

Government Orders

disruptive to the people of Canada. It is in this department that we find huge public funding for highly contentious areas, including the CBC, multiculturalism and of course, official bilingualism. I will be direct. The people of Yellowhead have no use for the Department of Canadian Heritage and its destructive, divisive programs.

They do not know what possible good can result from the funding of the bilingual bonus which cost them and their fellow taxpayers \$50 million last year. They do not know what good can result from funding the language police, the Commissioner of Official Languages, \$11.1 million. They do not know what good can come from funding the Edmonton region of the Alberta Francophone Association to the tune of \$103,000 annually plus a grant of \$12 million to be spent in a riding containing 945 francophones.

The people of Yellowhead are not sure why they are helping to pay for official languages support, which is projected to cost \$253 million this year, a cool quarter of a billion dollars.

It is not my intention to fan the flames of resentment, only to question a policy which has done much to tear the social and linguistic fabric of our nation.

Official bilingualism in Canada is not about promoting the equality of the French and English languages. It is about the promotion of minority language rights to the majority of the population. In fact the Official Languages Act, which entrenched the notion of coast to coast bilingualism in 1969, has been abused by federal governments which operated behind the smoke-screen of keeping Canada together.

The OLA was about appeasement right from the beginning. There are questions as to how this forced language program was to be funded, to be paid for. English Canada protested this imposition and of course it is paying for it.

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Pierre Trudeau knew the mathematics involved. He needed to retain power. He needed to retain his stranglehold on Quebec. After all, he had no support from the west. Therefore, the OLA was imposed on all of Canada. Ever since, the Official Languages Act has been used to put out anti-nationalistic fires in Quebec but to no avail. The effects of this firefighting have been severe.

I draw attention to how the Official Languages Act was used in 1976, at a time when great dissension in the province of Quebec was reaching its apex, to put out a fire that threatened national unity. On the eve of the Quebec election, 30,000 federal employees in Quebec threatened to refuse to serve people in English unless they received their bonuses for being bilingual, just like the bonuses bilingual secretaries, stenographers and typists received.

To pacify the civil servants and keep the separatist Parti Quebecois from claiming unfair treatment of francophones, Trudeau caved in and passed the order to pay the bilingual bonus. To top things off and to add insult to injury, the PQ won the election.

Ever since, the bilingual bonus has stuck and has even been extended to bilingual RCMP officers under this Liberal government. I have little doubt this decision was made to cool disparaging attacks from the Bloc.

This policy is discriminatory against unilingual anglophones and francophones. It has created division instead of unity. It is the opposite of what the OLA intended for Canada. The disruption of the merit system has a negative impact on morale.

That was not the only time the master social engineer used the contentious issue of Canada's official languages as an instrument of appeasement at the expense of the majority of Canadians. Trudeau implemented affirmative action in the hiring of public servants.

I draw my colleagues' attention to the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism. It recommended dividing the public service into French language units in which all work would be performed in French, and English language units in which all work would be performed in English. Under this system almost all jobs would be open to unilingual speakers.

It is true that at first there might be a swell of unilingual English jobs, but as anglophone employees retired and francophones joined the public service French language units would expand to eventually include a proportion of jobs equivalent to the French speaking share of the Canadian population. In essence, there would be equitable representation without resorting to affirmative action and without claims of discrimination against either anglophones or francophones. I think all members would agree that such a scenario seems reasonable and fair.

Trudeau, because of political considerations, did not adopt this fair solution. He apparently felt the French language unit would take too long to implement while the separatist threat was an immediate problem. As Trudeau said: "We cannot tell Quebec: Cool it, fellows, in 40 years we will be able to talk to you. We might save some money but we would not save the country". Well we sure have saved the country.

Today it is the unity of the country which is threatened, something that should not be happening if the sacred cow known as official bilingualism had worked, but of course it could not work. This policy has cost billions of dollars to enforce since its inception. We see what Canadian taxpayers are getting in return: among other things, a separatist party as the Official Opposition in the House of Commons.