

Government Orders

languages of Canada, the Commissioner of Official Languages, and the court remedy.

Why did the government exempt Part V, Part VI and Part VII? Part V dealt with the fact that English and French are the languages of work in all federal institutions. Officers, employees and employers of all federal institutions have the right to use either of the official languages at work.

Part VI gives English and French speaking Canadians equal opportunities and the right to gain employment or advancement in the federal institution of their choice.

Part VII was a commitment of the Government of Canada to enhance the vitality of English and French linguistic minorities in Canada and to foster pro-recognition and use of both French and English languages in Canada.

It is difficult to understand why the government chose not to apply these parts of the Official Languages Act to Bill C-85.

Do I have to tell you, Mr. Speaker, that the Official Languages Act was passed some three years ago, I think it was July 1988? We are now into the spring of 1991 and we still have no regulations pertaining to that bill.

That may be part of the problem. If it is, government members have the power to move. They have the numbers. Why do they not use their numbers to impose upon the issues that are important? Indeed, why do they not use the numbers to do the right thing instead of using them all the time to try to get things done their way and doing things which in our view are not democratic or parliamentary?

We object strongly to the motion of closure being put on this Motion No. 1. We will vote against it.

Mr. Brian L. Gardiner (Prince George—Bulkley Valley): Mr. Speaker, I suppose I should say that I regret having to rise in the House today to debate the particular motion before the House which is currently being considered.

Before commenting on the substance of the motion, I would like to go through the course of events that has brought us to this stage now.

As you know, Mr. Speaker, we are not dealing with a nebulous concept such as some some of the practices of

Parliament. What we are dealing with in the House today is a very serious move by the current government to ram through a motion which will enable it to bring back to the floor of this House and its committees, legislation that by all rights should have been started fresh in this Parliament when the House prorogued just a short time ago.

• (1620)

Let us go through what we have dealt with so far. As the previous speaker mentioned, we are dealing with five bills which originated in April 1989 with the throne speech beginning the government session after the free trade debate. Those bills were introduced and made their way through the usual processes and readings in this House. The members on this side, and undoubtedly on the other side as well, had concerns about these bills and were bringing them forward in the House and in committee.

For whatever reason, the government did not feel they were important enough, or felt there was so much opposition to them, it did not make it a priority of this Parliament to deal with those bills prior to prorogation of the House.

Following prorogation, the House returned with a throne speech and, rather than seeking unanimous consent of the House to reintroduce these bills, as was done with one bill, the government has now introduced a motion which will in essence go back in history in but a day's time for this legislation to be dealt with.

With the introduction of this motion, questions were raised by members on this side of the House about the nature of this motion and the procedure the government was following. I read the brief ruling on what this government is doing this morning and heard it read in the House this afternoon. I think the government is putting the Speaker in the position of making difficult rulings. While we will, and have to, abide by the rulings, we hear in the wording of this ruling that the Speaker of this House is really giving an important and serious signal to the government about this kind of action.

I noted that the decision said that these were exceptional circumstances and unprecedented. These were the words used for the ruling that has allowed this particular motion to be before the House. What next? We have, of all things, a closure motion brought in a short time ago by this government meaning that by tonight when we