

pation of both language groups, based on evidence heard since early fall in 1981.

Despite all that excellent work already performed, honourable senators, there remains much to be accomplished. The committee intends to analyze federal government activities in the area of official languages outside the Public Service, including the various language and cultural programs of the Secretary of State. The committee will deal with the amendments to the Official Languages Act proposed by the commissioner, and the resources and activities of the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages, to ensure that he is in a position to guide and assess language reform. The committee also wishes to scrutinize private members' bills that have been referred to it. Considering the large amount of work that remains to be performed, the committee felt it essential to recommend to Parliament, in its second report submitted in December 1981, that it be revived during the new session.

As far as I am concerned, honourable senators, I would go further than that recommendation and suggest that during the new session that committee be established on a permanent basis. I think this is vital. That recommendation indeed is in line with the report submitted by the Standing Senate Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs, entitled "Certain aspects of the Canadian Constitution," tabled in the Senate in November 1980 and which recommended the establishment of a standing committee of the Senate on official languages, comprising an equal number of French-speaking and English-speaking senators. However, it would be better in my view to maintain the joint nature of that committee with participation from both houses, because official language matters are of interest to members of both houses. That committee would be responsible for monitoring the implementation of the charter of language rights enshrined in our Constitution, the Official Languages Act, and more generally the federal policy on bilingualism. A permanent committee could more easily promote on-going public awareness of official languages matters.

The second recommendation in the committee report tabled in December 1981 deals with the authority to travel in Canada and abroad. It is based in part on the same reasons. Travelling in various regions of Canada is essential, in our view, to make the public aware of their language rights. In return, while travelling in the regions, the committee would be in a position to check on the spot the quality of bilingual services available to minority language groups. On the other hand, the committee would find it most useful to travel to countries which have implemented official languages policies. Discussions with those responsible for law enforcement in those countries would give the committee a good idea of those countries' achievements as far as official languages are concerned. Of course, if leave is given, the committee intends to travel during the adjournment of the Senate.

● (1520)

[English]

On motion of Senator Roblin, debate adjourned.

LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

REPORT OF COMMITTEE ENTITLED "CERTAIN ASPECTS OF THE CANADIAN CONSTITUTION"—DEBATE ADJOURNED

On the Order:

Resuming the debate on the inquiry of the Honourable Senator Lamontagne, P.C., calling the attention of the Senate to the Report of the Standing Senate Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs entitled: "Certain Aspects of the Canadian Constitution", tabled in the Senate on 26th November, 1980.—(*Honourable Senator Macdonald*).

Hon. Duff Roblin (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): Honourable senators, speaking for Senator Macdonald, I believe that Senator Leblanc would like to resume the debate this afternoon, in which case we would be delighted to accommodate him.

The Hon. the Speaker: Is it agreed, honourable senators?

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

[Translation]

Hon. Fernand-E. Leblanc: I thank Senator Roblin, for giving me the opportunity to speak this afternoon. Honourable senators, in a recent statement made in this house, Senator Frith told us that Senate reform had been discussed in Canada since 1890. Since that date, a hoard of material has been gathered—speeches, magazine and newspaper articles, radio and television interviews, books and pamphlets, seminars, bills, meetings of joint committees, Senate committees, meetings and caucuses of all kinds. I certainly do not have the impression, nor do I entertain the presumption that my intervention will provide any new material for that debate. However, if the Senate could only remember how urgent it is to undertake its reform before other politicians take the matter in their own hands, I will be satisfied that I have done my share in that debate. As mentioned by other senators who spoke before me in this debate, we can proceed with some reforms simply by changing our Standing Orders, without having to amend the Constitution or some of the laws that govern us.

I presume that everybody here is interested in this subject. It would be interesting to hear all senators state clearly and precisely what methods they propose not only to increase the Senate's productivity but also to extend its usefulness in its present form and with appropriate changes.

It would certainly be very easy to quote numerous excerpts from authorities who have made an extensive study of the Senate and who are familiar with its operation, excerpts praising and commending the Senate for its legislative, investigative and sober-second-thought role. And it would be just as easy to quote authorities that support the opposite views, because most have not bothered or had the courage to look fully into the necessity of the Senate in the present Canadian Parliamentary system.

Honourable senators, Canada will soon have a new Constitution. Section 44 provides that, after the expiration of a period of 90 days, the Senate will no longer have the right to