, youth internship, a summer employment program, a youth learning strategy and the improvement of student loans.

[Translation]

I invite everyone to applaud this initiative which will translate into more jobs and a better future for young Canadians.

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[English]

SCHIZOPHRENIA

Mrs. Marlene Catterall (Ottawa West): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the members of the West Ottawa Rotary Club for their generous donation to research on schizophrenia.

They follow the fine example of Dr. Michael Smith's donation of half his Nobel Prize, \$.25 million, to schizophrenia research and the \$775,000 announced in his honour by our industry minister.

Schizophrenia strikes one in a hundred Canadians, usually in their late teens or early twenties. Forty per cent will attempt suicide. Ten per cent will succeed. The rest will occupy one in 12 of our hospital beds, live homeless on the streets, or represent a disproportionate share of the prison population. Yet schizophrenia receives only a small fraction of the research funds of many less prevalent diseases.

(1415)

I wear this iris today as the symbol soon to be adopted by the Canadian Schizophrenia Society in support of more awareness and research.

* * *

FIREARMS

Mr. Lee Morrison (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia): Mr. Speaker, the anti-gun lobbyists would have us believe that Great Britain has been very successful in keeping its peasantry disarmed and docile. Tough gun laws work they say.

A couple of weeks ago I discussed this with a Scottish gun merchant. He told me: "Great Britain is awash with illegal arms. It is a lot quicker and easier to buy them in pubs than from me, and cheaper too because there are no sales or import taxes".

Now, according to yesterday's Ottawa *Sun* the same situation is developing here in Canada.

Our Minister of Justice should consider getting tough with criminals and stop musing about his intent to further harass and intimidate the millions of decent Canadian citizens who own or wish to own firearms.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[Translation]

CANADIAN PEACEKEEPERS IN BOSNIA

Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Everyone was relieved to learn of the release of the 16 Canadian peacekeepers who had been taken hostage last Thursday by Serb forces near Visoko in Bosnia.

However, this news was tempered by the simultaneous announcement that Serb tanks were advancing on Gorazde and that the shellings of the Muslim enclave were intensifying.

Has the minister obtained sufficient assurances that Canadian peacekeepers in Bosnia are safe, in particular their colleagues who relieved them at the checkpoint in Visoko where the hostage-taking incident occurred last Thursday?

Hon. André Ouellet (Minister of Foreign Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I know that all members of this House were extremely happy to hear the wonderful news over the weekend that, following negotiations, the Canadian soldiers were finally freed.

I can tell the hon. Leader of the Opposition that Canadian soldiers and those from other countries serving under the UN flag face difficult situations while on duty, particularly when the warring factions do not respect the peace agreements that have been negotiated.

May I remind this House that in several regions of the former Yugoslavia, peace agreements have been brokered and UN peacekeepers are maintaining peace and order. Unfortunately, agreements are being violated in certain regions and problems have arisen. That is why we are stepping up our efforts to secure peace among all factions throughout the former Yugoslavia.

Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, can the minister give us a status report on the situation in Gorazde where Serb shellings have intensified and Serb tanks have rolled into the city? Can he tell us if the UN has finally been guaranteed the safety of the helicopters used to evacuate the wounded?

Hon. André Ouellet (Minister of Foreign Affairs): Mr. Speaker, the situation is changing by the hour. According to the latest information we received, an agreement in principle had

Oral Questions

apparently been reached with the Bosnian Serbs and relative peace was to return to that part of the country.

I cannot tell you what the situation is at this precise moment. Intensive negotiations are continuing. However, I can tell the House that the United Nations Security Council will be meeting this afternoon to discuss the situation and that this morning, NATO ambassadors were briefed on the situation in Bosnia.

(1420)

Obviously, our goal is to get all warring factions to come to an agreement and to accept a peace plan for all of the territories of the former Yugoslavia.

Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, does the minister not recognize that the advance of Serb tanks on Gorazde and the violation of the ceasefire by Serb artillery forces could jeopardize the peace process?

[English]

Hon. André Ouellet (Minister of Foreign Affairs): Mr. Speaker, there is no doubt that we have seen very risky operations on the part of the Bosnian Serbs. There is a genuine effort involving the participation and the co-operation of the Croats, of the Muslims, in order to make some progress toward peace.

Representations have been made at the highest levels with the involvement of the Russian representative, the American representative and also obviously the representative of the United Nations.

We are doing our utmost to convince the Serbs it is in their own interests to be part of these peace negotiations. We hope they will understand it is in the interest of everybody, including themselves, to come to the table and negotiate a total peace settlement for the entire ex-Yugoslavia.

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[Translation]

PUBLISHING

Mrs. Suzanne Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance. The issue of *MacLean's* magazine published today contains new revelations on the Ginn Publishing deal, this time implicating the current Minister of Finance.

It says that the minister participated in a meeting with his colleagues from Industry and Heritage before the government authorized the sale of Ginn Publishing. The minister, through his Nellmart Ltd. holding, owns three cinemas in Vancouver and leases them to Famous Players, a Canadian subsidiary of Paramount Communications.

Does the Minister of Finance confirm that he participated in the meeting over this deal with his colleagues from Heritage and Industry on February 16, two days before the government authorized the sale of Ginn Publishing to Paramount, even

Oral Questions

though the minister has direct business links with Famous Players, a Paramount subsidiary?

[English]

Hon. John Manley (Minister of Industry): Mr. Speaker, I have seen the article the member refers to. I wish to state categorically that I personally had never discussed the Ginn matter with the Minister of Finance until today when I saw the article. I wished to confirm to him that my assistant was misquoted in the article. No such discussion ever occurred.

[Translation]

Mrs. Suzanne Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata): Mr. Speaker, the minister's spokesperson was still quoted as saying: "Martin participated in a meeting over the Ginn deal between Manley and Dupuy." Who is telling the truth? Bill Milliken, the spokesperson, or the minister?

[English]

Hon. John Manley (Minister of Industry): Mr. Speaker, the member seems to have trouble understanding my answer.

[Translation]

The spokesperson was misunderstood by the journalist. There was no such meeting, and there were no discussions between myself, the Minister of Heritage and the Minister of Finance. It never happened.

* * *

[English]

EMPLOYMENT

Mr. Elwin Hermanson (Kindersley—Lloydminster): Mr. Speaker, I am sure all Canadians want their government to create a heritage all Canadians, especially young people and future generations, can be proud of. But the Liberal governments, past and present, have been leaving a heritage of debt, taxes and joblessness.

(1425)

The best job creation program for Canada's young people would be a program of deficit reduction which would boost investor and consumer confidence in the Canadian economy and lead to lower taxes.

My question is for the Minister of Human Resources Development. Why is the government creating more debt to buy mere temporary employment for a handful of people at \$10,000 per temporary job instead of encouraging the creation of real jobs?

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification): Mr. Speaker, on Friday we made the announcement of the different initiatives.

When I left the meeting I was approached by a number of young people who are involved in a street kids organization in Ottawa. They asked me whether I would be prepared to meet with them because our announcement gave them some sense of hope that somebody does care about them and is interested in trying to help them get back into the labour market.

What we are trying to say to the hon. member is that maybe he should try to have some of that same sense of caring for a number of young people in society. They have had a tough time being out of the labour market for years. Now they want to get back in and this is a government that wants to help them do that.

Mr. Elwin Hermanson (Kindersley—Lloydminster): Mr. Speaker, there is nothing more disillusioning to young people than false hopes.

There is nothing wrong with leaf raking and sign painting but these youth corps jobs are very short term. The debt the government is creating is very long term as is the tax burden and unemployment that young people will inherit from this Liberal government. This phoney job corps reflects a 1970s mentality. I expected disco music to be playing here in the House.

Can the Minister of Human Resources Development tell us if any permanent jobs ever were created by the 1970s make work projects? Can he tell us how many permanent jobs have been destroyed by the high taxes and high interest rates driven by a quarter century of Liberal and Tory deficits?

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member speaks about programs that reflect a 1970s mentality. I would say the hon. member's question reflects a 19th century mentality.

Mr. Elwin Hermanson (Kindersley—Lloydminster): Mr. Speaker, it is really disappointing not to get any answer to a question at all when we are looking after the benefit of young Canadians and trying to create an atmosphere of hope for them.

I note the minister has been handing out some very nice youth corps T-shirts and caps made out of canvas, suede and leather. How much did these things cost? How many youth were employed, if any, to make these souvenirs?

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification): Mr. Speaker, it is quite true we want young people working in this national youth corps to be identified with Canada.

They are providing a service to the community. They are working on behalf of Canadians helping to clean up the environment, to work with inner city children, to develop a number of

Oral Questions

projects that will be of enormous service and contribution to this country.

In this time and age when we particularly want young Canadians to feel proud of their country we think there is nothing wrong with wearing a maple leaf on their chests.

* * *

[Translation]

SOCIAL PROGRAM REFORM

Mrs. Francine Lalonde (Mercier): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Human Resources Development.

Faced with the amount of criticism of both the federal government's intentions for the reform of social programs and its way of proceeding, the Minister of Human Resources Development had to cancel the federal-provincial conference that was to take place this very day in Ottawa. Furthermore, the impasse between Quebec and Ottawa on labour force training continues.

Does the minister confirm that it is because other provinces besides Quebec were strongly opposed to the government's policies and procedure that he had to cancel the federal-provincial conference at the last minute, something rare if not unique, without first advising the Prime Minister?

[English]

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is unaware of some recent history.

To begin with all the first ministers and the Prime Minister agreed in a meeting in late December that there must be a social policy review. Since that time we have had two very important rounds of meetings with ministers of all provincial governments. We held them last January and last March. Substantial areas of agreement were reached.

The reason we did not proceed with the meeting today is that some provinces wanted more time. It seems only reasonable and logical that in an important, complex process like this if some of the parties want more time that we as a government that looks toward co-operation would give them more time.

(1430)

[Translation]

Mrs. Francine Lalonde (Mercier): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary is for the Minister of Human Resources Development. Given the gap that he is trying to hide between the positions of his government, of certain provinces and of Quebec, does the Minister, following the cancellation—and it is quite something

to cancel a federal-provincial conference at the last minute; conference goers have seldom seen that happen—promise to review his proposed reform of social programs to make this reform meet the traditional aspirations and demands of Quebec?

[English]

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification): Mr. Speaker, this hon. member should take a look at a few books dealing with federal-provincial relations over the last 120 years. If she thinks this is a great change in precedent, I would suggest that it is quite the opposite. Any federal-provincial meetings must contain a number of adaptations.

By the way, this is not a cancellation, simply a postponement. We have asked our officials to sit down and look at certain areas where they want more time, where we can share more information and that is all.

I suggest to the hon. member that her party's attempts to create some great alarmist crisis out of this event is simply one more effort by them to try to undermine federalism in this country.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Dale Johnston (Wetaskiwin): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Human Resources Development.

Last week several ministers and provincial counterparts complained that the minister has no interest in genuine consultation as far as social reforms are concerned. They suggested that the minister is trying to ram through his own ideas rather than looking for fresh input.

Does this minister already have a specific proposal in mind to present to the provinces? If so, why is he pretending to seek input through consultation?

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification): Mr. Speaker, I would be very interested in receiving, and I ask the hon. member to table, exactly what provincial ministers he is quoting. When I received calls from provincial ministers and spoke to them on Friday, no one said we were trying to ram something through.

If the hon. member is going to make charges of that kind, putting words in the mouths of provincial ministers, he owes it to the House to table those reports.

Mr. Dale Johnston (Wetaskiwin): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question.

Is this minister truly committed to working with the provincial ministers on social reform or is this consultation process just a sham?

Oral Questions

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification): Mr. Speaker, the answer to the first part of the question is yes. The answer to the second part is no.

* * *

[Translation]

ACTION PLAN FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval): Mr. Speaker, after being told last Friday that Quebec's refusal to take part in the federal-provincial conference on social programs reform was one of the main reasons that had prompted the Minister of Human Resources Development to cancel the conference, the minister went ahead and announced his own youth program.

Does the minister recognize that his six-point strategy is the work of civil servants working in isolation here, in Ottawa, without regard for provincial areas of responsibility, the consensus in Quebec on the matter and the waste of public money due to extensive duplication at present?

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification): Mr. Speaker, what the hon. member said is incorrect. A meeting was held about a month ago, at which time we discussed all of these youth initiatives with the provincial ministers. A consultation process was also established at that time. So, what the hon. member is saying is wrong and I ask him to apologize.

(1435)

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval): Mr. Speaker, before introducing several new youth programs, would the minister not agree to say that Quebec already administers several programs in that particular area, including the Volunteer Youth Action Program? Did the minister make a point, before taking such actions, of calculating the exact cost of the overlap he is creating with his new program?

[English]

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification): Mr. Speaker, there are over 400,000 young people in this country without employment.

It would seem to me that any effort, whether it is by local governments, provincial governments or the federal government to help those people should be welcomed, not attacked.

We have talked to the provinces. We have worked out ways in which we would work in co-operation to make sure there is no overlap. The program we produced on Friday is a national program that affects Canadians from one part of the country to

the other. It allows young people to travel from one part of the country to the other to see what a great country we really have.

That is why it is so different from programs offered exclusively by provinces. It is a national program with national objectives with a national perspective in mind.

If the hon. member was not representing the kind of party and ideology that he is, he would be one of the first to applaud our attempts to work with the provinces to help young people.

* * *

PUBLIC SAFETY

Ms. Val Meredith (Surrey—White Rock—South Langley): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister.

The Prime Minister in his concern for public safety must be aware that there are approximately 1,000 criminals facing deportation currently free on the streets of Toronto. Not only that but there are another 400 prisoners about to be released who have deportation warrants pending against them.

People in Toronto and across the country are upset and concerned about safety in their streets. What is the Prime Minister going to do to ensure that these criminals are deported immediately upon their release from prison?

Ms. Mary Clancy (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Citizenship and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, first of all the reports are incorrect.

There are not 400 prisoners currently. There are 200. They are in the prisons and in the jails at this time serving out their sentences. At the end of the service of their sentences due process and the immigration department will ensure that they are returned to their countries of origin.

Ms. Val Meredith (Surrey—White Rock—South Langley): I have a supplementary question, Mr. Speaker.

One of the reasons for this backlog in deportations is the shortage of deportation officers. I understand there are about 24,000 deportation orders across the country that are unable to be acted upon.

Can the Prime Minister or the parliamentary secretary for immigration explain why the immigration minister is not reducing government red tape but instead is laying off a third of the front line deportation officers in Toronto?

Ms. Mary Clancy (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Citizenship and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, I again assure the hon. member that the immigration department is following the law of the land and following due process, that the number of people to be deported will be handled by the minister and by the department in due course and the hon. member should not worry.

[Translation]

UNEMPLOYMENT

Mr. Laurent Lavigne (Beauharnois—Salaberry): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance.

A task force study commissioned by the Quebec forum on employment reveals that unemployment has resulted in a \$32 billion loss for Canada. Moreover, the study shows that Canada's unemployment rate is higher than that of most industrialized countries.

Will the minister confirm the conclusion of the study, to the effect that the recent lowering of the unemployment rate is primarily due to a reduction in the number of people looking for work, and not to job-creating activities?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec): Mr. Speaker, there is no doubt, and we have said so ourselves, that the real reason for the lower unemployment rate is a reduction in the number of job applications.

However, it must be pointed out that, for the most recent month, we created 48,000 jobs, and a total of 114,000 over the last two months, which is almost a record for the last five or six years. Consequently, the government is very proud of its performance. However, the hon. member is absolutely right regarding the enormous cost of unemployment.

(1440)

In fact, this is one of the reasons why, unlike the Reform Party, we believe that, to lower the deficit, we must not only make cuts, but also stimulate employment. This is the best approach to a more reasonable deficit and a more adequate financial situation.

Mr. Laurent Lavigne (Beauharnois—Salaberry): Mr. Speaker, when does the minister intend to put forward a true job-creating strategy? Does he realize that, by not lowering UI contributions to \$3 now, he delays for one year the 40,000 jobs which he planned to create in 1995 with this budget measure?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec): Mr. Speaker, I should point out, and this is why our approach is a well-balanced one, that the deficit must be lowered to stimulate employment and to foster economic stability in our country.

We would love to lower UI contributions now, but we need money to do that and we need the UI reform which will be proposed by my colleague, the Minister of Human Resources Development.

When you look at the budget initiatives regarding apprenticeship programs, if you co-operated with us, instead of stubbornly

Oral Questions

objecting to the measures put forward by my colleague to help young people and to train older workers, we could create many more jobs.

* * *

[English]

TOBACCO PRODUCTS

Ms. Shaughnessy Cohen (Windsor—St. Clair): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health.

Young women are smoking at a much higher rate than are males of the same age. This is especially disturbing in light of the news that U.S. tobacco companies are adding some 600 chemicals to their cigarettes, 13 of which have been proven hazardous to human health.

What steps is the minister taking to ensure that Canadian cigarette manufacturers make the public aware of all such additives in their products?

Hon. Diane Marleau (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member raises an issue of concern to all Canadians.

All Canadians have a right to know what is included in the tobacco products they smoke, what goes into their lungs and what goes into the atmosphere around them.

I am determined to bring all pressures to bear on Canadian companies to also disclose the list of ingredients which are included in their tobacco products. If they do not then Canadians can take it for granted that the 599 ingredients listed in the U.S. are perhaps those that are included in Canadian cigarettes.

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OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley East): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Canadian Heritage.

We are still trying to find out the true cost of the official languages program in Canada. For example, the commissioner states that the armed forces spent \$35 million on bilingualism last fiscal year. The department gives the cost as \$47 million but adds that the cost may actually be much higher.

Will the minister admit that his government does not know the real cost of bilingualism and will he establish an accurate system to determine the total cost?

The Speaker: I would submit that the debate today is partially on this question. However, I will permit the hon. minister to answer the question if he so desires.

