

Government Orders

The Reform Party supports the promotion of language policy centred on the following:

[Translation]

first, freedom of expression; second, recognition of the French language in Quebec and of the English language in other provinces; third, recognition of bilingualism in important federal institutions, including the Parliament of Canada and the Supreme Court; and finally, recognition of bilingualism wherever the number of people warrants the presence of services in both official languages.

[English]

Explaining further so as to be perfectly clear, let me quote the hon. member for Nanaimo—Cowichan. He explained during second reading of the bill that the official languages policy is divisive. For proof of this, one need only to be reminded of the pejorative, anti-women comments that were hurled my way yesterday by the member for Carleton—Gloucester.

My hon. colleague from Nanaimo—Cowichan stated that “the mandate calls for the advancement of the equality of status and the use of English and French. Under this mandate the ministry will spend \$24 million this year on official languages in education. The Constitutions of 1867 and 1982 clearly state that education is a provincial responsibility. Why then is this ministry spending a quarter of a billion dollars in this area of provincial jurisdiction?”

● (1235)

We oppose this bill for a number of reasons, only one of which is our opposition to the government's official languages policy. I would like to quote the profound words of my colleague from Surrey North when she questioned the need for this department.

The hon. member stated: “Webster's dictionary defines heritage as something that we inherit at birth; in other words it is like a legacy. It is something or anything that is derived from the past or from tradition. By definition then, heritage of an individual or a group or a country is what we actually inherit at birth, that which was created and moulded by the actions of those who preceded us just as what we do now in our lifetime will become the heritage or the mould of the lifestyle for those who come after us”.

She went on to say: “Those in the present inherit a base from the past to build on for those in the future. Instead of there being a specific Department of Canadian Heritage, all departments or ministries should be responsible through the legislation they propose for the development and maintenance of everything we do, of the heritage for those who are to follow, not just a single department”.

Let me share with the House a story about a man by the name of Glenn Bradley. I found his story in the book *Worlds Apart: New Immigrant Voices* written by Milly Charon. His story is titled “The Dilemma of Multiculturalism”. This is Glenn's story and it constitutes the bulk of my remarks today. There is a poignancy to this story that I will leave with the House.

Language and nationality are current issues in today's society. In view of the laws and general social outlook in Quebec, one has to realize that to survive here, one must become French. Many of the language problems exist today because the younger generation did not want to learn to speak French, perhaps because of their parents who may have been immigrants and wished to keep the old ways and mother tongue dominant.

I grew up under the new age of political reform in Quebec. The social phenomenon of the quiet revolution and le Front de Libération du Québec were part of my childhood surroundings. These events played a part in the rise of the supremacy of the French language in Quebec.

My parents witnessed these social reforms and decided that if I was to have a future in Quebec I would have to learn to speak French.

They could have rebelled in their own way. They could have brought me up with all the Scottish traditions they had been raised with. However, teatime, the clans, and Robert Burns were not to play a part in my childhood education.

My family roots are deep in Scottish soil. My parents and all my ancestors were born in Scotland. My parents decided to leave their homeland in the late 1950s. At that time, Quebec was looking for skilled workers.

My father, who had been an engineer on merchant ships sailing out of Scottish ports, decided that Quebec would be the ideal place in Canada where his skills would land him a job without too much difficulty.

Quebec City was my parents' first stop, but when they realized that Montreal was the industrial centre of the province, they moved to St. Michel, a suburb.

My father worked in the oil refineries in the east end of Montreal and continued to do so even after the family moved to Duvernay, a predominantly French Canadian sector of the city of Laval. They chose Duvernay deliberately because they realized that the children they were planning to have one day would be able to learn French by association with the other people in the area.

During my early school days in the late 1960s, my father had decided that the shift work in the refineries would interfere with his responsibilities as a parent. Education was booming in Quebec, and the need for technical teachers was great. My father capitalized on this and easily landed a job with the Protestant School Board of Greater Montreal as a metalwork teacher for Monklands High School in Notre-Dame-de-Grâce. At the time, my mother was the vice-principal of Laval Highcliff Elementary School which I would attend.

Because both my parents were involved in education at different levels, it made them realize that if their offspring were to flourish in this country, they would need a good education.

In the late sixties and seventies the Laval school started testing its program with bilingual classes for elementary school children. Highcliff was chosen as the test school, and a group of students who were considered above average would take their classes in French. I was lucky to participate in that program.