

Supply

Similarly and earlier the member for Fraser Valley East said that he was not against bilingualism. He said that he was in favour of Canadians picking up a second language. Again it is not the intention of the Official Languages Act to cause Canadians to become bilingual. It is the intention of the government to provide bilingual service to the founding language groups in this country.

It offends me that the members would use—

The Deputy Speaker: Does the member have a question? There are two other members who wish to ask questions or make comments too.

Mr. Harvard: Mr. Speaker, I will ask a question by framing it this way. Earlier it was said that the Reform Party would like to see priorities set and spending cuts with respect to cutting back the provisions of the Official Languages Act. I would ask this: What would be a greater priority than the federal government providing French language service to the four million unilingual French speaking residents of Quebec and also service in English to the millions of English speaking—

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please, the hon. member for Calgary North.

Mrs. Ablonczy: Mr. Speaker, I will be brief.

The first thing I would like to say is that we do not see the policy of official bilingualism as making Canadians bilingual. What I was talking about was the need of the policy to provide equality of opportunity for all Canadians to participate in civil service jobs and in the defence sector in our country and that it has not done.

Second, the member asked what greater priority would the government have than to make sure that there was a provision of services for both official language groups in the country. I would like to point out on behalf of over 12 million Canadians whose mother tongue is neither French nor English that this government is to serve and to meet the needs of every single Canadian, of all Canadians.

It is time we recognize the fact that Canada is changing. I would say that the greater priority that this member asked about would be to ensure fairness for all Canadians, equality of service for all Canadians. That should be the greater priority that we should now be moving toward.

[Translation]

Mr. Yvan Bernier (Gaspé): Mr. Speaker, to start with, regarding the motion, I would like to tell the member from Western Canada that in my riding of Gaspé, which takes approximately 7 hours to cross by car, around 11 per cent of the population is anglophone.

• (1810)

If the notion of French predominance were to be accepted, that would mean that, for all intents and purposes, the anglophone communities of my area would be deprived of services. Even when Quebec is sovereign, I will be the first one to offer the people in this part of Quebec the right to speak their own language and to be served in both official languages.

The question I want to ask the member of the Reform Party is this: If the goal is to save money, it can be done through less emotional means than that, and will the member support a motion to eliminate overlapping, for instance? I would like to point at to her that only in training, we could save \$250 million in Quebec, or one billion for Canada as a whole. A while ago, we were talking about a figure of \$660 million. Would she be willing to vote in favour of the elimination of overlapping jurisdictions?

[English]

Mrs. Ablonczy: Mr. Speaker, I would first like to point out to the hon. member that we in our motion are suggesting that services be available to official language minorities in their own language in any part of the country where there is demonstrable local public demand. It would be a judgment that would have to be made by the government as to whether in this member's riding, with 11 per cent anglophones spread across a very large area, it would constitute a significant demand. I think it would certainly constitute larger demand than the one my colleague just spoke of where there was 1.7 per cent but still requiring bilingual services or at least the offering of bilingual services by the commissioner.

We want to be careful that we do not get into these matters simply on the basis of dollars and cents. We have to get into the situation on the basis of common sense and on the basis of this significant demand and not just ask where can we cut back. We need to ask where do we really need the services, where do Canadians really require these services. On that basis there can be savings. We are suggesting that because there are services provided where there is no real demand, there is no significant need, that money is being wasted.

We need to approach it from the point of view of the needs of Canadians rather than simply from a straight dollars and cents viewpoint.

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, this will be one of the shortest speeches I have ever delivered. I think we have about three minutes left.

[Translation]

I am pleased to take part this afternoon in this debate on the Official Languages Act.

[English]

I do not agree with this business of territorial bilingualism.