Hon. Michel Dupuy (Minister of Canadian Heritage): Mr. Speaker, all the figures concerning expenditures by the Canadian government on official languages are contained in the report of the Commissioner of Official Languages. I could refer to the pages if need be but they are all there.

Oral Questions

The total amount, if the member takes the time to add up these figures, is \$601 million for the whole policy for the fiscal year 1993–94.

Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley East): Mr. Speaker, I am merely responding. My initial question was to the comments made by the minister last week that they do not really know the true cost. I am wondering how we are going to determine that.

The first Commissioner of Official Languages, Keith Spicer, said in 1975: “It would seem more sensible to pull the whole lot of linguistic items together, tote up the terrifying sum, then publish and defend the thing”.

Two decades later we still do not know the true cost. Will we have to wait another two decades before we see Mr. Spicer’s proposals put into practice?

(1445)

The Speaker: I think there is a question at the end. The Minister of Canadian Heritage.

Hon. Michel Dupuy (Minister of Canadian Heritage): Mr. Speaker, I did not say at any time that we did not know what the cost was. If the hon. member wants a breakdown I will give the cost. The exact breakdown is \$297 million for services, \$292 million for the promotion of languages and \$12 million for the Commissioner of Official Languages. The total is \$601 million.

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[Translation]

IMMIGRATION

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Prime Minister.

Recently, the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration confirmed that the government was to review the status of 4,500 Chinese nationals who had been denied political refugee status but were allowed to remain in Canada because of the human rights situation in China. These people may now be deported, which would obviously have a negative impact on their personal safety.

Since the repression of all forms of dissidence has increased in China, as pointed out by Amnesty International, does the minister realize that by proceeding with the deportation of these Chinese nationals, we are putting their lives at risk?

[English]

Ms. Mary Clancy (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Citizenship and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, the minister is very aware and tracks human rights’ problems world-wide. No one will be removed from Canada to situations where they will be put in danger.

The minister has promised a final resolution on many of these cases by the summer. The question of human rights and the safety of these people will be taken into account as a first priority.

[Translation]

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Prime Minister.

Does the Prime Minister realize that pursuant to a decree passed recently by the Chinese government, these people, upon returning to China, may face jail terms of up to two years and fines representing up to a year’s salary?

[English]

Ms. Mary Clancy (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Citizenship and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, I wish to again reassure the hon. member that the minister is very aware of the situation in China. His department continues to monitor the situation.

I reiterate again, as the minister has said on several previous occasions, that we do not and will not remove people to countries where their lives or freedoms would be threatened.

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GOVERNMENT APPOINTMENTS

Mr. Ed Harper (Simcoe Centre): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister.

It was less than six months ago that the Tory patronage train was permanently derailed by the people of Canada. It now appears that the Liberal government has launched its own gravy train. Three passengers were picked up last week: a Liberal campaign manager, a minister’s official agent and an unsuccessful Liberal candidate.

The Liberal red ink book promised to end the Tory practice of choosing political friends for appointments. Can the Prime Minister explain for the people of Canada why he has broken this promise?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, a lot of appointments were made last Friday. Some of them were Liberals. We named a Lieutenant Governor who had been a member of the assembly in Saskatchewan for many years and who is the first farmer to be appointed Lieutenant Governor in almost 50 years.

We named a woman who, yes, ran for the Liberal Party. She is a lawyer. She has been appointed to the port authority of Quebec City where she lives. She is a very competent woman. I will not apologize for that.

According to Mr. Gallup, 55 per cent of the people are Liberal these days. Should we disqualify 55 per cent of the Canadian population from serving the Canadian government?

Oral Questions

Mr. Ed Harper (Simcoe Centre): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister uses the same hollow defence of patronage made famous by Brian Mulroney: "All my friends are qualified".

If the Prime Minister is serious about ending the political abuse of patronage, will he commit to making this process both transparent and available for public scrutiny?

(1450)

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, many of the jobs are advertised and people can apply for them. If the hon. member had any guts he would point out which of these three people is not qualified for the jobs that have been offered to them.

You cannot be unfair to people because they believe in democracy and are trying to get a party elected. Who is complaining because I named a former Tory minister in Ontario the chief justice of Ontario. Nobody got up to congratulate me for that. Who is complaining because I named the former Speaker as an ambassador? He is a competent person but sat in the House as a Tory. I will not apologize for that and I will not disqualify someone who had the judgment to vote Liberal.

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UKRAINE

Mr. Walt Lastewka (St. Catharines): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Now that Ukraine has voted in a new Parliament and is searching for means to strengthen its infrastructure and its economy, what role will the Canadian government play in its foreign policy relations with Ukraine?

Hon. André Ouellet (Minister of Foreign Affairs): Mr. Speaker, first of all I want to thank the hon. member for giving me notice of his question. I want to thank him and those with him who participated as Canadian observers to the elections in Ukraine. A number of parliamentarians, senators, MPs and representatives of various Ukrainian organizations in Canada were willing to devote some of their time to go there to witness a country moving to a democratic process. It is to the credit of all those who accepted to serve in these circumstances.

To specifically answer his question I want to assure him that Canada is committed to co-operating with the authorities in Ukraine to move this country toward a more democratic society, to move this country toward a market economy, and certainly to increase trade and good relations with the people of Ukraine.

[Translation]

CONTRACTS FOR ADVERTISING AND OPINION POLLS

Mr. Réjean Lefebvre (Champlain): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Prime Minister.

The cabinet has adopted guidelines for awarding government contracts for advertising or opinion polls.

Under these guidelines, a minister will be able to award contracts at his own discretion to an advertising agency or polling firm, without necessarily having to go with the lowest bidder.

Does this new cabinet guideline mean that the government is prepared to waste public funds for the benefit of friends of the party?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, no guidelines have been issued yet. The question is still before cabinet, and as soon as we are ready, the guidelines will be tabled.

Mr. Réjean Lefebvre (Champlain): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary is also directed to the Prime Minister.

With its refusal to adopt strict guidelines for awarding contracts to advertising agencies or polling firms, does the government mean that Liberal favouritism is not as bad as Conservative favouritism?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, obviously his supplementary was prepared before he rose in the House, because the guidelines have not yet been finalized.

In other words, the first answer applies to the second question as well.

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[English]

INDIAN AFFAIRS

Mr. John Duncan (North Island—Powell River): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Justice.

The Deloitte and Touche draft audit of the Métis Society of Saskatchewan identified that minutes of the society's meetings were tampered with. Métis society members have been denied access to this draft audit.

Can the minister tell the House how he plans to deal with these irregularities and enforce the law?

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, the audit has not yet been completed or made public. I expect it will be made public by the end of the month and at that time I will comment on it. I do not think it is appropriate for me to offer comment before it is public and in the hands of members of the House.

Oral Questions

(1455)

I can say that information about the audit appears to be, at least to some extent, in the public domain. I deplore the leaking of any information about an audit that is not yet completed and released publicly.

I can inform the House that as far as the Department of Justice is concerned we are making inquiries to ensure that no information was inappropriately leaked by anyone at the department under the authority of the Department of Justice.

Mr. John Duncan (North Island—Powell River): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary is for the Minister of Canadian Heritage.

Core funding for the Métis Society of Saskatchewan is provided by the minister's department. Can he assure the House that no fiscal 1994–95 funds will be released to the society until the investigation is completed and the financial mismanagement addressed?

Hon. Michel Dupuy (Minister of Canadian Heritage): Mr. Speaker, an audit is now going on. Until we see the results of the audit it would be premature to pass judgment on the performance of this group.

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HUMAN RIGHTS

Hon. Jean J. Charest (Sherbrooke): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister and seeks clarification.

A few weeks ago he made a statement in regard to human rights and trade that quite frankly disturbed a lot of Canadians. In a statement he made in a scrum he seemed to imply that Canada's policy varies according to the country being dealt with. If we are dealing with China, we are just too small to have any influence. But if it is Haiti or Somalia then our principles are not be the same. In other words, name me your country and I will name you my principles.

The Prime Minister knows that Canada's policy approach goes back 30 years to the days of the Right Hon. John Diefenbaker and that every government has subsequently adopted the same approach.

I would like to know from the Prime Minister exactly what is Canada's policy now?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, we have a policy of protecting human rights and we raise that question with every country when it is involved.

In the question the hon. member referred to, I answered that when there is an international boycott we participate in the international boycott. When there is no international boycott and we have trade relations we have to maintain those trade relations. That is exactly what I tried to explain. If the member did not understand, that is what I said.

We are not happy with the level of human rights in China and we protest. We always mention them. However, we want to do business with China.

In my view it is very important that we do business with these countries because not only will it have an economic benefit, but the more open a country like that becomes the greater is the chance that eventually human rights will be respected.

The hon. member referred to Haiti or Somalia. When there was an international boycott, Canada was there trying to help while still respecting the boycott. We did that and we were the last ones.

For example, concerning South Africa, we supported the government that was here before that unfortunately is not very well represented in the House any more.

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[Translation]

BST GROWTH HORMONE

Mr. Jean-Paul Marchand (Québec—Est): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister. Last week, the Standing Committee on Agriculture unanimously requested that the government impose a one-year moratorium on the sale of the BST growth hormone. This moratorium reflects the wishes of all the farming organisations and consumer associations in Canada.

Is the Prime Minister ready to follow through with the committee's unanimous recommendation and take the necessary steps for the government to impose a one-year moratorium on BST?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Health answered this question which has been asked several times already. If the committee made a unanimous recommendation in this respect, the Minister of Agriculture will take it into account, and if this issue comes under the Minister of Health's jurisdiction, she will take it into account and will report to the House in due course.

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[English]

FISHERIES

Mr. John Cummins (Delta): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans. We eagerly await the release of a new package on the east coast fisheries, meanwhile several problems on the west coast demand immediate attention.

(1500)

For instance, in 1989 and 1990 fish in Fergus Creek in Surrey were killed by chloramine, a chemical used on a trial basis as a secondary disinfectant.

Is the minister prepared to disallow the use of chloramine by the greater Vancouver regional district in order to protect salmon and other marine life?

Hon. Brian Tobin (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his question and advise him that I met just before question period with the AFAWU from British Columbia in my office to discuss a wide range of issues affecting the province of British Columbia.

With respect to the member's question I quite frankly am unable, because I am not properly prepared, to answer the question, although I will take the matter under advisement. I want to assure him that anything that interferes in a serious way with habitat and fish will be investigated and a stop put to it if the problem is as serious as has been described.

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[Translation]

FRANCOPHONE COMMUNITIES OUTSIDE QUEBEC

Mrs. Georgette Sheridan (Saskatoon—Humboldt): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Canadian Heritage.

There are several francophone communities outside Quebec. For instance, in my riding of Saskatoon—Humboldt, the francophones in Saint-Isidore-de-Bellevue have worked very hard to have their own school boards.

[English]

Can the minister tell me if the francophones of Saskatchewan and across Canada can count on this government to protect their language and culture?

[Translation]

Hon. Michel Dupuy (Minister of Canadian Heritage): Mr. Speaker, in October 1993, the federal government concluded a special agreement with Saskatchewan regarding school governance, under which the federal contribution will amount to roughly \$22 million over six years.

On top of these special measures, in 1993-1994, the federal government contributed nearly \$3.6 million to this province under a bilateral agreement regarding minority language training.

And lastly, the government is also supporting the development of the francophone community in general through a three-year \$10 million Canada-communities agreement, and a framework agreement with the Saskatchewan government regarding translation services and the setting up of a francophone affairs co-ordination office. The francophone community in Saskatchewan is being well treated.

Routine Proceedings

[English]

PRESENCE IN GALLERY

The Speaker: I draw the attention of hon. members to the presence in the gallery of the hon. Mr. Wammuhamadnoor Matha, First Deputy House Speaker and leader of the Thai delegation.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

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POINTS OF ORDER

COMMENTS DURING QUESTION PERIOD

Mr. Elwin Hermanson (Kindersley—Lloydminster): Mr. Speaker, one of the ministers in answering a question challenged a member to table a document. I have such a document, if the minister would still like it tabled.

It is an article from the *Globe and Mail* that quotes Tony Silipo, Ontario's minister of community and social services, who said: "Mr. Axworthy heard very clearly from a number of us provincial ministers at our last meeting—

The Speaker: If there is unanimous consent of the House a private member can table a document. Is there unanimous consent to table this document?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Speaker: It is not agreed.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

(1505)

[Translation]

BANKRUPTCY ACT

Mr. Pierre de Savoye (Portneuf) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-237, an Act to amend the Bankruptcy Act (priority of claims).

He said: Mr. Speaker, as we all know, the fruits of our labours are sacred. Unfortunately, when a business goes bankrupt, wages are added to other debts and given no special status, which means that in the event of a bankruptcy, employees are deprived of what is owed them.

The purpose of this bill is to change the priority of claims when an employer goes bankrupt, so that payment of an employee's wages and pension fund, up to a total of \$9,000, takes priority over all other claims.

(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed.)

*Routine Proceedings***PETITIONS**

(1510)

REDUCTION OF MILITARY BUDGET

Mr. Yves Rocheleau (Trois-Rivières): Mr. Speaker, it is a privilege to present in the House a petition started last October by a coalition of 24 organizations in the Saint-Maurice—Bois Francs area, at the suggestion of the Third World solidarity committee of Trois-Rivières.

This petition shows that 275 organizations throughout Quebec have endorsed the demands of the coalition by a resolution of their executive, which means that more than 350,000 Quebecers not only support the substantial reduction of our military budget but request that the amount saved be invested in the fight against poverty, in jobs, health care, education, the environment, Third World aid and reducing the deficit.

I was also given more than 6,600 cards signed by as many people from my riding and across Quebec and containing the same request for the Prime Minister of Canada. These cards do not, however, meet the standards of the House for official tabling, but I can assure petitioners that I will be glad to send them all to the Prime Minister's office within the next few days.

The Third World solidarity committee of Trois-Rivières is to be commended for its outstanding humanitarian initiative.

BILINGUALISM

Mr. Paul DeVillers (Simcoe North): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to the Standing Orders, I wish to present a petition signed by 29 residents of my riding who request a referendum on the issue of official bilingualism in Canada.

These people have the impression that we spend far too much money on the policy of bilingualism in this country. I do not share their views at all, but I nevertheless see it as my democratic duty to inform the House of the views of my constituents.

Mr. Plamondon: That kind of petition has been criticized before. If he agrees, let him table them, but if he does not agree, then he should not. He is under no obligation to do so under the Standing Orders. This is just more hypocrisy.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member for Simcoe North, on the same point of order.

Mr. DeVillers: Mr. Speaker, it is my duty to present the views of my constituents, and I have every right to do so.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Richelieu, again on the same point of order.

Mr. Plamondon: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The Standing Orders make it very clear that if a member does not agree with the substance of a petition, the member does not have to table it. We are either for or against a petition. In the latter case, we either return the petitions or ask a member who agrees with the content to table them. We do not say: I am tabling the petition but I do not agree with it. Let him stand up and be counted. Either he agrees or he does not.

The Deputy Speaker: To be fair to everyone concerned, one more last round. The hon. member for Simcoe North.

Mr. DeVillers: Mr. Speaker, of course I am against this petition, but—

Mr. Plamondon: Do not table it!

Mr. DeVillers: It does not matter what the Standing Orders say. I think it is my democratic duty to present the views of my constituents.

[English]

KILLER CARDS

Mr. Jim Jordan (Leeds—Grenville): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition which I am pleased to present and support.

It has to do with calling for a ban on the sale of killer cards, as they are referred to, collector cards in Canada. The cards, as most people know by now because there have been several other petitions presented, feature the killer and a description of the acts of the killer. I find it very repulsive but I think it is an attempt to glamorize this repulsiveness and idealize it in the minds of young people.

I am sure the killers, if they are in prison, must be flattered to think that somebody was interested in their endeavours. I do not know how in a civilized nation we can have this. It is an attempt to desensitize this thing. I am very much against it and I am pleading with the government to put in place legislation that would prevent the display, the sale or the exchange of killer cards in this country.

[Translation]

Mr. Fillion: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. This concerns the last member who spoke. I have the following question for the Chair: regarding the point of order raised earlier when the petition was tabled, is the Chair prepared to examine the Standing Orders and, for the benefit of members who are new and not fully acquainted with the Standing Orders of this House, possibly take the time to look into this matter and tell us whether the hon. member who tabled the petition acted according to the

Standing Orders or not? I would appreciate the Chair's opinion. Perhaps the Chair could take this under advisement.

The Deputy Speaker: I think the case is closed, but since the hon. member put his case quite reasonably, I will give it some thought and get back to the House as soon as possible.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

(Questions answered orally are indicated by an asterisk.)

Hon. Fernand Robichaud (Secretary of State (Parliamentary Affairs)): Mr. Speaker, I respectfully suggest that all questions be allowed to stand.

The Deputy Speaker: Does the House agree that all questions be allowed to stand?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*Translation*]

SUPPLY

ALLOTTED DAY—OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

The Deputy Speaker: I believe the hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage has four minutes speaking time remaining.

[*English*]

Ms. Albina Guarnieri (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Canadian Heritage): Mr. Speaker, large numbers of parents have been enrolling their children in French immersion programs. Enrolment increased at a phenomenal rate over the past decade. Significant increases have also been seen in other French second language program schools outside Quebec and English second language programs in Quebec.

The most recent census shows that as a consequence of these programs the level of bilingualism in the 15 to 25-year group has risen from 16 per cent to 23 per cent in only 10 years.

(1515)

The value of our official languages is also reflected in the desire of our English and French speaking minority communities to have access to quality public education in their language

Supply

as a key to retaining their vitality. The Government of Canada has assisted and continues to assist in the development of the minority official language education system across Canada.

[*Translation*]

Canadian identity is a reflection of who we are. It must therefore accommodate native people, linguistic duality as well as the multicultural nature of our society and our regional diversity. It is important for Canada to reflect all its citizens. The notion of "belonging" applies not only to those who had the good fortune to be born in this land, but also to those for whom Canada is a country of adoption.

