

notwithstanding clause. He thought it was justified. I believe that soon afterwards the present Minister of Transport (Mr. Bouchard), his neighbour in the Lac-Saint-Jean area, made similar remarks, as did other members of the Quebec Conservative caucus.

One can tolerate back-benchers having a different view from that of the Prime Minister. However, under our parliamentary system, one cannot tolerate important Ministers having different views from those of the Prime Minister on a subject like this. The Prime Minister was allowing the Government to speak with two voices, one to the nationalists in Quebec, another to the Anglophones in Quebec and the people outside Quebec. Members of the Government were speaking with a forked tongue; they were giving the impression that they were on both sides of the issue. On that, Mr. Speaker, I cannot congratulate the Government, and I cannot accept its policy.

If the Prime Minister was sincere in what he said to me on December 19, he should have fired the Secretary of State from the cabinet, and he should have fired the Minister of Transport from the cabinet.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Allmand:** Simply transferring him from the position of Secretary of State to another cabinet portfolio is not enough in our system of Government. Perhaps on a minor policy matter one could accept this, but this is not a minor policy matter. In this case we are discussing under what circumstances one can suspend the basic rights of this country. The Prime Minister stated that he did not support the use of the notwithstanding clause. The Secretary of State at the time, now the Minister of the Environment, stated that he did and that he thought it was essential that the notwithstanding clause be present.

In our system of Government one cannot tolerate that type of split within the cabinet. If the Prime Minister was sincere in what he said to me on December 19, he should fire the Secretary of State, now the Minister of the Environment, the Minister of Transport, and any other Minister in his cabinet who holds that position.

Today I accuse the Prime Minister of using double-talk to me on December 19. On that day he announced principles of which I can approve. He said the right thing. But then he backed off and allowed members of his Government to speak with different voices to different groups in this country.

*The Address—Mr. Allmand*

With respect to the sincerity of the Prime Minister with respect to the notwithstanding clause, and if he felt so strongly opposed to it, why was it not on the table for the constitutional discussions which took place at the time of the Meech Lake Accord? We could have recognised many of the principles contained in the Meech Lake Accord, as our party had suggested, and still get rid of the notwithstanding clause.

The Prime Minister did not do that, and he is still not doing that. He is not proposing that the notwithstanding clause be put to the provinces to be removed from the Constitution. Again, one wonders about the sincerity of the Prime Minister on this particular question.

At this time I fully support the statement made by my leader yesterday. I thought it was an outstanding statement in favour of minority rights everywhere in this country. If it were pursued by the Government, it would enhance national unity. It is a type of policy that, if pursued by the Premier and the Government of Quebec, it would enhance national unity and give support to the Meech Lake Accord. Unfortunately, that policy is not being pursued.

I have been here for 23 years. One of my highest priorities has been the protection and the guarantee of minority language rights. Year after year I have fought in the House and in the Joint Committee on Official Languages for the protection and the enhancement of the French language. My colleague, the Hon. Member for Vanier (Mr. Gauthier) who sits on the committee with me knows that I have done that. Time and again I have made a statement to the effect that Ontario should opt into Section 133 of the Constitution Act of 1867. I do not have to take second place to anyone in that respect.

However, in order to protect and promote the language rights of any one group it is not necessary to suppress the language rights of another group.

As the Supreme Court stated in its judgment, which we support, it is quite appropriate to have a law in Quebec, or anywhere in Canada, in which the use of one language is insisted upon, whether it is English or French, or even to insist upon the priority of one language, and that provision is made for the protection and the promotion of that language. All that is totally acceptable, as the Supreme Court has stated. However, it is not acceptable to suppress one language in order to protect another language.