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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,