Our concept of citizenship must also include the values we share and those we would like to be associated with. Equality and respect for diversity form an integral part of our shared vision of Canada and the vital elements of our identity.

[*English*]

The public debate has often been so focused on what divides us that it often overlooks the things we have in common, including our grassroots civic commitments to building our communities. This active concept of citizenship encompasses not only a legal status but rather our active commitment to the fundamental values we share which give us pride in our citizenship.

[*Translation*]

How do we go about edifying a common vision of Canadian identity? In my mind, this cannot be done in isolation. Existing tensions can only be overcome if all Canadians have an adequate knowledge and understanding of the fundamental realities of their country and aspirations of the communities that make it up.

It is not by accident that language and culture are recurrent themes in Canadian society. No parliamentarian or government can afford to overlook these issues. They must be addressed openly, transparently. There are certainly adjustments to be made to the application of the official languages policy and there is still room for improvement, as the Commissioner of Official Languages pointed out last week.

Public debate should focus on these improvements. It should deal with hard facts, and not myths, misconceptions and exaggerations. The hon. member's motion is based on such misconceptions and exaggerations.

I am pleased to have had this opportunity to take part in this debate and to show the importance of our official languages policy for Canadian identity. And I have no doubt that, put before the facts, this House will reject the proposal before us today.

*Supply**[English]*

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, I was anxious to participate today as the minister with legislative responsibility for the Official Languages Act and to debate the motion to amend that act as moved by the hon. member opposite.

The Official Languages Act is no ordinary statute. It embodies protections that are enshrined in the supreme law of our land. It strikes a balance between high principle on the one hand and on the other, its pragmatic application. It belongs as the Federal Court of Appeal has said to that privileged category of quasi-constitutional legislation that reflects certain basic goals of our society. In short, the Official Languages Act reflects both the Constitution of the country and the social and political compromise out of which it arose.

We would do well to give due consideration in this debate to the fundamental nature of the statute, to the fact that Parliament has already devoted considerable attention to ensuring that it is modern, forward looking and adaptable and that it meets the changing needs of Canadians in a changing time. Amendments that could disturb the equilibrium achieved by the legislation between respect for constitutional principles and their reasonable interpretation, amendments which could be tested in the courts, should not be undertaken lightly.

(1520)

[Translation]

The original Official Languages Act passed in 1969 was extensively targeted for reform and renewal during the mid 1980s, a process which resulted in Parliament adopting the new Official Languages Act in 1988.

Our party which, while in office, introduced the first Official Languages Act fully supported the 1988 reforms.

The aims of this reform were fourfold.

Firstly, to ensure that the provisions of the act were consistent with the language rights guaranteed in sections 16 to 20 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Secondly, to put in place a more flexible legislative framework for applying constitutional provisions in a fair, reasonable and practical manner with a view to developing policies and related programs.

[English]

As my hon. predecessor the then Minister of Justice asserted in this House upon moving the 1988 act for second reading, reform of the official languages policy had to be undertaken. Parliament had a duty to bring the provisions of the Official Languages Act of 1969 into line with the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

As the present Minister of Justice and therefore in a sense as the legal custodian of the Official Languages Act, I believe it is incumbent upon me to review with hon. members of this House

some of the guiding principles of the legislation to the extent that they relate to the motion before the House today.

The approach of the Official Languages Act is essentially one of institutional bilingualism. It is a functional approach. It requires government bodies to organize themselves so as to have the capacity to provide services in either official language to the extent necessary to serve the public or to allow public servants to work in the official language of their choice in accordance with the act.

[Translation]

The first three parts of the act flow directly from constitutional requirements which Parliament and the Canadian courts have upheld since Confederation.

The Supreme Court of Canada held that the aim of the legislation's provisions was to guarantee "equal access for francophones and anglophones to legislative bodies, the law and the courts".

[English]

I can therefore only welcome that portion of the opposition motion that would have the House resolve that the government should continue to facilitate the use of English or French in parliamentary and judicial proceedings as well as the use of both languages as the languages of federal legislation.

The Department of Justice has particular responsibilities in ensuring the drafting quality of legislative texts that must be equally authoritative in both official languages. It must ensure that representations made before federal courts on my behalf as Attorney General of Canada are done in the official language chosen by the non-governmental party.

[Translation]

Part IV of the Official Languages Act pertains to the constitutional right of Canadians to communicate with and receive services from federal institutions in the official language of their choice.

[English]

Section 20 of the charter clearly provides that any member of the public in Canada personally has the right to services in English or in French from any head or central office of an institution of the Parliament or Government of Canada.

Section 20 also provides that the public has this right with respect to any other federal office where either there is a significant demand for communications and services from that office in that language, or if due to the nature of the office it is reasonable that communications and services are available in both languages.

Simply put, all of us as Canadians, indeed all members of the public in this country have the constitutional right to deal with their national government in the official language of their choice. This includes departmental headquarters and at those other offices across the country where it is reasonable due to the nature of the office or where a significant demand exists.

Supply

(1525)

I emphasize this is not just a minority language right. Whether they are part of the English speaking majority outside of Quebec, the French speaking majority within Quebec, the French speaking communities outside Quebec, or the English speaking communities within Quebec, all Canadians have these entitlements. These basic rights are reflected in the corresponding institutional obligations set out in the Official Languages Act and the regulations on services to the public.

[Translation]

The new act and its regulations respecting services to the public take an office-by-office approach which is both consistent with the requirements of the Constitution and more flexible and effective, the aim being to ensure the provision of services in both languages where numbers warrant.

[English]

The motion to amend the Official Languages Act would limit the circumstances where federal services should be available to official language minorities in their own language to situations where there is a demonstrable local demand. The act's criteria and the regulations thereunder are already largely directed to meeting local needs, although the burden is not placed on minority members of the public to demonstrate demand.

A significant concentration of the minority language population in terms of numbers and proportion is sufficient in most circumstances to warrant the provision of federal services under the act in both languages. It avoids the administrative costs of actually having to measure demand at each office. This also helps to put to rest a longstanding difficulty in living up to the promise of the act. In the past demand from minority communities was often stifled because there were no bilingual services and there were no bilingual services because there was little manifested demand.

This brings me to comment on that portion of the opposition motion that would amend the act to reflect the philosophy of territorial bilingualism. If this notion of territorial bilingualism is meant to reflect the predominance of French in Quebec and English elsewhere, then I would respectfully reply that the act already reflects this predominance to an appropriate degree.

If however what is sought is territorial unilingualism whereby English and French are not only the predominant but the exclusive languages for all intents and purposes, I would have to say this would contravene not only the basic principles upon which the act was built but also the Canadian reality.

[Translation]

I have already said that with respect to federal services made available to members of the public, the principle of bilingual services was not absolute and that availability varied according to demographic and other factors. With respect to internal services made available to federal employees and the language in which public servants perform their job, under section 16 of the Charter, the two official languages are guaranteed equality of status "as to their use" in federal institutions. This great principle of equality is reflected in the duties and functions of federal institutions set out in Part V of the act.

In the National Capital Region and in certain designated regions, particularly in the Montreal area and in New Brunswick, federal institutions must ensure that their work environments are conducive to the use of both official languages.

[English]

Outside the prescribed regions the duty of federal institutions is essentially one of preserving fair practices as respects the minority language.

In conclusion, I respectfully submit that the Official Languages Act is a worthy and reliable instrument for the protection and the advancement of Canada's linguistic duality. Amendments that go to the principles of the legislation and which may impinge upon its constitutional underpinnings would serve no useful purpose and would likely deflect our energies from the real issues of the day.

The administration of the Official Languages Act is required by the legislation to be reviewed on a permanent and ongoing basis by a committee of Parliament. It is at that level we should be working to ensure that the implementation of the principles of the act is in accordance with the best practices.

I therefore encourage the House not to support this motion. I thank hon. members for their attention.

(1530)

Mr. Bob Ringma (Nanaimo—Cowichan): Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the Minister of Justice would agree that the current Official Languages Act plus the Charter of Rights and Freedoms adequately protect the rights of all minority language groups in the country. If so, how is it that we have the situation still en route in Quebec in which Bill 22, Bill 101 and Bill 178 together combine to make for injustice, which the United Nations has ruled on, against the country and against the province of Quebec? We still have not solved this problem with the existing legislation.

Mr. Rock: Mr. Speaker, in defence of the statute in its present form I referred to the compromise, social and political, out of which the statute arose. I think that in this country, with respect to this act as with so much else, what is required is a constant

Supply

monitoring of that compromise to ensure that it meets society's needs while still reflecting our underlying principles.

In dealing directly with the question I have been asked, I cannot speak for the legislatures of specific provinces which have seen things differently and seen fit to enact their own laws from time to time about language. I can say that as a national government and a confederation we defend this statute as reflecting principles of nationhood.

Yes, it is a compromise and yes, it is imperfect. At least to the present it is the best instrument that has been devised to reflect the linguistic duality of the country and the need which grows out of fairness to provide services where they are required in both languages to Canadians.

My response is perhaps not as direct as I would like to my hon. friend's question. I cannot speak for the legislature of Quebec or what may have motivated it from time to time in passing language laws of its own. I can simply say that from the federal perspective the Official Languages Act in its present form reflects the way this government sees the two languages in this country.

Mr. Ringma: Mr. Speaker, what I was really trying to get at is perhaps an admission on the part of the federal government, represented by the hon. Minister of Justice, that Canada has in effect been derelict in its duty in the case of Gordon McIntyre whose case was presented to the U.N. The Government of Canada has not fulfilled its obligation in being critical of the laws of the province of Quebec in this regard vis-à-vis the United Nations ruling.

Mr. Rock: Mr. Speaker, I disagree. I think that the federal government has met whatever obligations it faces in that regard. Certainly the position of the federal government was communicated to the United Nations committee that considered the matter and I am sure our position was taken into account.

Mr. Werner Schmidt (Okanagan Centre): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Whip of the Reform Party I wish to advise the House that pursuant to Standing Order 43(2), our speakers on this motion will be dividing their time.

As a preamble to my formal remarks I wish to recognize that whenever we want to introduce change, whether it is legislative, whether it is organizational change, whatever it might be, there needs to be first of all the acceptance of the recognition that something needs to be changed. There needs to be some ownership and some admission that everything is not as perhaps it ought to be.

My purpose this afternoon is to show that the federal language policy has failed in its primary objective which was and is to unify Canada. I submit it is doing the very opposite.

(1535)

How does it do this? I will approach the answer from two perspectives. First, the federal language policy is unjust. Second, it is impossible or almost impossible to implement the provisions of the language policy.

On what grounds do I believe that the federal language policy is unjust? Justice is a word we use to describe doing what is right and fair. It describes the interaction of rights and obligations. A right is the legitimate expectation that one will be treated in a certain manner by other persons and institutions. An obligation is the duty of an individual or institution to treat another individual or institution in the expected manner.

Canada's language policy has not been guided by such a concept of justice. Instead it is the result of the strong dominating the weak, depending on where one lives in Canada. The concept that justice is nothing more than the personal interest of the powerful was successfully refuted many years ago by Plato.

It was Prime Ministers Pearson and Trudeau who had the great idea of bringing Canada long needed justice. Trudeau spoke often and eloquently about the just society. Simultaneously, with bringing about a just society these two Prime Ministers wanted to bring about national unity. They chose language policy as the vehicle to achieve it.

From the beginning, however, whenever the principle of justice clashed with the principle of unity justice was sacrificed. Thus the federal government took a contradictory stand. It subsidized French-speaking minorities outside Quebec and English-speaking minorities in Quebec. At the same time it was trapped into silently aiding an enforced French only unilingualism in Quebec.

Such a self-contradictory stand is unjust and in the long run destructive to national unity. Thus the federal government's policy has become inconsistent, confused and generally counterproductive.

Add to the injustice of this policy the perpetuation of ignorance among Canadians about the federal policy and we have the consequences of ignorance. When people are kept in ignorance about government policies that affect them there is great potential for breeding suspicion, resentment, prejudice and ultimately hatred.

Some of these attitudes are beginning to surface. If we want to unite Canada, we must have a language policy that is just and we must tell Canadians what it is.

Even the bilingual and bicultural commission understood justice in terms of the rights for the language minorities. It wanted a policy that was essentially utilitarian, the greatest good for the greatest number of people. It rejected the notion that every Canadian had the duty to become bilingual. The B and B commission report states a bilingual country is not one where all inhabitants necessarily have to speak two languages. Rather,

it is a country where the principal public and private institutions must provide services in two languages to citizens, the vast majority of whom may very well be unilingual.

In contrast to that fair and just position, federal language policy is now more in line with asymmetrical bilingualism. In practical terms, every day operational terms, that means protect French everywhere in Canada, especially in communities where there are few francophones, but do not extend the same rights to the English in Quebec.

This policy results in contradictory explanations of the federal language policy. In Quebec the policy is explained asymmetrically. In the rest of Canada it is explained from a utilitarian perspective.

The most disturbing aspect of all of this is that there is no single comprehensive vision of Canada and its linguistic identity. To achieve that requires a just language policy. Let us remember that only with a government that is just will we have a stable country.

I move to my second aspect of the federal language policy. I submit that the present language policy is difficult if not impossible to implement.

(1540)

I wish to direct my attention particularly and the attention of this House to the third goal found in the 1988 Official Languages Act. The goals are that the proportion of French speakers and English speakers in the public service reflects Canada's linguistic make-up. This proportionate level of representation is to be achieved in the overall composition of the public service and at all levels of seniority and all fields of operation without infringing on the merit principle, hiring and promotion.

The hon. Minister of Justice talked a few minutes ago about the pragmatic application of that particular act. I suggest that in order for us to meet that goal it is impossible to hire on the basis of merit alone and that in some cases people will be hired on the basis of language alone.

Most recently the hon. Minister of National Defence on February 25, 1994 gave an even better illustration of how difficult it is to administer this act: "I want to tell the member that by 1997 anybody aspiring to the lieutenant-colonel rank of the military will have to be bilingual. That means we are putting on notice anglophones who want to be generals or chiefs of staff that they have to be totally and absolutely bilingual".

There are two problems. First, are anglophones the only ones who are being put on notice or are francophones being put on notice as well, or is this another example of asymmetrical bilingualism?

Second, can anyone ever claim to be perfectly bilingual?

Supply

After all is said and done regarding these things, the real issue for me is that I want Canada to be united, a country in which we can work together and respect one another in either of the two official languages without forcing each other to become individually bilingual.

Our country is bigger than any one of us individually. It is bigger than any one province or territory. It is only as we preserve justice for all that we will have a stable country. If we become greedy for power, for the power of self-serving, for special treatment, in this case because of language, we will tear this country apart.

Let us create a just language policy. Such a policy will combine common sense with reality. It will be affordable and make Canada an example of what a country can and should be.

That is the purpose of this motion. That is what we are debating. We hope the House will see it that way as well.

Mr. Dennis J. Mills (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Industry): Mr. Speaker, I listened attentively to the member of the Reform Party.

I have a short preamble to my question. If one were taking a drive through the province of Quebec right now and turned on the radio it would not matter what station, one could hear Anne Murray, Gordon Lightfoot, not just francophone recording artists, Canadian anglophone recording artists.

When driving outside Quebec, in any other part of Canada where there are another 1,400 or 1,500 radio stations, one cannot hear francophone recording artists.

Because these are Canadian airwaves, not French or English airwaves, does the member not think that as a measure of fairness it would be a good idea to have Canadian recording artists heard on all radio stations in Canada?

Mr. Schmidt: Mr. Speaker, the answer to that is yes, of course. The answer also is one can hear French recording artists in Kelowna, Vernon and Armstrong. These are little cities in British Columbia. One can hear them in Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba.

I would encourage the hon. member to drive through those provinces and to tune in to those radio stations because this does occur.

(1545)

Hon. Warren Allmand (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce): Mr. Speaker, I listened to the hon. member give his speech. He said that the present law was unjust because in part it was asymmetrical with respect to the anglophones in Quebec. He said that the provisions of the federal Official Languages Act did not protect the anglophones of Quebec as they did the francophones outside Quebec.

Supply

I am an anglophone from Quebec. I know of no provision that applies in a lesser way to the anglophones of Quebec than it does with the francophones outside Quebec. I was surprised to hear him say that.

Our problem in Quebec as anglophones has not been with the federal law. The federal law has protected our rights and enhanced those rights. Our problems have been with Quebec Bill 101, Bill 178, Bill 22 and others, not with the federal law.

I would like him to tell the House where the federal law provides lesser rights to the anglophones in Quebec than to the francophones outside Quebec. I doubt that he can provide the House with that information.

Mr. Schmidt: Mr. Speaker, the point clearly is the difficulty with Bill 101.

Mr. Allmand: That is not a federal law.

Mr. Schmidt: That is correct. The fact of the matter is that the infringement on the constitutional rights of Canadians by the provincial law is not being enforced by the Canadian government. That is where the problem lies.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Louis Plamondon (Richelieu): Mr. Speaker, I would just ask the members if they would accept reciprocity, that is, Quebec anglophones would be treated exactly as francophones throughout Canada. Use the rights of anglophones in Quebec as a basis. I am sure that if francophones outside Quebec received 25 per cent of what Quebec's anglophone minority gets, they would be very happy.

Would the ideal not be to have a kind of reciprocity? That is what I ask the hon. member, with respect for his opinion. Any right taken from Quebec's anglophones would be taken from francophones, but any right given to Quebec's anglophones would be given to francophones in the rest of Canada as well. Would he agree to that?

[*English*]

Mr. Schmidt: Mr. Speaker, that question is not answered easily. It takes time. It is a difficult question and a good question.

Reciprocity assumes that equality applies and that this is done logically. The point remains that the Court of Appeal in Ontario indicated that where numbers warrant, 12 people would constitute such a group. The Court of Appeal also said the only way the French language rights could be preserved in the educational system was by having separate French school boards.

