

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.