

That speaks for itself. The Government of Canada, through the government House leader, in refusing to recognize Bill C-269, an act to recognize aboriginal languages within the Constitution, is really telling us what priorities it has in terms of aboriginal issues. It tells the aboriginal people that it has put forward the aboriginal issues of the day to recognize the aboriginal peoples' concerns, but it does not want to follow through by recognizing the need for aboriginal languages to be recognized in the Constitution by themselves.

Again, I would also like to quote from a friend of mine, Blandina Makkik, from the Inuit Broadcasting Corporation who calls the \$600,000 cut to the Inuit Broadcasting Corporation spiritual genocide, which is very descriptive of how the people feel.

I would like to tell the Canadian people how important it is that the aboriginal languages be recognized because, as everyone knows, language is part of your culture.

• (1240)

I am sure that the government House leader never had to cope with the problem of not being able to speak his own language because he was forbidden to do so, as we were when we were in residential schools or when we were in public schools. I am sure that he never had to struggle with that. I am sure that he would never understand why we feel we have to be recognized separately and on our own. Again I would like to quote an article from the National Aboriginal Communications Society on the issue of cutting back on communications, which reads:

It is particularly important that Native people have access to communications giving the Aboriginal perspective during a time when such issues as self-government, Aboriginal title and equality rights are being debated.

Madam Speaker, those are the few issues that we have and I thank you for your indulgence.

**Mrs. Pauline Browes (Parliamentary Secretary to Secretary of State of Canada and Minister of State (Multiculturalism and Citizenship)):** Madam Speaker, I am pleased to join in this debate. First, along with the number of speakers who have spoken concerning the importance of the aboriginal languages I want to be on record as stating how important I believe that this is.

### *Government Orders*

Having an opportunity to travel in the Northwest Territories and Yukon during the Charest commission on the Meech Lake Accord—McKenna proposals, it was a great experience for me to sit in the Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories where some 27 languages were being translated during the debate. The issue of aboriginal languages is one that is extremely important, but unfortunately this is not the issue we are debating today, although some who may be watching this debate may think that is exactly what we are debating.

What we are debating is an amendment to clause 2 of Bill C-37. I would just like to read from clause 2:

"heritage language" means a language, other than one of the official languages of Canada, that contributes to the linguistic heritage of Canada,—

That is how clause 2 in part reads and the amendment wishes to indicate that this does not include an aboriginal language of Canada.

I would just like to go back to the history of this clause. We had a lot of discussion in the committee on Bill C-37 about this very aspect of this clause. I am a bit surprised that we are debating it again at report stage, because we had such an extensive debate at committee stage concerning whether or not aboriginal languages should be included as part of the Heritage Languages Institute. When we reflect on the previously proposed legislation, Bill C-152 which was brought before the House of Commons prior to the election of 1988, this bill, practically in its entirety, was brought in, during the last Parliament, and was not passed because of the election.

In that previous proposed legislation aboriginal languages were not included. It was not stated whether they were included or not included; it was not mentioned. Then when we got to committee on Bill C-152, the Liberal Party and the NDP were insisting that aboriginal languages should be included. In fact they made a number of motions and at report stage a Liberal member amended the bill to say that the retention and use of languages including native and aboriginal languages should be included in this bill.

So here we are: we introduced this Bill C-37 into this Parliament. We have gone through committee stage. We have had extensive discussion about it. Now the Liberals and the NDP have completely reversed themselves from what their position was just a short time ago. I am