

Privilege—Mr. James

Code, which gives an accused the specific right to be tried before a judge or a judge and jury who speak his or her official language, is not yet in force in Alberta. However, Bill C-72, the Official Languages Act, introduced by this Government and the Minister of Justice on June 25, 1987, will amend the Criminal Code to confirm language of trial rights for everyone and to ensure that Part XIV.1 comes into force no later than January 1, 1990, in all provinces across Canada.

The provisions that will shortly be before the House with respect to the Official Languages Act will correct a historic problem and do honour to all Members of the House.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

GOVERNMENT POLICY

Hon. Bob Kaplan (York Centre): Mr. Speaker, will the Prime Minister then tell the House why his Government has not begun discussions with the Province of Alberta, and will it now do so, to bring Part 14(1) into effect so that when this Bill is brought forward, if it ever is, people like Mr. Paquette will be able to have their trials in French?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, the situation which my hon. friend refers to was not created last year. It has persisted for many years and throughout the long reign of my hon. friend's Party in government. This Government is now acting, and I think quite swiftly, to correct it. If my hon. friend waits just a little while, he will have the opportunity to support amendments to the Official Languages Act to correct something which ought to have been corrected under previous Governments many years ago.

Mr. Speaker: This will be the last question.

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EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

EL SALVADOR—TERMS OF AMNESTY

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg—Birds Hill): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Secretary of State for External Affairs and concerns his recent visit to Central America. Can he tell the House whether or not he raised with the leadership of El Salvador, specifically President Duarte, the question of the charges made against that country's amnesty program to the effect that it would permit the murderers of the four American nuns and the murderers of Mr. Anaya, head of the Human Rights Commission there, to go free? If he did, what was the response and what is the Minister's response?

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, when I was in El Salvador, and indeed elsewhere during my visit to Central America, I raised questions relating to the amnesty. I think everyone understands that there is bound to be, in any successful peace accord in that region, some very rough justice. There is bound to be

controversy over the granting of amnesty to people who have committed or are alleged to have committed crimes. I think it is the general conclusion of the Governments and observers involved that it would be difficult to have general acceptance of an amnesty program without that occurring.

I raised the matter particularly with the Government of El Salvador. As the House knows, there have been two explicit exceptions to the application of the amnesty in question. One had to do with the death of the bishop, and the other had to do with the death, I believe, of the human rights leader to whom the Hon. Member made reference.

Some days ago, before my departure, the Hon. Member asked me if I would report to the House on my trip to Central America. I am going to accept that suggestion and I look forward to making a report here tomorrow.

Mr. Blaikie: I appreciate the Minister's answer and I hope he also appreciates that there is a difference between rough justice and injustice.

HONDURAS—PRESENCE OF CONTRA FORCES

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg—Birds Hill): Mr. Speaker, did the Minister have an opportunity to press the Government of Honduras with respect to its position *vis-à-vis* the Contras now on its territory, and what was the response?

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, as the Hon. Member knows, on November 5 the Honduras Foreign Minister spoke to the Organization of American States. He set forth a quite detailed proposal that would allow action by both the Government of Honduras and the Government of Nicaragua regarding the use of their territory. There has now been an informal response by Nicaraguan authorities to that proposal.

My understanding is that there will be initially informal discussions to see if an agreement can be worked out by the Governments of both countries that will allow the kind of compliance that would not only deal with the question of Contra bases or Contra activity in Honduras but also with problems of a similar kind which might be occurring on Nicaraguan soil.

Mr. Speaker: I should bring to the attention of the House that I have received a notice of a question of privilege from the Hon. Member for Sarnia—Lambton (Mr. James) and I will hear him now.

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PRIVILEGE

ALLEGATIONS AGAINST COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN

Mr. Ken James (Sarnia—Lambton): Mr. Speaker, I have reference to a question of privilege raised by the Hon. Member for Broadview—Greenwood (Ms. McDonald) on November