

We are told that, as things stand, the Official Languages Act would apply fully only to Montreal airports and that the foreseeable majority of local airport authorities would actually be located in non-designated areas with regards to the choice of the working language. What sophistry, what callousness! Is there no English-speaking community in the Montreal area?

Secondly, have we not been told that negotiations are under way concerning the other eight airports, including Moncton and some in Ontario? Therefore, Montreal is in no way the only one concerned. There are also airports in the three provinces with designated areas. Finally, if airports are now governed by the distinction between provinces with designated areas and the others, why would the minority communities of these three provinces lose acquired rights and the other provinces and their minorities not gain anything? I do not have time to explain the impact that this will have in Moncton, but I could paint a picture that would not be pretty. Do we not have enough with COR in New Brunswick and the Reform Party in Canada?

That is what those arguments for maintaining unjustifiable provisions are worth. That is also why my colleagues, well-informed citizens in our regions and I are deeply worried and ask the government to thoroughly review its position on this issue, especially at this critical time in our history. Are there not enough clouds already? Must we really add Bill C-15?

In its present form, Bill C-15 will be a bad piece of legislation because it contradicts, at least in spirit, a fundamental and almost constitutional law of this country. In the case of New Brunswick, which is the only officially bilingual province whose two communities are designated by law and soon, we hope, in the Constitution, it is more than a setback, it is offensive nonsense.

While discussing the testimony of two successive Official Languages Commissioners, the sponsor of this bill in the Senate suggested that we should not let ourselves be impressed because they were only doing their job. When he said that, I am sure that he did not want to show contempt for Parliament, of which the Commissioner is an officer. But in my opinion, he has done just that since, in fact, the government is now asking Parliament to go back and erode rights that it granted, to set a precedent which, on two important points, tends to weaken, for no valid reason a homogeneous and irreplaceable system of language rights.

Honourable senators, that is why I support the amendment made in committee by Senator Molgat, and I will vote in favour of the motion tabled in this House by Senator Frith, seconded by Senator Fairbairn.

Hon. Norbert Thériault: Honourable senators, I will be very brief since, as I well know, coming after Senator Louis Robichaud has never been an easy task. I would also like to express my support for the comments made by Senator Simard. I find him very courageous. Once again, I congratulate him. I agree with the comments made by my colleagues on this side of the Chamber.

I especially appeal to a few senators, namely Senator Robertson, who fought, with Senator Simard, for the enactment of the *Official Languages Act* in New Brunswick, my friend Senator Ross and the Leader of the Government in the Senate, who knows the situation. I implore them to accept Senator Frith's amendment or to review the whole structure of Bill C-15.

There is no hurry. I am told that it is already in progress. I am concerned as a minority Francophone from New Brunswick. I am also concerned, in the present climate, with what is going on in Montreal because the people of Quebec should know that Francophones outside Quebec have suffered enormously from the enactment of Bill 178. I am concerned every time the Francophone community in Quebec takes steps which might seem necessary. They may be necessary, I do not judge them. But, in the eyes of the majority, these actions impinge on the rights of the Anglophone minority in Quebec and Francophones outside Quebec pay the price.

I cannot conceive, as Senator Robichaud so aptly said, that the authorities being created might be forced to set aside the section of *Official Languages Act* that should apply.

On the subject of Air Canada, the excuse is often given that the *Official Languages Act* applied to Air Canada because the government still controlled, I think, 57 per cent of the shares. I am told that the government would eventually like to sell all its shares in Air Canada. Will the *Official Languages Act* apply then, or will we try to invoke the same arguments as today?

I would first urge Quebecers to understand the point of view of us Francophones outside Quebec. If they refuse, I would urge Anglophones in the Maritimes, in association with the Government Leader in the Senate, to make representations to the government so that, through Senator Frith's motion or by any other means, Senator Simard's suggestion can be accepted before the end of the third reading of this bill.

Hon. Pierre De Bané: Honourable senators, I propose the adjournment of the debate. I intend to participate in the debate on this issue. As the previous speaker said, I think other senators, namely those from Quebec, should also take part in it, mindful of what Canon Groulx, this great Quebec nationalist once said: what Quebec never understood is that French Canadians from other provinces are the first line of the French fact in Canada and, were they to disappear, the French in Quebec would soon follow them.

Hon. Thérèse Lavoie-Roux: Honourable senators, I had some comments to make on senator De Bané's remarks.

Hon. Eymard Corbin: Mr. Speaker, there is a motion from senator De Bané for the adjournment of the debate.

Hon. Royce Frith (Leader of the Opposition): Does Senator Lavoie-Roux wish to participate in this debate right now? I am sure Senator De Bané would be willing to give her the floor. Or does she want to comment on what Senator De Bané said? I just want to make sure, it is not a negative reaction towards any intervention Senator Lavoie-Roux would make.

Senator Lavoie-Roux: Honourable senators, if I have heard, not understood, but heard correctly, Senator De Bané wanted