

Supply

[*Translation*]

Mr. Robichaud: Madam Speaker, I only want to direct a question to the hon. Minister. Why should it take a few more weeks as he say? Another few weeks and we will adjourn for one week, which means some more delay. So, why wait since we, in the opposition, are prepared to go ahead with that bill right now, when every French organizations, Francophones outside Quebec, Alliance-Québec and Canadian Parents for French want the Government to go ahead with that piece of legislation as soon as possible? Why wait then? Why make us wait some more for a legislation that everybody wants?

Mr. Lewis: Madam Speaker, I have no problem with that piece of legislation. I have one with other laws. It is a matter of organizing all the legislation. But that one is not a problem. You should see our schedule.

[*English*]

—what we have passed and what we have in front of us, the Hon. Member will see that we are proceeding apace, as I indicated earlier, faster than the previous Parliament. When one reviews the record one will see that we are proceeding faster than have previous Parliaments as well. We have no problems whatsoever with our record.

I assure the Hon. Member that within the next weeks we will bring this forward for second reading. We will put it into committee. Hopefully, with his co-operation, we will be able to get it out of committee, through report stage and on to third reading.

The Government does not put items on the Order Paper to let them fall off it. Look at the record. Prior to No. 72 there were only nine that we have not passed. Three of those are the only ones that we have not got out of second reading. I am not going to apologize for a thing. We have passed everything up to No. 72 except for nine Bills, and three of those are in committee or at third reading stage. Look at our record. Do not worry, it will come.

• (1720)

Mr. Gauthier: I have one comment on the last statement of the Minister. It is, indeed, because the Opposition has been very co-operative that this Government has been able to pass its legislation. I would like to remind Members that on Friday we passed four pieces of legislation which are very important Bills. They were passed because we were in agreement with the Government on the purpose and objectives. That is the point of this debate. We think that the principle of this Bill is excellent. We agree with the Government. We said to the Government it has been three and a half years, what is it waiting for? The Government said that it would table the Bill.

I have a record of the questions that I have put to the Government over the last three and a half years. I could read them, but we would be here until midnight tonight. There have been 18 questions put in the House asking the Government to

move on this subject. Finally, on June 25, 1987 the Government moved.

The Minister snaps his suspenders and says, "Aren't we good?" I say, "Yes, because we co-operated with the Government". We will co-operate with the Government at any time to pass good legislation, just don't try and pass bad legislation because we will not agree with that. We are saying to the Government now that this is good legislation, come across. We are offering co-operation, support, and our help. What else does the Government need?

Mr. Lewis: I heard my hon. friend count the number of times he asked the Government to pass this legislation. I wonder if he would be good enough to tell the House how many times, while he was here from 1972, he asked his Party to pass legislation. I wonder if he would make us privy to the number of times that he failed to get the Liberal Party to bring forward this progressive legislation. That we do not hear. That we do not want trotted out, do we, my friend from Ottawa—Vanier?

We remember his annoyance with the Liberal Government of the day that it would not move on progressive legislation. Tomorrow he will have an opportunity to deal with another piece of legislation. I challenge my hon. friend to give us that same co-operation tomorrow that he suggested he is prepared to give today.

All of our legislation has been good legislation. That is why it is passed so quickly.

Mr. Gauthier: May I just remind the Minister, in a very friendly way and co-operatively, that between 1982 and 1983 we actually passed in this House a constitutional amendment. It talked about what I called in my speech this morning "administrative bilingualism". It talked about parliamentary, judicial, and school bilingualism. Now it is all in the Constitution. That was a reaction to much pressure by some people in this country on the Government of the day. I agree with the Hon. Minister that sometimes one has to push and push hard to get majorities to move.

I am very happy to tell him today that, with the help of members of his caucus in the Official Languages Committee, we succeeded in getting the numerous reports of that committee. I think there are in total 17 or 18 reports that have been tabled over the years by the committee. Most of them were accepted by the Government, both the Government of Mr. Trudeau and the present Government.

That was a result of consensus, and because of that consensus we now have a Bill which is a good Bill. I am offering the Minister my full co-operation. But I do not think that it is proper for him to impose his iron fist and say that "no one speaks except those I decide". I say that everybody has the right to speak. That is democracy.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): Resuming debate with the Hon. Member for Kenora—Rainy River (Mr. Parry).