If reciprocity means that in every community even where there might be five or ten people there would be a school board, we would end up with a proliferation of school boards which would add tremendous costs. This is only one example. There are many others. There are trustees to be paid, superintendents

to be paid, other administrative and professional staff, support and so on.

Therefore reciprocity is not an easy question to address directly. In principle I would agree.

The Deputy Speaker: The time is up for questions and comments.

Mr. Jim Gouk (Kootenay West—Revelstoke): Mr. Speaker, our motion today deals with facts.

The fact is that the Official Languages Act is a total failure. It is divisive. It is so overwhelmingly expensive it would even be impractical in a booming economy with an overflowing treasury, neither of which we currently enjoy.

One of the most curious aspects of the act is that no one asked for it. Quebec did not ask for it. Most certainly neither did the rest of Canada.

Quebec wanted the French language in its own province and we agree with that. It wanted access in French to key federal institutions such as Parliament and the Supreme Court and we agree with that. It expects federal services in French. We agree with that where there is sufficient demand to warrant cost effective provision of that service.

(1550)

Given that the majority of the people in Quebec are not concerned about it and even a larger majority of Canadians in the rest of Canada are not in favour of continuing with it, why are we spending so much money to maintain a program that does not work, that we cannot afford and that no one wants?

One theory generally follows the concept of Newton's first law of physics that an object in motion will remain in motion unless acted upon by an external force. In other words, the status quo reigns supreme.

In actual fact, given that the program is in fact flourishing it appears many are operating under their own special agendas without concern for the fact that the time for this program to end has long since past.

I would like to focus today on one particular aspect of the bilingual implementation program. The area I am personally concerned about is the introduction of bilingual services to the air traffic control system. These implementation programs are horrendously expensive and at times compromise the safety of the Canadian traveller.

Air traffic control primarily uses two types of services: tower control, which controls the movement of traffic on and in the immediate proximity to the airport; and radar control, which controls aircraft flying by use of aircraft instruments within a defined area of airspace.

The Official Languages Act imposes a duty on all federal institutions to ensure that the public can obtain all services

available from federal offices or facilities within the national capital region in either official language.

In keeping with that, Ottawa tower became fully bilingual 16 hours a day as of June 1990 and 24 hours a day as of March 1991. The cost of this was and still is outrageous. The staffing of Ottawa tower calls for 17 controllers but at present there are only 9 controllers available for duty. Part of the problem is that all positions are designated as bilingual imperative. This means a controller must be fully bilingual to even apply for the position.

I for one have no problem with the concept of providing bilingual service where demand is sufficient to warrant cost effective language services. I already mentioned this at the beginning of my talk. Just how much demand constitutes sufficient is a questionable point and well worth examining here.

Before I begin to discuss the need in the tower I would like to add that the full bilingual service is in place at Ottawa tower. It is now in the process of being implemented in Ottawa terminal.

Let us look at how one might determine what demands are and how much service is needed to satisfy those demands, if in fact they are in need of being satisfied.

Simulations were run on equipment then located at the research and development department in Hull. Operating from a single bilingual position, traffic that included 30 per cent French speaking pilots was handled acceptably. This establishes a rate at which we can then look at staffing plans if it can be determined that the demand exists. What of the demand? Controllers at Ottawa tower record each contact requesting service in French. The optimum amount of requests they receive is 2 per cent, one-fifteenth of the amount that has been demonstrated can be handled safely from a single position.

A little side note on that 2 per cent figure, these figures include Air Canada pilots who can obviously speak and operate in English. It includes an airline whose next stop after Ottawa is Boston. It includes pilots from Transport Canada who fly all over this country.

I suggest there is no justification at all for bilingual air traffic control services in the Ottawa area. If there is, it should only be in that single position originally envisioned which could demonstrably control not only that amount of traffic but a tremendous and unexpected amount of growth in the future.

The cost of this bilingual service is just one of the concerns of this program, but it certainly is a significant one. At present the combined cost of the overstaffing needed to implement the bilingual program in Ottawa terminal plus a shortage of three bilingual controllers from the tower who are now on training for the terminal to staff the new bilingual positions is almost \$1 million per year. There are English speaking tower controllers in

Supply

Ottawa who can relieve this cost but they are not allowed to control in the tower because they do not speak French. These costs are only the tip of the iceberg.

At the beginning I also mentioned the concern about safety. The source of this concern is the way the English speaking controllers are being dealt with during this highly questionable implementation of bilingual services. Incumbent rights are being ignored. Original implementation plans are being scrapped. Controllers' futures are up in the air, no pun intended.

(1555)

I fly a lot, as do most of the members in this House. I would not want to have open heart surgery from a doctor whose face I had just slapped the night before. Why then are we doing the same thing to the people whose hands we place our lives in every time we take to the skies?

This is but one small example of the problem caused by the Official Languages Act. However it is a very important example of the extent to which this is getting out of hand.

The time to end the problem is now. It is time that we became the external force that will put an end to the motion of a program that has never worked in the interests of anyone.

Mr. Mac Harb (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, for a moment I did not know where I was, until the member had concluded his remarks.

I want to correct the record. This capital city has already declared itself bilingual. In excess of 30 per cent of the people in this city speak both official languages. There are over 1.1 million people who live in the national capital region and use the international airport. I would say that over 55 per cent of those people speak French and English.

Is the hon. member trying to tell me that if I were a franco-phone living on the Quebec side and I used the international airport that I should not be entitled to speak to somebody in French?

On the other side there is a correction to the hon. member's comments. The Ottawa international airport not only serves other municipalities across Canada and the United States but it also serves some places in Europe. It is an international airport.

It is our intention to enhance the bilingual services at the Ottawa international airport. My hope is that we will reach a point where every airport in Canada will have the same flexibility and the same kind of services that are now provided at the Ottawa international airport.

I was not born a French or English Canadian. I came to this country a few years ago. I look at it as an enrichment and an honour for me to be able to speak French, English, Arabic and a little bit of Italian. I am working on my Chinese.

Supply

If anything we should be moving toward trilingualism in Canada and not just bilingualism. The whole world is moving toward not just one or two but three languages. The hon. member should travel to Europe to see that. In Europe the vast majority of people speak at least two languages.

Is the hon. member suggesting we should deny the majority of the people who live in the national capital region the right to services in French as well as the right of other people in the national capital region to services in English?

Mr. Gouk: After that counter speech I am not quite sure where to begin.

First, does the hon. member who posed that convoluted question think that 55 per cent of the French speaking people who live in the national capital region go up to the cockpit while they are on some flight, use the radio and handle the aircraft control procedures for the pilot?

The two per cent is documented. It is the optimum figure in terms of the French language used in the national capital region.

I would love to compare passports with the hon. member. I suggest that I travel at least as much as he does and probably quite a bit more. English is the international language of aviation.

I have no problem with the idea of using French in Quebec because that is the language there. I would even go along with providing the service here. However, we are going so far beyond the amount necessary to provide the service to those who require it that it is absolutely ridiculous.

When the member talks of implementing this right across Canada it is no wonder the budget is so totally out of control.

Mr. Andy Scott (Fredericton—York—Sunbury): Mr. Speaker, I would like to point out there is some inconsistency in what the hon. member has said. He started out by saying that one of the problems with the official languages legislation is that it is divisive. I suggest that if there is a divisive element in this it is the putting forward of some of these bizarre notions as fact.

(1600)

Twice categorically the member said that nobody in this country wants this. I do, so he is wrong. A lot of people do. Come visit New Brunswick and see how many people are lined up to get into immersion and programs like that. The suggestion that it is a failure disregards reality. Reality has it that in 25 short years in the context of the history of a country that large numbers of people are becoming conversant in a second language who would not have that opportunity outside of the official languages policy.

The suggestion has been made repeatedly that somehow this legislation forces people to become bilingual when in fact it has exactly the reverse effect of allowing people not to become bilingual and get services from their government.

If you speak French in Saskatchewan you do not have to be able to speak English to get services from your government. If you speak French in Fredericton, New Brunswick, you do not have to be able to speak English to get services from the government. That is what is provided, not the requirement to become bilingual but the opportunity not to be.

Finally, I would suggest that the cost argument that is put and is put often is very divisive in this debate. Consider the numbers of people who are being served by the provisions in this legislation relative to cost. I think of my province of New Brunswick and the numbers of people who get service. There are 250,000 Acadians who are being served by the federal government in their first language. Much of it is enhanced by this legislation. The cost relative to the numbers of people is not excessive at all. It is a divisive argument. It is an unfounded argument and I would ask the member to respond.

Mr. Gouk: Mr. Speaker, the member does not like my use of the word divisive but found many uses for it himself.

Yes I said that no one wants it and the member challenged that. I suppose he is right. There is absolutely nothing I can think of where there is absolute unanimity all across the line.

I would point out to the member that the last survey I saw suggested that 63 per cent of all those surveyed in Quebec did not agree with the national bilingual program and there was a higher percentage than that in the rest of Canada.

The hon. member suggest that because many people take French language training that they are in favour of this. I have taken Spanish and I have taken Portuguese and I am not in favour of Canada implementing bilingualism in Spanish and Portuguese either. Therefore, his argument does not hold much water.

With regard to the fact that no one is forced to take bilingual training because of the provisions of the bilingual service, tell that to the controllers at the Ottawa terminal.

Mrs. Marlene Catterall (Parliamentary Secretary to President of the Treasury Board): Mr. Speaker, I will be dividing my time with the member for Carleton—Gloucester.

[*Translation*]

I am glad to speak on behalf of the President of the Treasury Board in this debate—

[English]

—and to be able to express the point of view of the Government of Canada, the government of all Canadians, on the motion by the member for Nanaimo—Cowichan on official languages in federal institutions.

First I would like to express some amazement with respect to the position taken by the hon. member on this motion, an amazement that I am sure is shared by many members of this House and many Canadians.

The motion seems to display a perhaps deliberate misunderstanding of the very purpose and spirit of the Official Languages Act and its regulations. It seems to be challenging the very make-up of Canada's approach to language rights and, indeed, one of the founding principles of this nation.

The main purpose of the Official Languages Act, to make it clear to members opposite, is to guarantee the equality of status of French and English Canadians in the use of the two official languages in federal institutions.

(1605)

The act rests on the principle of institutional bilingualism, the principle that federal institutions must be able to serve Canadians and to communicate with them in the official language of the choice of the citizen. In fact, the act forces neither English speaking Canadians to speak French nor French speaking Canadians to speak English. Rather it is offices of federal institutions that must be bilingual in localities where demand is sufficient for services to be in both official languages.

These are important distinctions for anyone wanting to address the issue of official languages in this country and specifically the Official Languages Act.

[Translation]

Institutional bilingualism does not mean that all employees of federal institutions must be bilingual, but that federal institutions are responsible for bilingualism. It is up to them to take all necessary measures to ensure that, wherever required by law, members of the public can be served and receive the information they need in the official language of their choice.

[English]

Institutional bilingualism means as well that Canadians of both linguistic communities may obtain employment and have a career in the federal public service in the official language of their choice. They may do so while remaining unilingual if that is their choice.

These are the principles that underlie the official languages program in federal institutions. These principles are simple and fair. They are a reflection of the rights conferred upon Canadians by our constitution. They lie at the very heart of our

Supply

identity and our cultural heritage. They embody the very essence of Canadian linguistic duality, one of the fundamental characteristics of this country.

These principles guarantee Canadians, whether English or French speaking, the right to receive federal services and information in the language of their choice.

[Translation]

These principles give federal employees the right to work in the official language of their choice, in circumstances and regions specified in the legislation. They also give Canadians of both linguistic communities equal opportunities for employment and promotion in federal institutions.

These basic principles are an integral part of the laws of this country. And federal institutions must see to it that Canadians can exercise these rights.

The official languages regulations on communicating with and providing services to the public enforce specific provisions of the Official Languages Act.

These regulations define the circumstances in which federal institutions must serve the public in both official languages. It may be because there is sufficient demand for their services or because of the very nature of the services provided.

The official languages program is the instrument through which federal institutions implement the official languages legislation.

In short, these are the basic principles underlying this program. I would now like to explain why, in my opinion, these principles are valid.

[English]

In my view the Canadian approach to language rights has two fundamental characteristics. It is both reasonable and just. It is reasonable because it gives Canadians the right to receive federal services in the language of their choice but, at the same time, limits the scope of these rights notably by defining significant demand. It is just because it gives Canadians open and easy access to the services of their government in both official languages enabling the vast majority of Canadians to receive services in the official language of their choice.

(1610)

What is also remarkable about the Canadian approach is the sense of fairness and balance. In fact, that is why there is not one and only one definition of significant demand for services.

The variations that the regulations in the legislation allow may be based on the importance of the service to be provided, for instance, where health and security are involved. Obviously, any Canadian has to be able to understand the service they are being provided and to communicate.

Supply

When it is a matter of such issues as transportation in which any Canadian may be involved at any time, of course they have to be entitled to the services of their government in the official language of their choice.

I want to conclude very briefly by saying that we could have taken a different approach and as some would have it, we could have applied a simple rule that is based purely on mathematics. We chose not to do that. We chose to do it based on need and importance of the service.

We have decided to remain true to the principle of fairness, to rules that make it possible to meet the needs I mentioned earlier and the legislation was intended to meet. That is simply for Canadians to have access to the services provided by their country's institutions.

We want Canadians to be able to work together in the official language of their choice in the same institutions within bilingual regions as provided for in the act. The government has made a commitment to the equitable participation of Canadians of both linguistic communities in federal institutions. It is committed to ensuring that federal institutions reflect the presence of English speaking and French speaking Canadians, taking into account their mandate and their locations.

The Canadian approach whether it deals with service to the public, language of work, or equitable participation reflects the choices made since the beginning of the history of this country. I remember a time in this city when if one was a francophone one was unlikely to get hired by one's own government and if one did get hired one certainly did not get promoted. As one who believes in equity in employment, I would not tolerate that situation again in my community or in my country.

I also want to refer to the phrase territorial bilingualism. In my view we have had far too much of territoriality in this country in recent years. We have had far too much of pitting one person against another, of looking at every public policy issue from a selfish point of view. It is time to start realizing that our different communities have to work together toward common goals and common purposes. That is what makes Canada unique, a country respectful of our differences and proud of what we have in common.

Mr. Elwin Hermanson (Kindersley—Lloydminster): Mr. Speaker, I appreciated hearing the hon. member's comments. I have a couple of questions for her.

First, I would like a response to the fact that in a community in my constituency, Kindersley, members who receive cable television are not able to understand much of the proceedings because they do not get services in the language that they all understand but in the language of the floor.

If one is bilingual that is well and good. However the members in my riding who receive this do not even know what the Official Opposition is saying. In fact, we are not even getting service in our part of the country that we can understand.

The other thing is that for environmental consideration I have suggested and I expect others have as well that considerable savings could be made if we provided publications in language of choice rather than having every publication bilingual where one receives both languages. This uses twice the paper and it is twice the cost to put these documents together.

I know most Canadians would prefer these documents in one language or the other because they only use one. I would like to have the hon. member's response in the way of environmental and fiscal responsibility as to providing services in the language that is required, not in both languages.

(1615)

Ms. Catterall: Mr. Speaker, my first comment is that we could save an awful lot of money if we simply closed down the Government of Canada and ceased completely to provide services to Canadians.

We could save an awful lot of money if we ceased having a national postal service, if we ceased having a national transportation system. However, certain prices go with the very nature of the country, its diversity and its size, and as a famous Canadian said before me, I for one pay those prices gladly.

Naturally we are always interested in ways of reducing the cost of implementing any government program or policy. In fact the cost of providing official languages has dropped significantly in the last couple of years. I would be pleased to give consideration to the comments of the hon. member and to discuss them with the minister.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Eugène Bellemare (Carleton—Gloucester): Mr. Speaker, it may be difficult for Reform Party members who can function in English every day to imagine how French Canadians who do not always have the opportunity to do so in French feel.

In Canada, it is hard to imagine that our children, whether they are French or English-speaking, cannot receive an education in their mother tongue, or have no choice but to participate in socio-cultural activities, or rely on essential services and vocational training, in a language which is not their own. Yet, for more than 1.6 million Canadians, which includes francophones outside Quebec as well as English-speaking Quebecers, being able to use their mother tongue is something they cannot always take for granted.

The French and English languages are integral parts of the Canadian identity. Language is a vital component of what it means to be a Canadian, and has been since the very beginning. The fact is that close to 99 per cent of Canada's residents speak either French or English. However, close to two million Canadians live in provinces and territories where their mother tongue is the minority language. This linguistic duality is therefore a basic social reality in our country, and Canadians are proud of

that reality which distinguishes us from other nations such as the United States.

This is why francophone communities, of which I am a member, want their children to be able to preserve their language in a primarily English-speaking environment. This is also why anglophones in Quebec are concerned by their decreasing numbers and the need to preserve their social, cultural and educational institutions.

[*English*]

There are real concerns in the daily lives of many Canadians who are members of linguistic minorities. This is the reason why the federal government works with community groups to support their efforts to turn things around and to help them take charge of the development and future of their communities.

It would be hard to imagine promoting the use of English and French across Canada without strongly supporting their every day use in a community context.

It is through education that the federal government has mostly contributed to the development of the minority communities while respecting the fact that matters concerning education are under provincial jurisdiction.

When Canada adopted the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms in 1982 it took a stand in favour of the rights of minorities, including linguistic rights. Section 23 of the charter guarantees minority official language communities not only the right to education in their language but also the right to manage their own institutions.

These rights have been clarified by two decisions of the Supreme Court of Canada, the Mahé decision and the reference on education rights of Manitoba in March 1993.

As citizens of Canada we must respect those rights. That is why the federal, provincial and territorial governments are co-operating to provide opportunities for English speaking Canadians in Quebec and French speaking Canadians outside Quebec to be educated in their own language and for all Canadians to learn English or French as a second official language.

