

Oral Questions

We will have a very good opportunity during the next month to test to what extent Canadians are willing to accept the radical changes that are needed to reach the targets we would like to set.

Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I am sure the journalists who reported his comments will be happy to release their transcripts of what they heard him say.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, yesterday, according to the newspapers, the minister said that the statement by the Energy ministers had some positive aspects, including the need for continuing the fight against emissions, but, he said, we must do more. If that is his position, what specific recommendations does he have today for his government? And if he doesn't want to give us his recommendations, how can we take him seriously on a subject that is so important to the future of this country?

[*English*]

Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, I think that this government will be the first in the history of Canada to set targets in terms of CO₂ reduction.

The decisions we have to make will have to be taken by 1992, at least, when the other countries of the world, led for the most part by Canada, will enter into an international convention to deal with climate change. If it is possible, we should do it earlier. I say "if possible" because we are dealing with possibilities here.

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OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the acting Prime Minister.

For months we on this side of the House have been telling the government that it is not doing enough to promote the Official Languages Act and that that failure is a direct cause of much of the language tension in this country.

More specifically, we have demanded that the regulations relating to the Official Languages Act, passed 21 months ago in this House, be tabled. Still we have no regulations and no action.

This morning in an interview on radio station CHEZ-106 the Commissioner of Official Languages, D'Iberville Fortier, also criticized the government's slowness in acting. In fact the commissioner has threatened to resign in order to protest the absolute lack of action by this government.

Will the Prime Minister or the acting Prime Minister tell this House that he finally accepts the fact that the government has failed in this dossier and that it is a part of a major problem in this country that has to be addressed and resolved soon?

Hon. Robert de Cotret (President of the Treasury Board): Mr. Speaker, we are well aware of the situation with respect to official languages in this country. I had a chance to consult with the commissioner just a few days ago, before he released his report. We had a frank chat about it.

As I mentioned yesterday in answer to the hon. member for Ottawa—Vanier, Bill C-72 imposes a rather complex and rather special process for consultation. This process has been gone through, after the first project of regulations was prepared. Obviously, if you are going to have consultations, the net presumption is that you are going to listen to the people you consult with.

Thus a second project was prepared. The next round of consultations will be getting under way very shortly with the major players, including the Commissioner of Official Languages.

This is very important. It is the first reform in 19 years. We want it to be meaningful. We want it to be well accepted, fair and equitable for all Canadians.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier): Mr. Speaker, we phoned all the agencies today. Consultations have taken place and have now been completed, but I will get back to that later.

I would like to say to the minister that the Prime Minister of this country said the Commissioner of Official Languages was an impartial, sensitive and objective observer of language questions in this country. The Commissioner said on radio, yesterday or this morning, that it was as if the government were afraid to implement its own legislation which received practically unanimous support in the House two years ago. Considering these statements, does the minister responsible intend to table the regulations today or at least issue a statement