

*Adjournment Debate*

must stress once again that I deplore that the Prime Minister did not have the courage to enshrine in the Constitutional Act, 1987, the obligation for the federal Government to promote linguistic duality. That is why we in the Liberal Party have suggested an amendment to the Meech Lake Accord which would bind the federal Government to promote linguistic duality for minorities while allowing provinces to make that obligation binding upon them by passing a resolution in the provincial legislature if they wish to do so.

We do not want to impose this on anyone, but we are simply saying that, first of all, the federal Government should not only preserve, but also promote this duality, and that, when they deem it appropriate to do so, the provinces should have the right to follow suit simply by passing a constitutional resolution.

I can see some problems, Madam Speaker, because people are always telling me that we are moving toward this objective gradually and that we shall reach it eventually. However, as you will recall, Madam Speaker, we recently had a provincial election in Ontario during which we went through some difficult times. Certain groups attacked bilingualism in Ontario and the Leader of the Conservative Party, Mr. Grossman, stated firmly and as regressively as possible that Ontario would never be bilingual under a Conservative Government.

What can I say, Madam Speaker? The democratic process, and I am happy about this, rejected Mr. Grossman and he had to admit defeat. I am not saying that he lost everything on the language issue, but he certainly did not show an open mind about it.

In the case of Alberta, I asked the Prime Minister what he did to try to convince our friends in Alberta that a Member of the provincial Legislature had the right to speak in his own language, which is one of the official languages of this country. I do not know what the Parliamentary Secretary will reply. I do not know whether he did something, whether he wrote or whether he took any other action. But I should like to think that in this country of ours, in any legislature in Canada—provincial and here of course where it is spoken, as it is in Quebec and in New Brunswick—I should like to think that in Ontario, in Manitoba and in all western provinces where there are francophones who wish to express themselves, they would have the right to speak in French or in English if they wish, whenever they feel like it and without wondering whether they will be allowed to do so. And if they do, for Heaven's sake do not ask them to apologize for that, as Mr. Piquette was asked to do!

Madam Speaker, I want to conclude my brief remarks by saying to the Parliamentary Secretary: Well, I should imagine we will be talking about the official languages in the near future. We have had in this country experiences which resulted in progress in this field. Let us hope that in Alberta, let us hope that elsewhere in Canada—recently in New Brunswick

we heard about Lynn Lévesque who had a deplorable experience with bilingualism when she applied for a job in a post office. We have had examples such as APEC, the Association for the Protection of English Canada, which has been acting up and would have us believe that everything is in danger, that the French power is taking over.

Madam Speaker, I think we are making some progress, and the case of Mr. Piquette is another example which can be a lesson to us. We must take measures, we must take action, we must tell the legislatures: Be generous, be patient, do not worry, we are not threatening you when we speak French in Canada.

• (1820)

[English]

**Mr. Murray Cardiff (Parliamentary Secretary to Solicitor General of Canada):** Madam Speaker, on June 30 during Question Period, the Hon. Member for Ottawa—Vanier (Mr. Gauthier) directed a question to the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney). It concerned what is now commonly called “The Piquette Affair”, which pertained to the use of the French language by a Member of the Legislature in the Province of Alberta.

The Hon. Member asked the Prime Minister if he was prepared to take action, and “call the Premier of the province to put pressure on his Alberta cousins and friends, so they will finally understand, once and for all, that French and English are the official languages of this country . . . and that it is unthinkable that a Francophone should suffer any restrictions in Alberta, any more than an Anglophone would in Quebec?”

The Minister of Justice (Mr. Hnatyshyn) has requested that I elaborate on the questions raised by the Hon. Member, in light of the new legislation on official languages contained in Bill C-72, and tabled on June 25 of this year.

Neither Bill C-72, nor the Meech Lake Accord contemplate any measure that could deprive a provincial legislature of any degree of its sovereignty. The tools that the federal Government has at its disposal in matters that fall within the jurisdiction of a provincial legislation are reason, suasion, and good example.

What the historic achievement of Meech Lake and the important measures contained in Bill C-72, an Act respecting the status and use of the official languages of Canada, demonstrate, is the will of the Government to advance the equality of status and use of French and English throughout the country, to promote the linguistic rights of all Canadians in a spirit and a framework of co-operation with the provinces.

• (1825)

For example, according to Subparagraph (d) of Subsection 42(1) of Bill C-72, the Secretary of State can take measures to “encourage and assist provincial Governments to support the development of English and French linguistic minority