[*Translation*]

Moreover, the federal government recently extended the scope of its action to support minority language education.

(1620)

Indeed, the government adopted special measures to help some provinces set up structures which will allow a minority to manage its schools, as provided by section 23 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and facilitate access, for

Supply

francophones outside Quebec, to post-secondary education in French.

This support will help provide young people who belong to linguistic minorities and who are tomorrow's adults an equal opportunity to participate actively in our country's development and prosperity.

In my province, for example, these special measures by the federal government allowed for the setting up of a network comprising three French-language colleges, including the Cité collégiale, here in Ottawa, which is already a resounding success.

The Franco-Ontarian community has been working relentlessly for years to ensure the creation of colleges in certain regions and the success of the Cité collégiale confirms the real need for such institutions.

[*English*]

The importance of minority language education to minority language communities is obvious. As the B and B commission pointed out, the absence of adequate education prevented these minority communities from contributing fully to Canadian society. Only now are we beginning to reverse the impact of these previous deficiencies.

I belong to the French speaking minority community and I am proud of my origins. Like me, almost 978,000 people living outside Quebec have French as a mother tongue. Furthermore, some 665,000 persons living in Quebec have English as their mother tongue. This is an important segment of the Canadian population. In fact these minority communities are more numerous than the population of several provinces.

Our official language minority communities are spread out across the country. As a fourth generation Franco-Ontarian, I am proud to state that half a million francophones live in Ontario alone. The Acadians form one-third of the population of New Brunswick, Canada's only officially bilingual province. The largest provincial minority of all is the English speaking community in Quebec.

Numerous or not, concentrated or scattered, those communities are important contributors to Canadian society.

[*Translation*]

The motion before us proposes territorial bilingualism, which is described by Reform Party members as territorial unilingualism, as a new linguistic arrangement in Canada. The Reform Party proposes a form of ethnic cleansing. This territorial solution, which exists in some European countries, may seem attractive at first glance. However, on closer examination, we see that it does not reflect the regional and demographic realities of Canada.

Supply

For example, unlike Switzerland and Belgium, where linguistic groups live in well-defined areas, the two Canadian linguistic communities are present right across the country.

Canada has a real interest in ensuring that official language minorities participate fully in the social and economic life of our society.

[*English*]

The Liberal Party has contributed more than any other party in the House toward building a united Canada, a country united in its cultural and linguistic diversity. We will continue to work toward that goal. Our vision of our country is one wherein all francophones and anglophones are first class Canadian citizens regardless of where they live in Canada.

[*Translation*]

Canada has been thriving thanks to the co-operation displayed by the two major linguistic families, and it will continue to thrive in unity and prosperity, as long as we will be wise enough to protect what unites us and courageous enough to eliminate what could divide us.

[*English*]

Mr. Elwin Hermanson (Kindersley—Lloydminster): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the comments of the hon. member for Carleton—Gloucester. It is good to hear that he has settled down, at least I sense that his speech came from his heart.

I would just like to present a few statistics from the 1991 census for the member and ask for a response to a question.

My riding is quite different from his riding. Perhaps in his riding official bilingualism, as we practise it and it is legislated, fits. However, Kindersley—Lloydminster has a population of 63,871 people. English is spoken by 61,325 and French by 35. Then there are some non-official languages, such as Chinese, 130; Spanish, 40; German, the largest after English 1,130.

(1625)

Another interesting statistic is English only: English as the only spoken language 61,645; French as the only language is zero according to this census.

I want to turn back a few pages to another riding in the province of Quebec, the riding of Saint-Maurice, which is represented by the Prime Minister. There are some very interesting statistics: the total population is 75,185; English is the home language if 555 residents; French 73,370. There are very few non-official languages, 10 Spanish, 60 German and a few others. Those able to communicate only in English is 45 people; those able to communicate in French only is 61,405 people.

Carleton—Gloucester is not actually representative of all of Canada. In Kindersley—Lloydminster because of lack of funding, school are being closed, education services are being

restricted. Several hospitals in my constituency have been closed for lack of funds.

I wonder if the hon. member understands the feelings of people who see services that are very important to them close down partly because of services provided to people of which there is not one person in my constituency. No one in my constituency relies on services in one of the official languages. To the north of me are the native people who were here before the anglophones and francophones but they have no official status whatsoever.

It all seems very unfair and just does not seem relevant to a Canada which is about to go into the 21st century. That is why we need to move forward. I would like to see the minister get in step with that and prepare Canada for the next century, not looking back to the 19th century.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Bellemare: Mr. Speaker, I find the comments made by the member for Kindersley—Lloydminster and House leader for the Reform Party to be insensitive. He gave us statistics and said that in his riding, unlike mine, there are very few francophones. Is the member trying to tell Canada

[*English*]

French is not wanted in Kindersley—Lloydminster, or if you are French, we do not care about you and do not dare ask a question en français, especially to your federal government since that is where the services are. I wonder if that is really his attitude, his attitude of caring for Canada, his attitude of wanting to provide for minorities.

I find his attitude similar to those of all the other Reform Party members who spoke earlier. He asked me: "Does he understand the feelings of the people?". Does he really understand what prejudice means? It is one thing to practise it, but it is another to receive it.

I will tell a little story. I remember getting my first job in this city as a student. I got to work as a summer student, 16 years of age, and I had forgotten my lunch. I lived downtown. I wanted to call my mom because I knew she would take the bus and deliver the lunch. I asked permission of the secretary of the office if I could call my mother. She said yes.

I called my mom and I said to her: "Mom do not bring my lunch. I forgot it. It is my fault. I will go and get it. I have my bike. Do not worry". At that very moment the superintendent of that division of the federal government grabbed me by the arm and said: "Young fellow, if I hear you speaking in French once more in this office you will be fired".

I wonder if your party is really thinking of what you are saying. I wonder if your party is really thinking of what you are telling French Canadians. I think all of you are a bunch of bigots.

Supply

(1630)

The Deputy Speaker: Having heard the story that the member just recounted, I wonder if he was carried away in the heat of the moment and if he would not agree to withdraw that word as being one that does not help the atmosphere of the House.

Mr. Bellemare: I am sorry, Mr. Speaker, I did not have my hearing aid on.

[*Translation*]

The Deputy Speaker: I repeat what I said. I appreciate the story just related by the hon. member, but I wonder if he is prepared to withdraw the word “bigot”?

Mr. Bellemare: Mr. Speaker, I did not accuse Reform Party members of being bigots.

[*English*]

It was a thought and perhaps my tongue projected my feeling. I truly feel that because of the manner in which they act. One always judges someone according to his acts. I really feel that.

Because it is unparliamentary I will withdraw this French word “bigot” because they find it extremely offensive. I am not sure if it is because it is a French word or the definition or that they are uncomfortable with the definition.

The Deputy Speaker: I would like to thank the hon. member for withdrawing that word.

Mr. Hugh Hanrahan (Edmonton—Strathcona): Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin by expressing my anger in regard to the term ethnic cleansing in terms of linguistic ethnic cleansing used by the hon. member.

I have been accused because I am a Reformer of supporting such atrociousness. We do not support that. I would like to go on the record as being an Albertan who has a daughter in grade eight. She has been in French immersion since day one of her education. We are proud as a family that this is an opportunity that she has as a Canadian.

I would also point out that it costs the taxpayer of Alberta an extra \$450 per student to be educated in French. I believe that extra amount should be paid by the individual who is receiving the benefit, the student involved or the parents.

I would like to ask the hon. member for his comments on that situation.

Mr. Bellemare: Mr. Speaker, the member from the Reform Party takes great objection to my comment about ethnic cleansing. I remind him that the member for St. Albert, a Reform Party member, is the one who brought up that topic a while ago when he said that the problems around this world are ethnic in origin. He made references to activities across the ocean that are occurring right now.

If the problems are of ethnic origin, if he and his party want to create a Quebec français and an English Canada, is that not the member's definition of ethnic cleansing? If it is not, what exactly is it?

As far as paying to go to school, is the member suggesting that only those who can afford an education have a right to that education?

(1635)

They give us an example that there is a school closing here and there and a hospital closing somewhere. It is certainly not Klein's fault. Whose fault is it? Is it the fault of minority language?

Are the school closings in Alberta and B.C. caused by the province of Quebec, caused by Saskatchewan, caused by everyone but them? No, it is always a question of over spending.

What they would like to do to this country is take the key and lock it and every time they come up with whatever topic, helping the poor, assisting the minority groups, respecting official languages, respecting their country, all they want to do is shut down this country, shut down the government and go back home. That is all they want to do.

The Deputy Speaker: I would be very grateful if we could avoid using terms such as were used by both speakers just now. As you know, a word to be unparliamentary has to be disruptive. The word used by the hon. member did not seem to be disruptive with the Reform Party members but I would ask members, particularly given what is going on in the rest of the world, if we might try to avoid words which are so loaded with emotion and strong feelings that they do nothing to create good will and what I think Canadians would want us to do in this House.

Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley East): I would just like to ask a question of the member. I guess we do not all realize that we are all trying to arrive at a better solution for Canada. I guess that is not accepted and I do not know what I can do to put the concerns of the hon. member to rest on some of these things.

Just as an example of a policy gone too far, I have an electrician in my riding who tried to get a copy from Employment Canada of the major contractors and locations of the major projects in British Columbia. This document is available and was submitted to the employment office in British Columbia. It is a catalogue, something like a Simpsons-Sears catalogue, and it is a significant document with hundreds and hundreds of locations, jobs and so on.

When he found out about this he went to the employment office and asked if he could have a copy of that so he could get on with his job search. He has been out of work for several months. He was told, although the document was brandished across the desk, that until it was translated into both official languages he

Supply

was not allowed to have it so that he could get on with his job search.

He sits, as I speak, at home waiting for the translation. It will take several weeks, in which case he sits there, and he has been on my doorstep as well, asking why can he not get that when in my riding I think there are 40 unilingual French people.

I realize we can provide the service to them but for the 70,000 people, a good number of whom are looking for jobs, they want to have access to that document.

It seems that it is a good idea sometimes, a good concept, but it is pushed so far, pushed to such an extreme that this person sits on the unemployment roles waiting for access to this document.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Bellemare: Mr. Speaker, I am sure that the Reform Party member made a slip of the tongue when he referred to the Simpson Sears catalogue, because I am convinced that Alberta is living with its times and that Albertans know that, for at least 20 years now, it has only been Sears.

I also want to illustrate another mistake made by the member, who just found out, talking to someone from Alberta, about the difficulties Canadians can experience when they contact federal offices. He said that the person could not get a document in English because the French version had not yet been published.

(1640)

I apologize to him, but the federal government often experiences problems. Particularly in the last eight years. The federal government's policy is to publish in both official languages in order to serve all Canadians. If he knows someone in his region who worked for the federal government and who had a document in English only, then that person also had a French version, because both are always published at the same time. Documents are only distributed once they have been prepared in both languages, so that people who request a copy can get it either in English or in French.

The hon. member forgot to mention the case of the francophone waiting in line at the manpower office. When his turn finally came after a close to two-hour wait—and I am relating situations which I witnessed or which were reported to me—the francophone was told: Sorry, I do not speak French but we do have a bilingual person working here and would you go back to the end of the line, which means another wait of 45 minutes or more, so that maybe that particular officer will be available when your turn comes again.

Yes, it is hard to serve people in both languages, but what we are trying to do in Canada is create an atmosphere that makes us proud to be Canadians, that makes us feel good to be Canadians.

It is because of attitudes such as yours that many Quebecers got fed up and sent us grumblers like Bloc Quebecois members.

Mrs. Suzanne Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata): Mr. Speaker, I was faced with two choices. Either I refrained from saying anything at all, or I spoke from the heart. I have chosen the latter course of action.

What I have heard since the start of this debate convinces me more than ever that Quebec is doing the right thing. It is clear that Quebec has made the right choice to embark on its march to independence.

I realize that the junior member from thirty-five kilometres away will try to cut in, but since I have listened carefully almost all day to the speeches of the other members, I would ask them to extend the same courtesy to me and to refrain from commenting while I am speaking. I will be happy to field questions and comments later.

Canada's official languages are guaranteed under the Constitution. Education rights are also guaranteed under the Constitution. That is all well and good, but what about our francophone minorities outside Quebec? They are having trouble getting schools—

Mr. Speaker, would it possible for you to ask that members refrain from making comments while I have the floor?

The Deputy Speaker: If the members opposite could be quiet for a few minutes, other members could also be heard.

Mrs. Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata): I recently completed a trip across Canada. I visited all of the provincial capitals, with the exception of Charlottetown. I met with francophone minorities outside Quebec. I heard some amazing stories.

A resident of British Columbia was told that there were no bilingual stenographers in all of Canada, whereas there are at least 17 bilingual court stenographers in Montreal alone. A person was asked if he would agree to a preliminary hearing in English and was promised that the transcripts would be translated into French afterward. That person was later told that the \$20,000 cost of translating the transcripts was too high. When the time came for that person to go to trial, he was told that since his preliminary hearing had been in English, then surely he was also capable of understanding trial proceedings conducted in English.

(1645)

In my office, I got a lot of information and press clippings intended to show me how well French is doing outside Quebec. I picked up only four before leaving my office this morning.

In Ontario, for the school census, they are unfortunately unable to correct the form, which says that the photocopiers

cannot print on both sides. That is the reason which the ministry gave to Ontario's francophones.

In 1994, a key year for Franco-Ontarians, the Auditor General of that province criticized the Ministry of Education for not providing francophones with good services and he says that the services given to francophones are inferior. Our friend from Carleton—Gloucester is quoted here: "Deploring the lack of bilingual judges, six-year wait for civil cases in Ontario, backlog of 1400 trials".

The gem is Mr. Vastel's article, where it mentions that someone is looking for "sewers, preferably bilingual". Let me explain. In Kingston, the city where they want to relocate the military college because it is bilingual, the Employment Centre has an advertisement for a "sewer"; let me spell it out in case I do not pronounce it correctly, so that there is no ambiguity. It should be translated in French as "couseur" or "couseuse", but the advertisement says "égout"—quite a different sewer!

Another situation. I just heard someone from Saskatoon ask the Minister of Heritage a question. There is an advertisement in the Saskatoon Employment Centre for a "cook for menu in family style restaurant", which was translated "faire cuire de menus dans famille coiffée de restaurant". Those are a few gems.

To get back to something more serious, although we need to laugh a little, we will talk about bonuses. I admit that bilingualism is costly. We talked about bilingualism bonuses, for example. Do you know that such bonuses have existed since 1888? In 1888, bilingualism bonuses were established. They were \$50 for any francophone civil servant who could take English dictation or for any anglophone civil servant who could take French dictation. So Canada has always wanted to recognize bilingualism with a bonus. In reality, in constant dollars, \$800 is not much compared to the \$50 offered in 1888 just for writing a dictation. Now they are given a bonus to be operational, so that they can respond and give service. I do not think that \$800 is a lot.

If you want to make cuts in bilingualism, I do not think that is the place to do it. Training is where the cuts should be made. If you need to be bilingual for a position, you should be bilingual before you are hired and not have someone take courses and more courses and still more courses, which is very expensive. Why take a public servant from his office and send him for three months of immersion somewhere, the Château Frontenac, perhaps, for the Christmas holidays, or maybe Toronto, if he is French-speaking.

(1650)

I find it inconceivable that, 25 years after the passage of the Official Languages Act, we continue to send unilingual public servants on language training at public expense. If bilingualism

Supply

is a condition of employment, then they should be bilingual at the time they are hired. I am not talking about refresher or upgrading courses, which are relatively inexpensive. But to pay for the basic language training of unilingual civil servants is too expensive. We could easily save close to \$96 million a year, if you count the training costs plus the program administration costs. That is no paltry amount.

I would like to call imagination into play. In a draft article which was sent to me, Professor Bouvier calls it the ignorance bonus versus the bilingualism bonus. The latter, the bonus paid to those bilingual civil servants who fulfil their duties satisfactorily, should remain. As for the other one, the ignorance bonus, we could do away with it.

According to an article published in *The Ottawa Citizen*, the report just produced by Mr. Goldbloom must be seen as conveying a double message, both a judgment and a warning. Why a warning? Year after year, we are reminded in that report about all that is going well and all that is going wrong in Canada. Let us face it, it is not a bed of roses for francophones outside Quebec.

When you think about ways of preserving your language, it is important to know that you can get served in your own language. I can remember back in my youth, when we went out shopping. We could safely go to Dupuis Frères knowing that we would be served in French. But beyond Saint-Laurent Street, you were sure to have to ask to be served in French because it was not automatic; they would answer you in English. We had to besiege Sainte-Catherine Street to get the restaurants to translate their menus. Is it through these little day-to-day battles that Quebec was able to assert its French and French-speaking colour more and more.

I listened carefully to the hon. member for Nanaimo who spoke first, I think, on behalf of the Reform Party, as he enumerated all the milestones, but I could not help but notice that he had major memory blanks. He systematically failed to mention any legislation passed in Quebec that favoured anglophones. He only talked about those that anglophones had trouble with, like Bill 101 and Bill 178 on signs for example. When I travelled in Canada, I saw unilingual signs everywhere except in airports.

I drove to Calgary to visit the Dinosaur Museum—the real ones— and along the way I encountered no road sign that bore anything beside directions in English, not even international symbols. The same thing last week in Newfoundland, I saw nothing but English all over the place. So, when they come and tell us that there were trials and cases were taken all the way to the United Nations because poor little English Canadians were treated badly in Quebec, give me a break. People should come and see for themselves that it is possible to live both in French and in English in Quebec. In fact, it is the only place where it is

Supply

possible. It is not possible to live in both official languages anywhere in Canada except in Quebec.

I am talking about entire provinces. Of course, in Northern Ontario there are towns that are 100 per cent French-speaking. That is true, there are some in Northern Ontario.

