

Routine Proceedings

The government has also worked with all provinces and territories to encourage them to make their services available to their official language minorities in their own language.

[Translation]

In the field of education, there are tens of thousands of French-speaking children outside the Province of Quebec who are now receiving their education in their own language where before they could not. There are additional thousands of English-speaking pupils across the country benefiting from more and better teaching of French as a second language.

[English]

The English speaking population of Quebec continues to have access to a network of English language schools, colleges and universities. Furthermore, both English and French are taught extensively as second languages in Quebec schools.

[Translation]

Schools and community centres serving official language minority groups have sprung up in several provinces. Official language minorities now have their own community radio stations and community newspapers. Of course, organizations are also working hard to strengthen the ties within their communities. The most notable of these are *La Fédération des francophones hors Québec* and Alliance Quebec, but there are many others.

[English]

Despite the inevitable tensions that have occurred and continue to occur from time to time, the progress we have made in the past quarter century has strengthened us and given us fresh insight. We have got to know each other better. We have become more used to the process of dialogue that is so essential to our very survival.

As a member of an official language minority community, I am proud of what we as Canadians have accomplished to promote Canada's two official languages. Federal, provincial, territorial co-operation on official languages is a dynamic example of the Canadian commitment to official language equality. Through joint initiatives, substantial impetus is being given to promote minority language education and second language instruction and other services in the two official languages are being improved.

[Translation]

These forward-looking measures set the stage for a Canada that is united in its diversity and full of promise for the future.

It all started 25 years ago. That is a day to remember and a memory to cherish.

Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier): Madam Speaker, it has been a quarter of a century since the day the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism was appointed by the then Prime Minister, the Right Hon. Lester B. Pearson. A quarter of a century may seem negligible in the history of a country, but to official language minority communities that have had to struggle to preserve their heritage, to many of us, a quarter of a century seems very long indeed.

In its report, the Laurendeau-Dunton Commission said that Canada was experiencing the worst crisis in its history. That was in the Sixties, Madam Speaker. In 1989, history seemed to repeat itself. What we are seeing is a new emergence of intolerance and misunderstanding, largely arising from ignorance and disinformation.

• (1120)

An hon. member: Deplorable!

Mr. Gauthier: Despite constant efforts, despite federal legislation passed in 1969, 1973 and 1988, and despite provincial legislation, including Bill 8 in Ontario and Bill 142 in Quebec, we still have a long way to go to ensure that our Canadian linguistic duality is approached with respect, generosity and tolerance.

Madam Speaker, although we can rejoice in the progress that has been made, we must face the facts. As they say, it isn't over until it's over.

Linguistic equity is far from being an accepted fact. In some provinces, movements and groups are sowing the seeds of disunity by refusing to acknowledge the rich resources of a country that has enshrined two official languages in its Constitution. They refuse to recognize the very foundations of our history.

To ensure that both official languages are treated the same, we must rely on firm leadership and on the understanding of Canadian men and women at all levels, whether federal or provincial, in our municipalities and our schools. That is the only way we will be able to guarantee linguistic justice in this country. We must explain to Canadians that, if we are to preserve this