

The Address—Mr. Allmand

When one says things like this, very often he or she may be accused of being insensitive to those people who want to protect the French language. I want to rebut that very clearly. The Anglophone population in Quebec now stands solidly behind the principle that the French language and culture in Quebec must be protected, promoted, and allowed to flourish not only in Quebec but throughout the country. We agree with that. Most of us are having our children educated in immersion courses or in French schools. At the present time, I understand that the Anglophone youth population of Quebec is more bilingual than the Francophone youth population. There is goodwill there. The type of law that was introduced by the Premier of Quebec does not support that type of unity between the two language groups.

I want to remind the House that in 1982, when the first draft of the Constitution was presented to the House, it did not contain the notwithstanding clause. It was a very good document and I supported it 100 per cent. I had always been in favour of an entrenched Charter of Rights. I was in favour of the repatriation, and I was in favour of an amendment clause which had been required for many generations.

However, at the last minute, following the counsel of the Supreme Court of Canada, there was another federal-provincial conference. It was at that point, at the request of certain provinces and not the federal Government, that the notwithstanding clause and other clauses were introduced, such as Section 59 which weakened language rights and other clauses which weakened aboriginal rights. I finally voted against the Constitution. I made my point clear at that time and I am consistent today.

If the Prime Minister says he was not treated fairly yesterday by the Leader of the Opposition, let him make as strong a statement in favour of minority language rights as did the Leader of the Opposition yesterday.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Allmand: Let him stand in his place and say similar words, not only for the Anglophones in Quebec, but for the Francophones throughout the country, both in Quebec and in the other provinces. If the other Ministers in his cabinet do not agree with what he says, then to show his sincerity on this matter they should be fired.

I wish to deal with some other matters in the short time left to me. At the very beginning of the Speech from the Throne the Government states:

My Ministers believe that continued progress in reducing the deficit is a vital necessity if Canada's economic well-being is to be secured.

• (1240)

Madam Speaker, what a farce, what nonsense! This sort of declaration comes from a Government which in the pre-electoral period last year, that is, from May 30 to September 13, 1988—that short period before the election—announced or promised new programs amounting to \$12.2 billion. If we add on the promises to buy a fleet of nuclear submarines and 300 new tanks, we see the promises amount to \$20 billion. This is in the pre-electoral period.

Then, during the election campaign, after the election was called, another \$16.9 billion in promises were added on top of the \$20 billion. In the by-election in Lac-Saint-Jean where the famous Minister of the Environment (Mr. Bouchard), at one time the Secretary of State, was elected, in order to get him elected this Government, which says it is concerned about deficits, promised commitments amounting to \$163 million. That was in just one by-election.

During the last Parliament the Government bestowed benefits amounting to \$288 million in the Prime Minister's riding of Manicouagan.

After the election in the Speech from the Throne we get a statement whereby the Government states that reducing the deficit is a vital necessity. There is no doubt that some of the projects promised before the election and during the election are good ones and should be implemented. But what is wrong is the hypocrisy and the dishonesty of the Government. Before the election it was promising and spending money like prodigal sons on everyone's favourite project from the East Coast to the West Coast. Now, immediately after the election, it is setting us up to cancel these projects and cut back on many others.

The Conservatives' pre-electoral and electoral tactics were a massive con game on the Canadian people and have to be condemned in the strongest terms.

I refer to an article written by John Ferguson, a well-known economic journalist in the country, an article in his column published on February 4, 1989, in which the headline reads "Tories do sudden about-face on severity of the debt". In the article Mr. Ferguson points out, and correctly so, that in the Budget of the Minister of Finance of last February he said: "Our challenge in 1984 was to restore fiscal stability and rebuild credibility in the management of Government finances". "That is exactly what we did", said the Minister of Finance. So in other words, they had solved that. We were given the impression that it was the time