(1655)

There are towns in New Brunswick where people can live in French even when surrounded by English. But there are others in the Prairies, in Western Canada, in the Maritimes, and if their numbers do not warrant it, they may obtain nothing. We read in the newspapers about what happened in Kingston; they may be up to 4,999, but there is still one missing; I may move there to bring that number to 5,000 so they can receive services in French.

What seems extremely important to me is to stop dreaming and realize that Canada is an English-speaking country. When one lives abroad—I lived in Portugal for ten months and whenever I said *e esto Canadense*, everyone would speak to me in English. Nobody thought that I could be francophone. And as I spoke French, they said, “Ah, there is some French there.”

In every embassy except in Paris, we are addressed in English. Let us stop putting our heads in the sand. Canada is an English-speaking country. Why did the Trudeau government pass a law in 1969? To stop the rise of nationalism in Quebec. That is why Mr. Trudeau drafted his law in 1969. That was the only reason.

Section 23 of the 1982 Constitution Act protects the rights of French-speaking communities outside Quebec, with respect to their schools in particular, but even Supreme Court decisions were not enough to put this in practice. Mrs. Landry, the Minister of Canadian Heritage, had to give \$112 million to the provinces, and I agree with our friends from the Reform Party that it costs the federal government a lot of money because the provinces do not assume their responsibilities. The provinces do not respect the Constitution and the federal government's only recourse is to give them \$112 million so that they can respect their minority populations.

I think it is extremely important to realize something else. Among the many symbols we are very proud of in this country is the national anthem we still have in common, namely O Canada, which was first performed on June 24, 1980, and officially proclaimed as our national anthem on July 1, 1980. The music was composed by Calixa Lavallée and the lyrics were written by Mr. Routhier. I remember very well the debate that took place in this House, and it would be quite informative for the members who did not have the opportunity to follow that debate. I remember how difficult it was to draft the English version and even today I meet anglophones who are surprised to see that we changed the lyrics of their national anthem. It is time to set the record straight. Canada comes from Quebec. That is where Canada got its start, just like the national anthem. It should be pointed out that when each province joined the Canadian community, the majority was French-speaking. If francophones' rights had been respected from the start, we might not be where we are today.

Before I sit down, I want to remind members of one last thing, namely that belonging to a country has its price. Here, Canada decided to be bilingual. Those who find it too expensive can move to the United States. It is cheaper to live in the United States. But there is a price to pay for living in a bilingual country. It seems extremely important to me, and Quebecers are also aware that, costly as it is to be Canadian, it may be a little more expensive to be a Quebecer, but at least we will have all the tools we need to grow the way we want.

(1700)

Ms. Albina Guarnieri (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Canadian Heritage): Mr. Speaker, personally I am disappointed by the hon. member's speech, and I am sure Canadians must be surprised at the position and views of the Bloc Québécois on official languages.

I have a question. The other day, the hon. member, who is the heritage critic, asked and I quote:

[English]

“When will they,” meaning the provinces, “start treating French Canadians as well as the English are treated in Quebec”.

[Translation]

Her leader, commenting on the same subject, said and I quote:

[English]

“The Quebec government did not do enough, even the Péquistes did not do enough. The federal government certainly did more than Quebec. I am ready to admit that”.

[Translation]

Mr. Speaker, my question is, why do Bloc members not speak the same language?

Mrs. Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata): I think we do, Mr. Speaker, but I did not think that was the point of this debate. I am glad the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage asked this question, because I am disappointed as well.

What I find particularly disappointing is the position taken by the Liberal Party—I do not know whether I am supposed to say that here—by the government, I should say. It is the same thing. What I find disappointing is that the minister arranged for two planted questions, and trick questions at that, one from the hon. member for Madawaska—Victoria and one from another member who talked about Saskatoon today, in which they praised the government for not making any cuts.

Francophone communities are in dire straits, and the minister was very sympathetic to the needs of francophone communities. Budgets have been cut. Last year, there was a 10-per-cent cut in funding for these associations. They expected another 10-per-cent cut this year, and they got another 5 per cent on top of that. In some cases, some associations will cease to exist or they will have to lay off several staff members.

Supply

When we no longer have associations to defend our rights, it means being left without any protection whatsoever. That is what is so disappointing. Our position is clear. We respect the francophone community. We want to work as partners when Quebec becomes a sovereign nation, and we will do everything to try and defend that community as long as we are part of Canada. However, we cannot give them the 5 per cent the government refuses to give them and which they need so badly. That is the truth of the matter, Mr. Speaker.

[*English*]

Hon. Warren Allmand (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the hon. member for St. Boniface. Unfortunately in the 10 minutes I will have and the 10 minutes he will have, we will not have enough time to respond to all of the arguments that have been put forward in this debate, especially some which I believe are false and misleading.

The hon. member from Nanaimo of the Reform Party proposes three things in his motion. First he proposes to amend the Official Languages Act to provide territorial language rights. Generally speaking it would mean there would only be one official language in Quebec, which would be French and one official language in the rest of Canada which would be English.

While he did not accept that extreme expression of the territorial principle, some members in his party in speaking to the debate have supported it. The Reform Party has not been completely together on this one. He said that bilingual services should apply in the east and north of Ontario, in the northeastern part of New Brunswick and west of Montreal. He gave those as examples. When I questioned him on it, he said he was not hard and fast on the examples but at least it gave us an idea of the territorial bilingualism he had in mind. As I pointed out in the question which I put to him, it would leave out the anglophones in the eastern townships, the anglophones in the Gaspé and the anglophones in the Outaouais region. It would leave out the francophones of Manitoba that have had historic rights in that province. It would leave out the francophones in Nova Scotia, the Acadians.

(1705)

What we are talking about is how wide or how narrow is interpreted the expression "when numbers warrant". It would seem that the hon. member from the Reform Party would interpret it widely so it would be very difficult for many minority communities to qualify. He would interpret it in a way

that would leave out, to a greater extent than we do, minority language communities.

We oppose the first proposition in his resolution because we believe that the one million francophones outside Quebec, as citizens of Canada, have rights and those rights should be protected. The approximately 800,000 anglophones in Quebec have the same rights, to be protected under the federal Official Languages Act and policy.

The second point in his resolution is to provide for English and French in the Parliament of Canada and the institutions relating to the Parliament of Canada and to the Federal Court. That is the law and the policy right now. I do not know how that part of his resolution would change anything. I may be incorrect. He did not spend much time speaking to that part of his resolution.

The third part of his resolution asks that we refrain from spending on those aspects of language which come under provincial jurisdiction. He did not speak to that part of his resolution either but if we were to adopt that policy, it would mean cutting assistance to the provinces for minority language education and second language education, including immersion. That would be a bad thing.

The money the federal government provides to the provinces for second language education, including immersion, and for minority language education is a good thing. It is done for the national unity of the country because many of the provinces could not afford to give adequate minority language education.

The hon. member from Nanaimo asked that we keep an open mind. I came to this debate with an open mind but I must say in listening to the speeches, as a party the policy has been unclear and ambiguous. I am not saying all of them. I listened to them all. I was here for the entire debate. They gave different versions. In fact some of them proposed things that were contrary to the resolution. Some of the proposals they spoke of were truly retrograde, a step backward in protecting the language rights of Canadians, including minority language rights.

He said in his opening remarks that the act was not working well, therefore it had to be changed. He said in many cases it was divisive and too expensive. He suggested that commissioners of official languages had supported that criticism.

That is not correct. It is true that from time to time, and the reports of the official languages commissioner will attest to that, they are critical of the administration for not following the provisions of the act or where there have been mistakes or errors. That is the role of the Commissioner of Official

Supply

Languages, to point out where the administration has failed to live up to the principles in the act.

No commissioner that I know of has criticized the principles and the general policy of the act. As a matter of fact, all commissioners agree that without the act things would be much worse with respect to our language minorities.

As to whether it is working well or not working well, these are relative concepts. In fact, there are now 162,000 francophones outside Quebec in 700 French primary schools. There are 23,000 francophones outside Quebec in 45 colleges and universities. Four million Canadians, or 16 per cent of the population, speak both official languages.

(1710)

The second criticism he made is that it is too expensive. Again, I do not know of any Commissioner of Official Languages who criticized the entire policy as being too expensive. The present commissioner criticized the bonus program and suggested we get rid of it but he has not said that the policy is too expensive in a global sense.

Commissioners have criticized specifics within the policy and asked that they be corrected, but not that the entire policy be cancelled or cut back.

With respect to expense, in fact it only costs 20 cents out of every \$100 that the federal government spends on programs. That comes to three cents per day per Canadian. In response to the member of the Reform Party, it will not keep many hospitals open that are closing in his constituency. The cost for official language policy is a very small percentage of our entire budget.

Finally, he says it is divisive. Again I do not know of any Commissioner of Official Languages who says that the principles of the act are divisive. It is divisive in the sense that some people will not accept the principles in the Official Languages Act. It is their democratic right to oppose it and we hear that today. I do not think the reason, the cause of the divisiveness, is the principles in the act. It is just that some people will not recognize the rights of linguistic minorities.

The polls that I have looked at—I do not want to spend too much time, but they are on the record—indicate that from 60 to 75 per cent of Canadians support the policies in the Official Languages Act.

The purpose of the Official Languages Act is to provide legally enforceable language rights and language justice for the two official language communities in Canada, that is the one million francophones outside of Quebec and the approximately 800,000 anglophones in Quebec. It is also to serve the interests

of the six million francophones in Canada, including those in Quebec because they are a minority in the entire country.

It is a law that is based principally or inspired by a need for tolerance, understanding and generosity. I am pleased that our government is going to bring back the court challenges program because it is no use having rights in law if you cannot enforce them in the courts.

There is no obligation to become bilingual under the Official Languages Act but I heard members of the Reform Party once again saying today that French is being thrust down their throats. No language is being thrust down the throat of the consumer of services. It is true that if you are going to provide those services some people have to speak French and some people have to speak English in order to provide the services but generally speaking that is in the institution.

By the way, 70 per cent of all federal government positions are unilingual either English or French. Only 30 per cent of the positions are bilingual.

I thought I had until 5.15. I wrote down the time. How much time do I have left?

The Deputy Speaker: Zero.

Mr. Allmand: I have zero time on such an important subject.

Unfortunately we do not have the time to debate this important matter in the way it should be debated. I have many points I would still like to make. I will have to come back on another day.

Please put the motion before the House again so we can all get at it once more.

Mr. Darrel Stinson (Okanagan—Shuswap): Mr. Speaker, I listened to the hon. member say that the Reform Party has been saying this is being thrust down people's throats. No, it has been thrust on to the backs of the taxpayers at the sacrifice of hospitalization in this country. We have to prioritize. This is all we are saying on this side of the House.

How can I tell people in my constituency that they have to wait for months for hospitalization and for operations and still fund official bilingualism from the pockets of the taxpayers? They do not understand it. It is not a priority out there. We do not have the numbers.

(1715)

Mr. Allmand: Mr. Speaker, of course health care is important. I do not have the figures here today as to how much at both the federal and provincial levels we are spending on health care, but it is probably not enough. However, to suggest that you can save hospitals with the little bits of money that we are spending on our bilingual program at the federal level is to mislead Canadians. It plays to the minds and hearts of bigots when you do that.

Supply

I am not saying that the member is one, but when you suggest that you can save the health care system with the budget that we have for official languages that is distorting the situation.

I will give examples. They could be given in English Canada as well. An elderly anglophone who is close to me went to a hospital, in this case in Quebec but it could happen to a francophone outside Quebec, for health care and could not communicate with the nurses or the doctors in that hospital because nobody could speak English. I know there are many examples on the other side where francophones go to hospitals and they cannot get service in French and they are trying to describe their ailments, which is not easy even if you have a doctor or nurse who speaks your own language.

Therefore, to suggest that it is either one or the other, it is health care or official languages policies or services, is to mislead Canadians. Both are necessary on a basis of justice and social policy. I suggest that you will never save one hospital or one major health care program in this country with the little bitsy budget that we have for official languages.

Mr. Bob Ringma (Nanaimo—Cowichan): Mr. Speaker, I wish to address a couple of points made by the hon. member. One part of the problem is the costs of official languages. The problem is that we do not know what those costs are.

Now we are told \$601 million per year. We are told three cents on every \$100. Frankly, I have received correspondence from the Department of National Defence specifically telling me: "Here is our figure of cost of this thing but we cannot tell all because of Treasury Board rules and regulations".

It is our perception that much of the cost of official languages is hidden somewhere or other. We would really like to unearth it. Perhaps that is the procedure that we can follow in the standing joint committee.

The other point that I would like to address which was made by the hon. member concerns the overall. What is it that we are trying to do here in examining the Official Languages Act? He was taking territorialism as an example and using the example that I was giving and saying that it did not go far enough. I agree. Let us take St. Boniface, Gravelbourg and Maillardville outside of New Westminster as places where it does merit it. Surely what we should be doing is studying the thing and not just rejecting it out of hand and saying the act is good, most people agree with it, therefore let us not look at it.

Please, let us go at it step by step and examine things that come up with a policy that works for all of us.

Mr. Allmand: Mr. Speaker, on his first point, with respect to the true costs, I would agree with him. If the present costs that

are put forward by the government are not the complete costs then let us have the complete costs. I do not think it serves the debate well to have varying versions of the costs.

I do not know whether these costs are the full costs or not but we will have a chance in the committee to tie officials down on that. I think all the costs should be put on the table and then we can judge. I am sure, however, that in comparison to other programs they are still very small as a percentage base compared to health care, social services and so on.

His next point was with respect to what should be the exact definition of where the people demand the services. I was on the official languages committee in 1968–69 for the first act. We spent almost a year on it. I was on the committee in 1988 for the second version and we went through at great length the points that are being raised by the member: How narrow or how wide should the definition be in covering minority language communities? Should you cover Gravelbourg or not cover Gravelbourg? Should you just cover large areas like the east and north of Ontario and leave out, let us say, the Acadian community in Nova Scotia? We went through that for months and months in 1988.

(1720)

The hon. member and myself are both on the official languages committee and we will have a chance to go through it again. That does not strike to the heart of the legislation, to the principles. Here we are debating how wide or how narrow, that concept of which populations should be served and where, how big that should be before we give the services. We will have a chance to go at that.

It comes also to a question of justice. Take the eastern townships as an example. There is a majority of francophones in the eastern townships now but the first Europeans to come to that part of Quebec were anglophones who fled from the United States to towns like Cowansville, Knowlton and Frelighsburg. I have lived there. I lived in Sherbrooke. They built a university there and they built colleges; Stanstead, Bishop's, Compton Hall and so on. Now it is mostly French speaking. Are we to leave these people out altogether with these long historic rights? That is a very important question.

We studied it before and we will study it again.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Public Works and Government Services): Mr. Speaker, as a francophone member from Western Canada, I am pleased and honoured to speak on this motion.

Supply

Our policy, that is the policy in force at the present time, is to ensure that our country is one in which all Canadians, francophone and anglophone, can feel at home, regardless of where they choose to live.

I had planned to speak exclusively about French language education governance.

[English]

Having heard some comments, I cannot help but address not only the government's French language schools and post-secondary opportunities in French but the proposal being made today.

Many people will know that the key to growth for minority language communities is quality education. The government has assisted in the management of minority language schools. The charter recognizes this right. The management of schools, that is its realization, has required much effort. It is still not complete, but for those where it is not complete the federal government is available to render some assistance.

The point I would like to make is that if you are going to develop the French language or English language community you need quality education. You cannot have the highest quality education unless it is the people themselves who govern, who manage, and that is a basic issue that we need to understand.

We also need to understand that without the help of the federal government this would never, never have happened.

Look at the language rights accomplishments of provinces throughout the years, whatever the political stripe. It has never been terribly generous. Quite to the contrary. They have done as little as possible in spite of judgment after judgment to do it to the contrary. That is where the federal government has that important right. It has an important responsibility to the people of Canada.

Where do you think immersion schools would be today if it had not been for the federal government's involvement? Where do you think the management of schools would be? Where do you think post-secondary opportunities in French would be if the federal government had not been willing to assist in their financing?

Without the federal government we would have accomplished a great deal less.

[Translation]

I would like to quote from a document that I read recently. I think it will be extremely useful since it expresses what I have been saying. I quote: "The establishment and expansion of centres of excellence for francophone communities outside Quebec was made possible thanks to the assistance of the federal government". For example, the *Collège universitaire de Saint-Boniface* in Manitoba has become the finest French-language

post-secondary institution in Western Canada. Each year, the international centre for French common law at the *Université de Moncton* in New Brunswick welcomes several dozen interns from a number of francophone countries. Its reputation now extends beyond Canada's borders.

(1725)

[English]

We are richer for those particular institutions at a time when countries' boundaries are no longer nearly as important as they were, at a time when we talk about globalization, when we reach out and we talk to other countries not only about economic development but other types of development.

It would seem to me that our minority communities, indeed all language communities, are a tremendous asset to this country.

I want to talk about the proposal. I will not dwell too heavily upon some of the points that have been made, but what is territorial bilingualism. I fear territorialism. We have territorialism in the former Yugoslavia, I fear.

It is a little tent here for someone with a little tent here for someone else. We put the tribes into those tents and sometimes they decide not to talk to each other.

Is territorial bilingualism really not French for Quebec and English for the rest of Canada? Is that not a nice way of saying it? Is it not a recognition that if that were to happen that over time those small fragile communities, very often with very few people, would disappear?

What is demonstrable local public demand? What percentage is it? Who is that makes the request?

There is a French language school in St.-Lazare, Manitoba, which is several hundred kilometres away from Winnipeg. Is there a demonstrable local public demand there? What is it exactly?

We talk about the costs. What I resent most is there is a suspicion that the costs are much more than the \$601 million that has been mentioned. Rather than wait for the proof they prey on the prejudice of people who think that. Rather than say let us find out in committee, oh, no, that is not good enough.

This is why I deplore this particular proposal. It is insidious. It is malicious. I think it is intellectually dishonest. It is preying on the prejudices of people.

