

Financing of Bilingualism Programs

decided on this amount; the minister has not told us. It seems to me it would have been much more sensible and, in my respectful submission, would have shown a great deal more good faith on the part of the federal government if it had continued discussions with the provincial governments, produced some kind of plan—or have the provinces produce plans for the promotion of bilingualism—made some kind of estimate of the cost and then related the cost to the total obligations of the federal treasury. Under such a procedure the figure might then be \$35 million or \$65 million or something else. But I am appalled at what I consider to be this totally bureaucratic approach of saying, without knowing what the plans are going to be, without having discussed exactly what they will be, without knowing what the cost will be: "You make plans but we place a limit of \$50 million on those plans no matter what they may be." It seems to me this is not the proper approach to this kind of problem.

• (2:20 p.m.)

I conclude by reminding the House if I have to remind it, of my dedication to the bilingual character of this country. Therefore I cannot but greet with pleasure the federal government's involvement and its assumption of its responsibilities. I just hope that the fears I have expressed will in the future prove unjustified.

[*Translation*]

Mr. André Fortin (Lotbinière): Mr. Speaker, we consider it excellent policy to provide the provinces with funds for joint financing of education of minority groups of one of the official languages so that they may achieve equality with the majority group, provided the rights and powers of provinces in the field of education are respected.

I should like to remind the minister that education comes under the exclusive jurisdiction of the provinces, under section 93 of the British North America Act, and urge him to keep this in mind during his discussions with the provincial representatives. We trust, Mr. Speaker, that the federal government will proceed cautiously and respect this principle, which is embodied in the Constitution.

It is obvious that on the pretense of curing a national malaise, our action should not become for the provinces another source of frustration and dissatisfaction against federalism, whatever our intentions are, if we do not comply with the terms of confederation.

[Mr. Lewis.]

Mr. Speaker, we believe that federalism must be flexible so as to respect the identity of the individual while guaranteeing its own unity and Canadian characteristic in a bicultural and bilingual atmosphere. We rejoice at the minister's statement and action, yet they leave us confused about respecting the terms of confederation.

It is utopian to imagine that all Canadians can become bilingual. However, we sincerely believe that it should be possible for anyone who wants to do so.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to conclude my remarks by saying that it is up to the federal government to help the provinces finance the program for bilingualism, show every respect for the identity and characteristics of each province, and provide for all equal opportunities to see their rights respected.

It proved more expensive for the province of Quebec to ensure the respect of bilingualism than for any other province.

Mr. Speaker, if it were possible to make such a legislation retroactive, I firmly believe that the federal government would not be in a position to repay the astronomical sums of money which the province of Quebec spent to maintain federalism, while in other provinces unilingualism was promoted. If every province will extend to its minority the same respect which the province of Quebec has shown to its minority, we of the Ralliement créditiste believe that national unity is possible.

That is why we are pleased with the initiative of the federal government, provided naturally that it will respect the identity and the jurisdiction of each of the provinces.

[*English*]

PUBLIC SERVICE STAFF RELATIONS ACT**PROVISION OF PENALTIES FOR FAILURE TO IMPLEMENT ARBITRATION AWARDS**

Mr. Lloyd Francis (Ottawa West) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-145, to amend the Public Service Staff Relations Act.

Some hon. Members: Explain.

Mr. Francis: The purpose of this bill is to provide penalties which would be binding upon senior government employees for failure to implement arbitration awards within the period of 90 days specified by section 74 of the Public Service Staff Relations Act.

Motion agreed to, bill read the first time and ordered to be printed.