

uncertain as to whether he would apologize for having used his mother tongue in the Chamber. I happen to know that sanctions which may be used against Mr. Piquette range from a fine to imprisonment, and even the suspension of his parliamentary privileges. And this is due to the fact that the Speaker intervened and directed a parliamentary committee to review the whole question of official languages in Alberta.

I am not passing judgment on the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly. I am seeking the assistance of the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) with respect to the application of a basic principle, and the Prime Minister, being one of those who has been generous and understanding over the years, will surely agree with me that the right to speak French or English anywhere in this country is a basic right of all Canadians. I would suggest that a Member of a Legislative Assembly—in Ontario, in Quebec, in Alberta, or elsewhere—has the right to speak in his mother tongue without being harassed by his colleagues.

So, Mr. Speaker, I fail to see what the point of order which was raised is all about, but if we are to debate the issue I would be prepared to share my notes with the Minister and tell him why I raised this question in the House today. It is a matter of national interest, it is a question which concerns minorities and which happens to be the subject of a parliamentary initiative on the part of the Government which introduced a very important bill last week, a measure which, at first blush, I am very pleased to support.

There is no doubt that Mr. Piquette's rights were encroached upon, I believe they were. So it becomes a point of debate as to whether his rights were encroached upon, and I think so. Must he apologize? I do not think so.

• (1520)

[English]

Mr. Speaker: I thank the Hon. Member for Ottawa—Vanier (Mr. Gauthier) and the Right Hon. Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Clark) for their remarks. I know that they are completely at one in terms of the general principle. The Right Hon. Secretary of State was clearly rising to indicate that the facts were complex and that perhaps not all the facts had been brought forward in the questioning earlier of the Right Hon. Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney). I thank both the Minister and the Hon. Member for their interventions.

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PERMANENT AND PROVISIONAL STANDING ORDERS

AMENDMENT TO ESTABLISH STANDING COMMITTEE FOR THE DISABLED AND THE HANDICAPPED

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, there have been discussions with the House Leaders opposite and I think you

would find a disposition of the House to accept a proposal which would amend the Standing Orders and have the effect of establishing a Standing Committee for the Disabled and the Handicapped. I think this is something all Hon. Members would welcome.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Mazankowski: The proposal is as follows:

That Standing Order 89(2) be amended by inserting after the line "(d) Consumer and Corporate Affairs" the line:

"(e) Disabled and Handicapped"

and that all subsequent lines be relettered accordingly.

Mr. Speaker: Does the Hon. Deputy Prime Minister and President of the Privy Council (Mr. Mazankowski) have the unanimous consent of the House to move his motion?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Roland de Corneille (Eglinton—Lawrence): Mr. Speaker, I wish to express the appreciation of the Liberal caucus that this move has been made to establish a permanent committee on the disabled and the handicapped. I commend the Government for this move. In addition, that particular committee has always displayed a very fine spirit of nonpartisanship. I want also to commend you, Mr. Speaker, for the outstanding leadership you have given in this field in terms of making the House of Commons a more accessible and fairer place for the disabled and the handicapped to enjoy and participate in.

Mr. Speaker: I thank the Hon. Member for Eglinton—Lawrence (Mr. de Corneille).

Mr. Neil Young (Beaches): Mr. Speaker, I want to join with the remarks of the Hon. Member for Eglinton—Lawrence (Mr. de Corneille) and express my appreciation and that of my caucus to the House Leaders of all Parties in the House for agreeing to establish the Committee on the Disabled and the Handicapped as a permanent committee of the House.

This was the unanimous request of the committee as well as of disabled individuals and organizations representing them who have appeared before this committee over the years.

While I am on my feet, Mr. Speaker, I would also like to express my appreciation and that of the committee for the full support that you have given to the committee and to the issues with which that committee deals.

Hon. David Crombie (Secretary of State): Mr. Speaker, I would like to offer my appreciation to the Deputy Prime Minister (Mr. Mazankowski) and my colleagues in the other two Parties with regard to this move. Indeed, it is a milestone in the awareness in this country of handicapped and disabled people. Those in the field understand fully that in the next five to seven years there will be a revolution with regard to the way in which handicapped and disabled people will be able to gain