It is saying to the crowd "What do you want? We are prepared to give it to you because we want to keep your support. We want to keep your support".

Why give languages back to the provinces? Why? They know the records of most provinces. They know that provinces have not been generous. They know that over time the provinces would reduce those particular language rights and that is the

Supply

intellectual dishonesty. They know that and they are trying to put forward that position without owning up to it.

To suggest as was suggested before that the budget attributed to official languages would keep hospitals open is the height of irresponsibility. I said irresponsibility. There are other words that could have been used.

As I indicated before it is the old tribalism back at work. We have our tribe. You can have your tribe. Within each of those tribes, and we have seen that, there are some members who are more valued than others.

We are having a debate about official languages. What will be the next target? Multiculturalism? Aboriginal self-government? Obviously there are people out there who are concerned. I share those concerns and I am quite prepared to talk about them but let us be honest about it.

I do not deny, I have never denied, and I have written professionally about this topic, that the Official Languages Act costs money. I have said it. I have outlined the costs and I will continue to say it. But you have to look at it in perspective. You have to stop pretending that for the deficit and the debt and the hospitals there is a miracle cure. I am tired of hearing that kind of nonsense and I think a lot of others are tired of hearing that kind of nonsense as well.

If the Reform Party of Canada is truly interested in official languages why would it not look at what we have and try to build upon it as opposed to destroying it? It is among the first who would blame the Bloc for wanting to separate and destroy a country. I have asked the Bloc: Why not stay with us and help us build a better country? I say to the Reform Party rather than destroy the official languages, rather than perpetuate the myths that are out there which are frightening people, why not join in a debate that is intellectually honest?

(1730)

Why would you not say that if the federal government does not continue to be involved that those small communities will disappear? Those small communities are fragile. Have you ever lived in one of those small communities? Do you know how difficult it is for someone to retain that language? Do you know how long they fought to do it? Do you know what price they had to pay? I doubt it because if you did—

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member knows very well he is to put his remarks to the Chair. The reason we do not want members saying “you” is to avoid emotions getting too high. Will the member please do that.

Mr. Duhamel: Mr. Speaker, I suggest that if the hon. members who brought forward this motion had lived in minority language situations as many people have had to do, if they had

had that experience they would not have brought forward this motion.

I ask them, through you Mr. Speaker, to put away their prejudices and look at how we can improve it. Of course it can be improved. There is not a program in government that cannot be improved. Of course money can be saved. There is not one program in government that cannot be improved in terms of more efficient use of funds.

That should be the focus of the debate. The debate should consider what kind of Canada do we want. What kind of investments are we willing to make in our minority language communities? How are we going to make sure we make the investments that are sufficient not only to sustain them but to permit them to grow?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, in conclusion, I have one final comment. Like my colleague who preceded me, I would have liked to have a little more time. I would simply ask my hon. colleagues to try and be constructive, rather than destructive.

[*English*]

Mr. Bob Ringma (Nanaimo—Cowichan): Mr. Speaker, first I will address the comment of whether any of us had lived in minority situations. I was a kid in Vancouver and I was one of those foreigners and heard: “His parents are foreigners. What is a name like Ringma anyway? That is funny sort of foreign name to me”. I have lived it probably more than others in this House.

I heard the last speaker talk about intellectual dishonesty. I want to say I heard some intellectual dishonesty coming out from there saying why would we not build on the official languages policy rather than destroy it. It is precisely what we are trying to do. We are saying to amend the Official Languages Act, not chuck it out. We are saying to amend it and build on what is good in it.

I heard talk about intellectual dishonesty. If we are talking about bilingualism now, what will be next? Multiculturalism? Native rights? Do we not have a right, an obligation in this House to talk about these matters without emotions coming to the fore and people saying: “You cannot talk about that”. This is nonsense. That is what Parliament is for. I will stand on my rights to talk about all of these subjects. It is my duty, how much it may hurt.

Finally, demonstrable local public demand is the phrase that was picked out of the motion. I agree it is a difficult one. It equates to what is in the act today, where numbers warrant. That is an area we should go at together. We should specify whether it is 5,000 or 10 per cent or 2 per cent of the population and under what circumstances. Let us put it out. Let us not just deny it.

Supply

(1735)

Mr. Duhamel: Mr. Speaker, first I want to make certain that my colleague who just spoke does not misrepresent what I said. I at no time said that we should not be talking about these topics. I said we should be talking about them in an intellectually honest way. I object so much to the suggestion that the costs are such that hospitals are closing and people are suffering as a result of that. That is the intellectual dishonesty to which I refer.

When we talk about territorial bilingualism and demonstrable numbers there is a significant difference in what the critic and some other members of his party are saying. They have to decide whether or not they are talking about the same terms in the same way. I have heard significant differences in the speeches today. I will try to do a standing order statement on those differences just to point them out in case some people think I am exaggerating.

The member suggests I am saying we cannot talk about this. Of course I did not say that. I said we need to build. I suggest that what is being proposed today is destroying and not building. The provinces will not protect minority language rights. Looking at their record, it has not happened over time. That is what would happen.

[Translation]

Mr. Jean-Paul Marchand (Québec-Est): Mr. Speaker, this is a subject that I care deeply about. The rights of francophones outside Quebec are very much affected by the Official Languages Act and this law—

[English]

Official bilingualism in Canada is a complete failure. There is no doubt about the fact that it is a complete failure. The Reform Party talks about costs in dollars and cents but does not refer to the human costs of the failure of official bilingualism in Canada.

There are some MPs who talk about rights, especially anglophones in Quebec talk about their fundamental rights. If there is a community in Canada that has never had their rights respected, it is the francophones outside Quebec. Their rights were denied in spite of guarantees in the Constitution. Those rights were abolished illegally by every single province in Canada, every single one, right after Confederation. It was just Quebec that respected its English speaking minority. Every other province in Canada, every single province abolished French language rights in those provinces.

[Translation]

The Deputy Speaker: The answer must be brief; time is already up.

The parliamentary secretary has the floor.

Mr. Duhamel: Mr. Speaker, I understand very well that there has been a huge loss for Canada, the whole country, because minority communities like francophones outside Quebec were neglected for years. Because of this neglect, it took extra effort to help them rebuild their infrastructure.

I know that it is not much use making comparisons because we all have our prejudices; I prefer my solution, you prefer yours and so on. Nevertheless, when dealing with such a sensitive subject as this, I would like us to consider people first and what can be done to help them keep the language they had since birth, whether it was French, English or some other language. For me, a Canadian very strongly aware of his roots, I most certainly want all Canadians, not only francophones or anglophones, to be able to keep their language and culture and at the same time to work and join with others.

[English]

Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley East): Mr. Speaker, I will dive right into my speech without commenting on some of the things that have gone on.

(1740)

In his report to the Prime Minister of England a century ago, Lord Durham's characterization of Canada was profound and enduring. He described English and French Canada as two nations warring within the bosom of a single state. We cannot hide the unfortunate reality that there have always been varying levels of tension between the two groups.

Because of their numbers the English have in times past enjoyed the lion's share of political power within Canada. We find an example in the federal civil service which employed very few francophones in proportion to their share of the population. Federal services were almost unavailable in French, which was clearly unjust. In Ottawa, the nation's capital and an hour and a half from four million francophones, many services were simply unavailable in both official languages.

For nearly a century there was very little overt reaction but Quebec underwent a fundamental transformation after the second world war. After it had served there so nobly like a sleeping giant, Quebec shook itself awake and it defined itself as Confederation's underprivileged partner. Its intellectual elite began to pursue redress with a vengeance in a quiet revolution.

The Canadian way is the way of compromise. Some see this as a political weakness. That can be true, but in general the way of compromise is the way of peace and reconciliation. Rwanda is a nation without compromise. The democratization of South Africa we hope will be an example of noble compromise.

The Liberal government saw that compromise was necessary in order to keep Quebec within Confederation. Under Pearson

the federal government began to right the old wrongs in part by providing services in French and hiring more francophones.

It also passed an act of Parliament in 1969. The Official Languages Act was designed to quell calls for Quebec's independence. Its architect was Pierre Trudeau and his purpose was to satisfy other Quebec intellectuals by making federal services bilingual across Canada. The notion that some federal employees might not want to become bilingual did not appeal to Mr. Trudeau. The fact that there might be no demand for it in certain regions did not concern him. The cost of this venture went unestimated.

Twenty-five years later what do we find? Has the purpose of the act been fulfilled? Is Quebec satisfied? With the expenditure of over \$600 million a year is Quebec now more comfortable within Confederation? I should say not. Quebec is closer than ever before to separation and the Bloc Quebecois is calling the act a failure.

On April 12 the Commissioner for Official Languages tabled a report that describes in detail not how civil servants across this land have embraced bilingualism, not how services are now adequate in both languages, not how the administration of the policy has been cost effective, no. The commissioner reported a litany of bilingual woe across Canada.

Many offices designated as bilingual can hardly deliver the service. Offices that have virtually no demand are hounded by the commissioner's language police to display bilingual signage. Imagine a Canada employment centre in Saskatoon being rebuked by the commissioner for putting up an ad for a job that was not translated perfectly. This rebuke came in response to one complaint and this is in Saskatoon. The commissioner forced the letter of the law upon an unwilling office.

Let me talk about a small post office in my constituency in the community of Sardis, B.C. The Official Languages Act says that where there is a significant demand for two languages, the service shall be provided by the Government of Canada. There is no definition of the word significant in the act although it does define a bilingual district as an area where 10 per cent of the population speaks the minority language.

To transfer the meaning of the word significant to my constituency, it would require a population of at least 8,000 people with French as their mother tongue to require services in French. After the last census the government determined there was a significant number of francophones who needed bilingual services in the tiny Sardis post office.

What does the word significant mean to the government? One point seven per cent of the population identifies their mother tongue as French. That is 1.7 per cent. Far fewer actually speak the language. That is their mother tongue. To top it off there was not one request in the post office for service in French, not one

Supply

ever. Yet bilingual service must be provided. This is just one example of a silly policy that becomes horrendously expensive when it is repeated in different ways thousands of times across Canada.

It is no wonder bilingualism costs \$660 million every year. That is only the official figure. Add in the administrative inefficiencies, enforcement, lost opportunities and the opportunity costs and the real world figure is much higher.

(1745)

A comprehensive study done by Scott Reid says it seems reasonable to set this overhead cost at approximately 5 per cent of all public service staffing costs or \$951 million per year.

Donald Savoie, a noted Canadian scholar, hikes the figure to 20 per cent.

Is this incredible cost necessary to hold Canada together? Are French and English bound only by the glue of this frustrating, burdensome regulation, inefficiency and waste? Why maintain a charade of bilingualism when after trying and spending for 25 years people still do not want it?

If the loss of the Official Languages Act would cause Quebec to separate then the act must be one of the main pillars on which this country rests. We managed for a century without such an act. Is bilingualism really the substance of Canadian unity? I do not believe it.

Canada is much greater than that. Canada possesses the only cords strong enough to bind a nation together. They are not the shackles of language law, they are historic ties, unity within diversity, the bonds of shared sacrifice, shared elements of culture, shared hopes and values, bandaged where necessary with generosity and good will.

Petty arguments over language cannot sever the fundamental oneness felt between all Canadians. Like a storm on the ocean, there may be tumult above but beneath the waves the deep waters lie undisturbed.

I am grieved that the Bloc Quebecois, along with other intellectuals, has created such a storm in Quebec. Even though the problems of inequity are largely resolved, the media and the politicians have for 20 years repeated their perception that vast inequities still persist. They have trumpeted this concept and held out false promises to persuade people to pursue them in their folly.

What will be the result of their actions? Every Canadian of every group will suffer, chief among them the people of Quebec.

I question the attitude of the Bloc when I hear of its support for unilingualism in Quebec, asserting at the same time that even if Quebec separates the federal government should force bilingualism on English Canada. This is not the spirit of the tolerance and generosity that has helped make Canada one of the

Supply

best places in the world to live. This is the kind of political ambition that breeds mistrust and anger.

The Commissioner of Official Languages expressed a great principle at the beginning of his report when he quoted Montesquieu: "Nothing is just merely because it forms part of the law; rather, it should be law because it is just".

The commissioner said that the form of law must reflect the substance of justice. The law simply reflects an underlying reality. I agree fully with that concept. Where there is significant demand, as our motion states, it is only just that bilingual services reflect that demand. The Official Languages Act is an attempt to change Canadian reality, to shape a different Canada, to create a new reality by forcing bilingualism coast to coast on what is frequently an unwilling population. It is expensive, it is intrusive and it is unnecessary.

The Reform Party does not oppose bilingualism. All Canadians would profit by learning another language if they would like to. Reformers are not unkind or insensitive to the rights of minorities. The Official Languages Act is not the act that makes us kind or sensitive. It is my desire and the desire of Reformers to make law reflecting underlying reality by giving jurisdiction over language to the provinces and using federal powers to protect all minorities from linguistic injustices.

We live in a changing Canada. Millions of new Canadians today were born neither French nor English. They too deserve to become part of the Canadian language equation.

The Reform Party of Canada wants to effect a new Canadian compromise, to reach out to French Canadians to cement and rebuild our great national home, not on the artificial, unstable basis of language or ethnicity but on the sure foundation of mutual respect, understanding and equality for all races, cultures and languages; on the desire for peace and prosperity rather than on power, anger or unrest.

To this new vision of Canada we pledge ourselves today and I invite all members to join with us in this grand adventure.

(1750)

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Francine Lalonde (Mercier): Mr. Speaker, I have endured the debates all afternoon, but now, I know that my time is short, but I will try to speak calmly.

The Official Languages Act was a late attempt to right serious historic wrongs, and to answer the question forthwith, Mr. Speaker, before it is overlooked, as a young francophone from Ontario used to say: "What you call Quebec's French unilingualism, we would really like to have as Ontario's bilingualism."

Come and see the reality of rights. Come and see the reality of rights in schools, in social services, in hospitals for English-speaking people and in the debates within the Parti Quebecois to preserve these rights. And I would like it if, in Canada, they had the same debates to preserve rights when Quebec is gone. Because I will tell you one thing: a debate such as the one here today will not give anyone in Quebec the desire to stay in this country.

There is an historic dimension missing. Perhaps I should apologize for the fact that my ancestors arrived around 1647. I must apologize for that. Their name was Tremblay and others came later. I must apologize for what they built at the time. They were Canadians, real ones, the first "Canadians".

They were all over the continent you know, they also explored the West, but we do not have time for a history lesson. After the conquest, "Canadians" were mostly confined to the territory of Quebec, but over the years, they maintained the desire to go all over Canada.

I would like to mention one fact. In 1928, headlines in *Le Devoir* stated that Montrealers were worried because francophones, instead of going West where there were some good lands, were emigrating to the United States. For a hundred years, 10,000 French-Canadians a year went to the United States—there were large families in those days—but why did they not go West? Because in 1928, it would cost \$48 to have a family come over from Liverpool, but \$928 for the same family, that is ten children—as was common in those days—and two parents, to cover the same distance but from East to West.

We must realize that "Canadians" tried desperately to make a place for themselves, their schools and their own religion in this country but they were kept from doing so. Mr. Trudeau tried, although belatedly, to remedy the situation, yet he knew full well that in Quebec things had already started to move and that the measures he was implementing were no more than a paper barricade.

[*English*]

Mr. Strahl: Mr. Speaker, there was not really a question at the end of that but I certainly caught the gist of the member's comments. I can try and understand historically some of the frustrations, not being from Quebec.

Overall the French culture and the French language have done very well within the Canadian context. The people the member mentioned who went south into the United States were not able to hang on to their culture and their language by and large and they have lost that and have become assimilated.

As I mentioned earlier, there were wrongs in the past. To take note of them and try to rectify them where we can is obviously what Canadians have tried to do. A further mistake would be to

Supply

try and redress past wrongs in a way that exacerbates another problem somewhere else.

Our motion is to try and get at the nub of the issue which is where numbers warrant and where there is significant need for the French language outside of Quebec then those services should be provided; likewise in Quebec where there is significant demand for the English language.

I will use my own province as an example. French barely makes the top ten languages in British Columbia. Chinese is by far the second most frequently used language. In my own riding people who are either unilingually German or use German as their mother tongue outnumber French-speaking people perhaps 200 to 1.

(1755)

Where there are numbers and where we can justify it and where we can financially afford it, for that reason, because we want to provide it, I say let us provide it. We cannot have a Canada wide policy to try to redress some wrongs from the early part of this century. It is not practical. I do not think we can afford it. I do not think it redresses those wrongs and makes people feel better. If it did we would have unanimity. As it is we have people who are actually driven apart by the act.

The Deputy Speaker: The time has expired for questions and comments. The member was dividing his time with the hon. member for Calgary North.

Mrs. Diane Ablonczy (Calgary North): Mr. Speaker, my colleagues have discussed at some length the problems we have had in Canada with the policy of official bilingualism and I would now like to take a look at how the policy has worked in the public service.

The recent annual report by the Commissioner of Official Languages echoed Lester Pearson, as annual reports have done practically since the inception of official bilingualism, with the following words: "The Official Languages Act requires federal institutions to ensure that English-speaking and French-speaking Canadians have equal opportunities for employment and advancement within their ranks".

This is a high minded and noble goal, one that all of us in this House can agree with. It is hard, however, to reconcile this ideal with a statement made by the hon. minister of defence, for example, on February 25: "We are putting on notice anglophones who want to be generals or chiefs of staff that they have to be totally and absolutely bilingual". This is in *Hansard* at page 1855.

He later commented: "Anglophones have more to be worried about than francophones because of the tougher bilingual requirements for senior officers".

It seems pretty clear and obvious from these completely opposed statements that the ideal and the reality of official bilingualism are two different things.

I do not believe for one moment that the hon. minister of defence favours French-speaking Canadians over English-speaking Canadians, but I think the minister is faced with the problem of having to defend an inherently flawed system.

