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guages, to point out where the administration has failed to live up to the principles in the act.

No commissioner that I know of has criticized the principles and the general policy of the act. As a matter of fact, all commissioners agree that without the act things would be much worse with respect to our language minorities.

As to whether it is working well or not working well, these are relative concepts. In fact, there are now 162,000 francophones outside Quebec in 700 French primary schools. There are 23,000 francophones outside Quebec in 45 colleges and universities. Four million Canadians, or 16 per cent of the population, speak both official languages.

● (1710)

The second criticism he made is that it is too expensive. Again, I do not know of any Commissioner of Official Languages who criticized the entire policy as being too expensive. The present commissioner criticized the bonus program and suggested we get rid of it but he has not said that the policy is too expensive in a global sense.

Commissioners have criticized specifics within the policy and asked that they be corrected, but not that the entire policy be cancelled or cut back.

With respect to expense, in fact it only costs 20 cents out of every \$100 that the federal government spends on programs. That comes to three cents per day per Canadian. In response to the member of the Reform Party, it will not keep many hospitals open that are closing in his constituency. The cost for official language policy is a very small percentage of our entire budget.

Finally, he says it is divisive. Again I do not know of any Commissioner of Official Languages who says that the principles of the act are divisive. It is divisive in the sense that some people will not accept the principles in the Official Languages Act. It is their democratic right to oppose it and we hear that today. I do not think the reason, the cause of the divisiveness, is the principles in the act. It is just that some people will not recognize the rights of linguistic minorities.

The polls that I have looked at—I do not want to spend too much time, but they are on the record—indicate that from 60 to 75 per cent of Canadians support the policies in the Official Languages Act.

The purpose of the Official Languages Act is to provide legally enforceable language rights and language justice for the two official language communities in Canada, that is the one million francophones outside of Quebec and the approximately 800,000 anglophones in Quebec. It is also to serve the interests

of the six million francophones in Canada, including those in Quebec because they are a minority in the entire country.

It is a law that is based principally or inspired by a need for tolerance, understanding and generosity. I am pleased that our government is going to bring back the court challenges program because it is no use having rights in law if you cannot enforce them in the courts.

There is no obligation to become bilingual under the Official Languages Act but I heard members of the Reform Party once again saying today that French is being thrust down their throats. No language is being thrust down the throat of the consumer of services. It is true that if you are going to provide those services some people have to speak French and some people have to speak English in order to provide the services but generally speaking that is in the institution.

By the way, 70 per cent of all federal government positions are unilingual either English or French. Only 30 per cent of the positions are bilingual.

I thought I had until 5.15. I wrote down the time. How much time do I have left?

The Deputy Speaker: Zero.

Mr. Allmand: I have zero time on such an important subject.

Unfortunately we do not have the time to debate this important matter in the way it should be debated. I have many points I would still like to make. I will have to come back on another day.

Please put the motion before the House again so we can all get at it once more.

Mr. Darrel Stinson (Okanagan—Shuswap): Mr. Speaker, I listened to the hon. member say that the Reform Party has been saying this is being thrust down people's throats. No, it has been thrust on to the backs of the taxpayers at the sacrifice of hospitalization in this country. We have to prioritize. This is all we are saying on this side of the House.

How can I tell people in my constituency that they have to wait for months for hospitalization and for operations and still fund official bilingualism from the pockets of the taxpayers? They do not understand it. It is not a priority out there. We do not have the numbers.

● (1715)

Mr. Allmand: Mr. Speaker, of course health care is important. I do not have the figures here today as to how much at both the federal and provincial levels we are spending on health care, but it is probably not enough. However, to suggest that you can save hospitals with the little bits of money that we are spending on our bilingual program at the federal level is to mislead Canadians. It plays to the minds and hearts of bigots when you do that.