

*Official Languages*

the fairness extended to the public. A French-speaking or an English-speaking taxpayer, in an officially bilingual country, is entitled in all fairness to communicate with his government in the language of his choice, that is most likely in his mother tongue.

Thus, any rational appraisal of the text of the legislation, to be neither emotional nor biased, should give some consideration to that very important entity, the Canadian people, which through its historical fate and also its own will happens to belong to two different cultures and to speak two different languages.

I return now, Mr. Speaker, to certain points in the hon. member for Dauphin's intervention. According to him, we are dealing with an undesirable legislation. When the hon. member for Dauphin used the adjective "undesirable", I found myself wondering what he would consider to be a desirable legislation in the language field.

I felt I could guess, as he pursued his intervention, for instance when he told us—and it was like hearing Quebec separatists speaking—that there are no real bilinguals and when he mentioned that French Canadians were bilingual as a result of an historical accident. I relished the expression "historical accident", being, like almost all French-speaking Canadians who speak English, one of those who have had to the language, and at their own expense, with no government paying to have them taught.

I like very much the "historical accident" referred to by the hon. member for Dauphin. He seems to think that French Canadians are born bilingual, like the people who are born black or yellow. I can set him straight on that. No Canadian is born bilingual. Those who are bilingual have become so through their own efforts.

[*English*]

But I could also reassure him and say it does not take that much intelligence or effort to become bilingual, once you have decided that you want to do so.

**Mr. McIntosh:** Tell us what you mean by bilingual now.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Pelletier:** So, Mr. Speaker, I understand what a desirable legislation means for the hon. member for Dauphin. I apologize for straying a little from the subject of this amendment, but that is exactly what the hon. member did himself.

He says there are no bilingual people. He thinks that Canada is a country with such an

English-speaking majority that we should not go to so much trouble for the language minority, precisely because it is a minority. He thinks that serving the French-speaking public in French and the English-speaking public in English is a means of discrimination for the federal government.

He did not tell us how he came to that conclusion and that does not surprise me, Mr. Speaker, because I have a notion that he does not know himself. The connection between the two statements is not clear to anybody, and probably not to the hon. member for Dauphin himself.

I merely want to say that once more we find, in his speech, one of those ill-omened prophecies—"the effort is doomed to failure". According to him, Canadian parliament is considering a bill which is doomed to failure. If the failure is inevitable, in the mind of the member for Dauphin, Mr. Speaker, I wonder why he entertains so many fears, because nothing he fears is likely to happen. He might as well leave the house safely, go to sleep soundly and let us discuss quietly.

Finally, I think, Mr. Speaker, and I want to stress this—I do not know which parliamentary language I should use—that it is a shame to quote out of context people like Mr. Gérard Filion or Mr. Claude Ryan, as the member has just done.

Those are men who when they analyse their society are not afraid to recognize its defects and to state them. But, the member for Dauphin uses a truncated quotation, for instance, to present Mr. Gérard Filion, as a detractor of the culture in which he was born and of the people to which he belongs.

I just want to say to the hon. member for Dauphin that if Mr. Filion were here, he would get a rather severe tongue-lashing, because Mr. Filion is capable of defending himself and his views differ fundamentally from those of the hon. member.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I would like to recall what I thought the most unbelievable statement of the evening: this legislation, the hon. member said, will be passed through the obstinacy, the stubbornness of the government.

I would like to emphasize, Mr. Speaker, that it is not only through the obstinacy or the stubbornness of the government, but also because of the enlightened views of many members of the opposition—and I would like to pay my respects to them—among which there are some of our colleagues of the New Democratic Party, and because finally of the enlightened and intelligent attitude of the