There is good reason for the fact that of the 3,000 communications received by the ombudsman under the Official Languages Act over half were complaints of one sort or another.

To put it very simply, the current implementation of official bilingualism does not work. It does not work for anglophones and it does not work for francophones.

The term bilingual describes a person who is equally proficient in both official languages. By this definition there are very few Canadians who can claim to be fluently bilingual and yet we persist, after 27 years of failure, to believe that this policy will somehow be made to work if only we wish harder and spend more money.

By way of example let me draw your attention to many of the members on both sides of this House, myself included, who would not be eligible for employment in virtually all the senior positions in the public sector today because our command of the other official language is less than functional.

It is ironic that although many of us in this House are not bilingual we expect anyone who wants to advance in the public sector to be fluent in both languages.

The reality is that the great majority of Canadians are not bilingual and those who claim to be often are not.

The second problem is that the designation of bilingual postings is increasing, often doing so when there is no real need for bilingual services, as my hon. colleague has just indicated.

One example of the unnecessary designation of public service posts as bilingual was uncovered by the Ottawa *Citizen* in 1991. In that case there were eight positions designated as bilingual. It turns out that the eight employees were asked to use their bilingual capabilities just once in the past two years and that was when an English-speaking caller had a wrong number and the employees were able to direct him to the right one.

(1800)

The example I have just given is one of scores which show that many public service positions are unnecessarily designated as bilingual.

There is an alternative to the present implementation of official bilingualism which will not only allow public servants to speak in the language of their choice, but will also eliminate language based discrimination.

Supply

In 1977 in response to the problem of de facto discrimination against francophones, the royal commission on bilingualism and biculturalism recommended that the public service be reorganized into two parallel hierarchies of unilingual work units. French would become the language of about 25 per cent of those work units and English would be the language of the rest.

It is important to keep in mind that this would not be a quota system because anglophones could try to win jobs in the French language work unit and vice versa. However, in each case workers would be allowed and required to communicate with fellow employees in the language of the work unit.

The big picture within the public service as a whole would be that employees could choose whether or not they wanted to make the substantial financial investment required to learn the other official language. Either way there would be a place for them to work in the language of their choice. Not only would the choice have been left to the employee, but the enormous cost of government sponsored language training would have been saved.

This proposal has been tested in the private sector and has been very successful in bilingual companies. Most positions can be filled by unilingual speakers of one language or another and only a few bridge positions need to be filled with bilingual employees. Had this model been adopted when it was recommended 27 years ago full equality between the languages would have been achieved by now and there would be no meaningful discrimination against speakers of either official language.

However, Trudeau chose to adopt another model in which every individual position was designated as to the official language skills it required. Francophones and anglophones would be expected to work in close proximity throughout the public service which means that many posts, including all posts beyond the most junior level would involve regular communication between speakers of two languages.

In this situation two unfortunate results were inevitable. First, the traditionally dominant language, English, would continue to dominate. This is why virtually all public service meetings continue to this day to be held in English. Second, there would be a huge need for bilingual people to occupy all supervisory positions since the rules now proclaimed that each person must be supervised in the language of his or her choice.

It is in the wildfire spread of bilingually designated posts that the real tragedy has occurred. On the one hand the system helped to boost the number of francophones employed by Ottawa. This is because two-thirds of the designated bilingual posts in the public service are occupied by francophones. On the other hand between 60 and 70 per cent of francophones in Canada do not speak English. For this majority the chances of finding employ-

ment in the public service have been reduced by the system of designating individual posts as bilingual.

In fact between 1974 when the policy was introduced and 1992, the number of positions in the federal civil service open to persons capable of speaking only French dropped from 34,000 to 25,000. This is a drop of 26 per cent. Even more staggering is the impact in Quebec itself where over half of all the jobs in the federal public service are open only to persons who speak English as well as French.

If the majority of francophones face discrimination the situation among anglophones is even worse. Nearly 90 per cent of Canadian English speakers are incapable of speaking fluent French. This means that most English Canadians are ineligible to rise above the junior public service or above the rank of major in the armed forces. The result of this situation is dramatic.

In a 1990 survey by the Professional Institute of the Public Service of Canada over one-third of anglophone respondents stated that the policy of designating individual posts had negatively affected their advancement opportunities in the past. Over half of the respondents stated they believed the policy would hurt their promotion opportunities in the future. Nearly 42 per cent stated that on at least one occasion in the past they had not even bothered to apply for a post solely because of the restrictive language requirements.

(1805)

In other words, because they structured their reform so poorly, the federal government managed to actually increase the level of discrimination faced by the average francophone and simultaneously introduced discrimination against the average anglophone. Canada is probably unique in having managed to systematically discriminate against both its major language groups at the same time by means of the same policy.

The way out of this mess is to toss aside the present system and to finally adopt the system of French and English language units proposed by the B and B commission 27 years ago. New Brunswick has recently adopted elements of this model for its provincial language service. It seems to be a success. That would be our territorial bilingualism policy within the public service. We believe it is time for Ottawa to follow this example.

Mr. John Harvard (Winnipeg St. James): Mr. Speaker, I have been listening to the debate all afternoon. I would like to say most respectfully that the members of the Reform Party have been intellectually dishonest in this debate.

The member from Calgary said, or implied at least, just a few moments ago that because very few Canadians are bilingual that represents failure of the bilingualism policy of this country. Nothing could be farther from the truth because there was never any intention of the Official Languages Act of 1969 to cause all Canadians to become bilingual.

Supply

Similarly and earlier the member for Fraser Valley East said that he was not against bilingualism. He said that he was in favour of Canadians picking up a second language. Again it is not the intention of the Official Languages Act to cause Canadians to become bilingual. It is the intention of the government to provide bilingual service to the founding language groups in this country.

It offends me that the members would use—

The Deputy Speaker: Does the member have a question? There are two other members who wish to ask questions or make comments too.

Mr. Harvard: Mr. Speaker, I will ask a question by framing it this way. Earlier it was said that the Reform Party would like to see priorities set and spending cuts with respect to cutting back the provisions of the Official Languages Act. I would ask this: What would be a greater priority than the federal government providing French language service to the four million unilingual French speaking residents of Quebec and also service in English to the millions of English speaking—

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please, the hon. member for Calgary North.

Mrs. Ablonczy: Mr. Speaker, I will be brief.

The first thing I would like to say is that we do not see the policy of official bilingualism as making Canadians bilingual. What I was talking about was the need of the policy to provide equality of opportunity for all Canadians to participate in civil service jobs and in the defence sector in our country and that it has not done.

Second, the member asked what greater priority would the government have than to make sure that there was a provision of services for both official language groups in the country. I would like to point out on behalf of over 12 million Canadians whose mother tongue is neither French nor English that this government is to serve and to meet the needs of every single Canadian, of all Canadians.

It is time we recognize the fact that Canada is changing. I would say that the greater priority that this member asked about would be to ensure fairness for all Canadians, equality of service for all Canadians. That should be the greater priority that we should now be moving toward.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yvan Bernier (Gaspé): Mr. Speaker, to start with, regarding the motion, I would like to tell the member from Western Canada that in my riding of Gaspé, which takes approximately 7 hours to cross by car, around 11 per cent of the population is anglophone.

(1810)

If the notion of French predominance were to be accepted, that would mean that, for all intents and purposes, the anglophone communities of my area would be deprived of services. Even when Quebec is sovereign, I will be the first one to offer the people in this part of Quebec the right to speak their own language and to be served in both official languages.

The question I want to ask the member of the Reform Party is this: If the goal is to save money, it can be done through less emotional means than that, and will the member support a motion to eliminate overlapping, for instance? I would like to point at to her that only in training, we could save \$250 million in Quebec, or one billion for Canada as a whole. A while ago, we were talking about a figure of \$660 million. Would she be willing to vote in favour of the elimination of overlapping jurisdictions?

[*English*]

Mrs. Ablonczy: Mr. Speaker, I would first like to point out to the hon. member that we in our motion are suggesting that services be available to official language minorities in their own language in any part of the country where there is demonstrable local public demand. It would be a judgment that would have to be made by the government as to whether in this member's riding, with 11 per cent anglophones spread across a very large area, it would constitute a significant demand. I think it would certainly constitute larger demand than the one my colleague just spoke of where there was 1.7 per cent but still requiring bilingual services or at least the offering of bilingual services by the commissioner.

We want to be careful that we do not get into these matters simply on the basis of dollars and cents. We have to get into the situation on the basis of common sense and on the basis of this significant demand and not just ask where can we cut back. We need to ask where do we really need the services, where do Canadians really require these services. On that basis there can be savings. We are suggesting that because there are services provided where there is no real demand, there is no significant need, that money is being wasted.

We need to approach it from the point of view of the needs of Canadians rather than simply from a straight dollars and cents viewpoint.

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, this will be one of the shortest speeches I have ever delivered. I think we have about three minutes left.

[*Translation*]

I am pleased to take part this afternoon in this debate on the Official Languages Act.

[*English*]

I do not agree with this business of territorial bilingualism.

*Supply**[Translation]*

I represent a riding in the province of Ontario, where the majority of people speak English. According to the principle of territorial bilingualism, as defined in the motion before the House, English would be the predominant language of the other provinces, hence of my province of Ontario. Most of the people in my riding are French, and they live in a province where the vast majority of people speak English. Like myself, almost 70 per cent of my constituents have French as their mother tongue. According to the hon. member, in such a case, territorial bilingualism would apply at the riding level, but that would not work either. What would such a policy do to some of the communities in my riding, to the 35,000 anglophones living in my riding?

[English]

Thirty-five thousand anglophones in my riding, if you applied this territorialism at the riding basis, would be denied their rights; 65,000 if you applied it on a provincial level. That is how impossible that proposition is.

[Translation]

I would have liked it if we could have used today's debate to criticize the flaws of the Official Languages Act, since all legislation has flaws, and to suggest changes to the Official Languages Act to ensure it can better serve the people of Canada, and by that I mean the unilingual people of Canada, because if the population were already bilingual, we would not need an Official Languages Act.

Neither the member for Quebec—Est nor I need this legislation, for we are both fluently bilingual, but the people we represent have the right to be served in their own language. It is for them that it is important to have an Official Languages Act, not for the member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell personally and not for my colleague who is also a Franco-Ontarian, sitting across the way, from the riding of Québec—Est.

So I would have liked to learn today how we could use this Official Languages Act to unite both founding peoples of this country, not to divide them. That is the topic I would have like to have debated today. Speaking of the history of these two great peoples, I heard one member speak earlier of her ancestors who

came here around 1640—mine arrived in La Prairie in 1680—and of all the other members who are new Canadians who came here a few years ago, like some of my colleagues in this House, or whose ancestors have been here almost forever, as in the case of our native colleagues. So I regret that we had this debate today, especially with this slant; I would have preferred it to be otherwise, needless to say.

The Deputy Speaker: It being 6.15 p.m., in accordance with the provisions of Standing Order 81(16), it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith every question necessary to dispose of the business of supply.

[English]

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Deputy Speaker: All those in favour of the motion will please say ye.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Deputy Speaker: All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Deputy Speaker: In my opinion the nays have it.

And more than five members having risen:

The Deputy Speaker: Pursuant to Standing Order 45(5)(a), I have been requested by the deputy whip to defer the division until a later time.

Pursuant to Standing Order 76(8), a recorded division on the proposed motion stands deferred.

[Translation]

Accordingly, pursuant to Standing Order 45(5)(a), the division on the question now before the House stands deferred until tomorrow at 5.30 p.m., at which time the bells calling in the members will be sounded for no more than 15 minutes.

[English]

It being 6.18 p.m., the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m.

(The House adjourned at 6.18 p.m.)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Monday, April 18, 1994

Customs Officers

Mr. Anderson	3127
Mr. de Savoye	3128
Mr. Hermanson	3128

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Non-Confidence Motions

Mrs. Jennings	3128
Motion	3128
Mr. McWhinney	3131
Mr. Mills (Red Deer)	3132
Mr. Keyes	3134
Mr. McClelland	3135
Mr. Duhamel	3136

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

Supply

Allotted Day—Official Languages

Mr. Ringma	3137
Motion	3137
Mr. Bellemare	3139
Mr. Landry	3140
Mr. Allmand	3140
Mr. Dupuy	3140
Mr. de Savoye	3143
Mr. Boudria	3145
Mr. McClelland	3146

Mr. Williams	3147
Mr. Bryden	3149
Mr. Bodnar	3149
Mr. Bellehumeur	3150
Ms. Guarnieri	3150

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Justice

Mr. Steckle	3151
-------------------	------

Dictée des Amériques

Mr. Fillion	3151
-------------------	------

Drinking Water

Mrs. Jennings	3152
---------------------	------

Dakota Ojibway Tribal Council

Mr. McKinnon	3152
--------------------	------

Multiculturalism

Mr. Bryden	3152
------------------	------

Health Care

Mr. Pagtakhan	3152
---------------------	------

Louvicourt Mining Project

Mr. Deshaies	3153
--------------------	------

Bosnia

Mr. Frazer	3153
------------------	------

Federalism

Mr. Iftody	3153
------------------	------

The Environment

Mr. Caccia 3153

Leader of Equality Party

Mr. de Savoye 3153

Official Languages

Mr. Ringma 3154

Official Languages

Mr. Scott (Fredericton—York—Sunbury) 3154

Youth Services

Mr. Duhamel 3154

Schizophrenia

Mrs. Catterall 3154

Firearms

Mr. Morrison 3154

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Canadian Peacekeepers in Bosnia

Mr. Bouchard 3155

Mr. Ouellet 3155

Mr. Bouchard 3155

Mr. Ouellet 3155

Mr. Bouchard 3155

Mr. Ouellet 3155

Publishing

Mrs. Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata) 3155

Mr. Manley 3156

Mrs. Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata)	3156
Mr. Manley	3156

Employment

Mr. Hermanson	3156
Mr. Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre)	3156
Mr. Hermanson	3156
Mr. Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre)	3156
Mr. Hermanson	3156
Mr. Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre)	3156

Social Program Reform

Mrs. Lalonde	3157
Mr. Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre)	3157
Mrs. Lalonde	3157
Mr. Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre)	3157
Mr. Johnston	3157
Mr. Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre)	3157
Mr. Johnston	3157
Mr. Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre)	3158

Action Plan for Young People

Mr. Gauthier (Roberval)	3158
Mr. Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre)	3158
Mr. Gauthier (Roberval)	3158
Mr. Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre)	3158

Public Safety

Ms. Meredith	3158
Ms. Clancy	3158
Ms. Meredith	3158
Ms. Clancy	3158

Unemployment

Mr. Lavigne (Beauharnois—Salaberry)	3159
Mr. Martin (LaSalle—Émard)	3159

Mr. Lavigne (Beauharnois—Salaberry)	3159
Mr. Martin (LaSalle—Émard)	3159

Tobacco Products

Ms. Cohen	3159
Ms. Marleau	3159

Official Languages

Mr. Strahl	3159
Mr. Dupuy	3159
Mr. Strahl	3160
Mr. Dupuy	3160

Immigration

Mr. Duceppe	3160
Ms. Clancy	3160
Mr. Duceppe	3160
Ms. Clancy	3160

Government Appointments

Mr. Harper (Simcoe Centre)	3160
Mr. Chrétien (Saint-Maurice)	3160
Mr. Harper (Simcoe Centre)	3161
Mr. Chrétien (Saint-Maurice)	3161

Ukraine

Mr. Lastewka	3161
Mr. Ouellet	3161

Contracts for Advertising and Opinion Polls

Mr. Lefebvre	3161
Mr. Chrétien (Saint-Maurice)	3161
Mr. Lefebvre	3161
Mr. Chrétien (Saint-Maurice)	3161

Indian Affairs

Mr. Duncan	3161
------------------	------

Mr. Rock	3161
Mr. Duncan	3162
Mr. Dupuy	3162

Human Rights

Mr. Charest	3162
Mr. Chrétien (Saint–Maurice)	3162

BST Growth Hormone

Mr. Marchand	3162
Mr. Chrétien (Saint–Maurice)	3162

Fisheries

Mr. Cummins	3162
Mr. Tobin	3163

Francophone Communities Outside Quebec

Mrs. Sheridan	3163
Mr. Dupuy	3163

Presence in Gallery

The Speaker	3163
-------------------	------

Points of Order

Comments During Question Period

Mr. Hermanson	3163
---------------------	------

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

Bankruptcy Act

Bill C–237. Motions for introduction and first reading agreed to	3163
Mr. de Savoye	3163

Petitions

Reduction of Military Budget

Mr. Rocheleau	3164
---------------------	------

Bilingualism

Mr. DeVillers	3164
---------------------	------

Petitions**Killer Cards**

Mr. Jordan	3164
------------------	------

Questions on the Order Paper

Mr. Robichaud	3165
---------------------	------

GOVERNMENT ORDERS**Supply****Allotted Day—Official Languages**

Consideration of motion resumed.	3165
Ms. Guarnieri	3165
Mr. Rock	3166
Mr. Ringma	3167
Mr. Schmidt	3168
Mr. Mills (Broadview—Greenwood)	3169
Mr. Allmand	3169
Mr. Plamondon	3170
Mr. Gouk	3170
Mr. Harb	3171
Mr. Scott (Fredericton—York—Sunbury)	3172
Mrs. Catterall	3172
Mr. Hermanson	3174
Mr. Bellemare	3174
Mr. Hermanson	3176
Mr. Hanrahan	3177
Mr. Strahl	3177
Mrs. Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata)	3178
Ms. Guarnieri	3180
Mr. Allmand	3181
Mr. Stinson	3182

Mr. Ringma	3183
Mr. Duhamel	3183
Mr. Ringma	3185
Mr. Marchand	3186
Mr. Strahl	3186
Mrs. Lalonde	3188
Mrs. Ablonczy	3189
Mr. Harvard	3190
Mr. Bernier (Gaspé)	3191
Mr. Boudria	3191
Division on motion deferred.	3192