

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 sovereignist 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.