

• (1810)

[Translation]

ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE—SITUATION OF
FRANCOPHONES—INQUIRY WHETHER SOLICITOR GENERAL
HAS ACTION PLAN—REDUCTION IN FRANCOPHONE MANPOWER

Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier): Madam Speaker, again I rise to say how disappointed and somewhat disillusioned I feel with respect to the linguistic situation in Royal Canadian Mounted Police services. Again I am very sorry that I have to raise the issue, for it would seem some people are reluctant to discuss this matter.

Incidentally, Madam Speaker, tomorrow the Committee on Official Languages will be hearing the Solicitor General, the man responsible for these cases, be it the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, or the Canadian Security Intelligence Service, or Correctional Service Canada. As I said, tomorrow we will have an opportunity to ask the Minister a few questions and perhaps, at least I hope, secure a commitment about his taking the necessary corrective measures and making whatever arrangements may be required with the deputy heads of the various agencies so they will not only report to him on progress made but also ensure that they will rectify and change their attitude concerning the linguistic question.

Madam Speaker, the problems experienced by the RCMP with respect to the official languages are not new, everybody knows that. I raised them in the House 13 times in the past seven or eight months, and I am not the only one doing that because the Commissioner of Official Languages had this to say in his 1981 annual report, and I quote:

—the RCMP's foot-dragging in the areas of language of work and Franco-phone participation among police personnel is disquieting.

This was in 1981, and things have not changed since then. The problem is not new, we are in 1987 and the problem is just as disquieting and worrying.

In August one could read in the *Pony Express*—an official internal RCMP publication—that they were planning a reduction in the number of regular officers hired by the RCMP from the 20 per cent established, on the basis of figures set a number of years ago already, and this was to be done as a result of an agreement between the Government and the RCMP, a reduction to 14 per cent.

There was a flurry of activities at the time, several questions were raised in the House, there were debates, and when we know how the government machinery works . . . I thought that the day when I received from the President of the Treasury Board a firm commitment that the Solicitor General was going to get personally involved in this question, this problem, and set everything straight by means of a comprehensive plan which was to be submitted to him in the very near future . . . In fact, in his answer to me in early May he had told me: Within a week! Here we are, June 15, and I have been waiting for this RCMP comprehensive plan for more than a month.

When I raised this question last week, Thursday when speaking on the supply motion, to make this Government

Adjournment Debate

understand that what we want is to obtain firm guidelines, specific policies, clear objectives, I was told: A report will be released. Sure enough, they released the report of the internal group on the Canadian Security Intelligence Service, and I read it. Tomorrow we will have time to put questions to the Minister, I hope, concerning this famous report, and I am grateful to the Government for making this report public.

What I am concerned about and what I should like to get is the official comprehensive plan of the RCMP, approved by the Solicitor General and delivered, at his request, to the President of the Treasury Board. I want this plan because it was promised to the House and because it might help us to better understand and appreciate the objectives of this Government concerning official languages.

Madam Speaker, this is a serious problem which means that today we are in difficulty, and not only for the language of work, because the RCMP is almost entirely anglophone.

There have been problems obtaining services in French; we have received complaints; the Committee has examined several. Instead of ensuring an equitable participation of both linguistic groups to reflect Canada's respect for both these groups and for our duality, the RCMP wanted to reduce the proportion of francophone staff from 20 to 14 per cent. I protested vigorously. Apparently, there is now a trend to a more generous policy. Madam Speaker, I just do not understand why, again today, on June 15, the Government is still so reluctant to make these linguistic guidelines, policies and plans public.

To conclude, Madam Speaker, I want the House to know that I wrote the Prime Minister a four-page letter. I must confess that I was feeling quite discouraged. I was getting nowhere with the Minister: one day he was telling me one thing, and the next something else. I therefore wrote the Prime Minister a well thought out four-page letter in which I described step by step how this issue had developed. I received first an acknowledgement. Then, a little later, specifically on May 25 (I had written the Prime Minister on May the 5th), I received a letter signed by Mr. Donald J.M. Cummer, which stated:

Further to your letter dated May 5, the Prime Minister has asked me to thank you for your comments on this issue—

—concerning the RCMP, the Security Intelligence Service of Canada, and the Correctional Service Canada. I quote further:

—and to send a copy of your letter to the Hon. James Kelleher, that it may receive the undivided attention it deserves. Rest assured that Mr. Kelleher will contact you shortly.

Madam Speaker, when I write the Prime Minister and ask him to do something about a minister whose resignation I have been seeking because he is unable to manage his own affairs, I find it quite insulting to be told: "Your letter has been forwarded to the accused and he will reply himself." Madam Speaker, I find that totally unacceptable because this letter asked the Prime Minister to give particular attention to the