

bilingual city, will the government retain some control of the moneys allocated to that area?

Hon. Lowell Murray (Leader of the Government, Minister of State for Federal-Provincial Relations and Acting Minister of Communications): Honourable senators, I am not sure what the honourable senator is trying to say about the Secretary of State's responsibility for minority language communities across the country, but the fact of the matter is that the present Secretary of State has completed a number of important agreements with the provinces and, in fact, some very important negotiations are now taking place with the Province of Quebec relating to such matters as provincial health and social services to the anglophone minority in Quebec.

The minister, as the record will show, is acquitting himself of his responsibility for minority linguistic communities in a very distinguished and successful fashion.

Senator Wood: The honourable senator knows that this weekend Mr. Bourassa said that even though Mr. Bouchard may have the right to allocate moneys to Quebec he will not allow those to be used for bilingual purposes. Therefore, my question is: Are the social services to be provided in only one language?

Senator Murray: Honourable senators, I have not seen the statement by Premier Bourassa to which the honourable senator refers. Let me first simply say that we have, in our own jurisdiction, Bill C-72, which applies across the country and to everywhere in the country. Second, in the provincial jurisdictions it has been our policy—and a successful one it is—to come to the aid of linguistic minorities through cooperation with provincial governments. We are doing that in Quebec. My goodness, tens of millions of dollars are being spent by the federal government pursuant to federal-provincial agreements to assist the minority linguistic community in Quebec now. This has been going on for some years.

[Translation]

THE CONSTITUTION

MEECH LAKE ACCORD—CONSIDERATION OF "NOTWITHSTANDING" CLAUSE IN CHARTER OF RIGHTS— POSITION OF QUEBEC ON POSSIBLE REMOVAL

Hon. L. Norbert Thériault: Honourable senators, I have a question for the Leader of the Government in the Senate, further to what I gather from his answer. Did I correctly understand him to say that if Quebec joined the Constitution or signed the constitutional agreement, it would at the same time agree to remove the notwithstanding clause?

Hon. Lowell Murray (Leader of the Government, Minister of State for Federal-Provincial Relations and Acting Minister of Communications): No, honourable senators, that is not what I said.

[English]

Senator Thériault: I understood the Leader of the Government to say, and the record will show—I am not talking to you, Senator Flynn!

Senator Flynn: Am I talking to you?

Senator Thériault: I understood the Leader of the Government to say that there is no chance that the "notwithstanding" clause will be abolished so long as Quebec has not signed the Constitutional Accord. Perhaps the Leader of the Government should check the record, because that is what I understood him to say.

Senator Flynn: Check it yourself!

Senator Murray: Honourable senators, let me take my honourable friend through it once more.

One of the results of the exclusion of Quebec from the 1981-82 exercise was that Quebec did not accept the legitimacy of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. For that reason, up until March or April of 1987, Quebec routinely exempted the laws of its National Assembly from the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

● (1430)

The fact of the matter is that one of the results of Meech Lake, once proclaimed, will be that Quebec will accept in its entirety the legitimacy of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. In the meantime, as the Government of Quebec and the Secretary of State have pointed out, the "notwithstanding" clause has special significance for that province.

Senator Thériault: That is the whole point. The "notwithstanding" clause was used this time in Quebec not only to circumvent the Constitutional Accord of 1982 and the Canadian Charter of Rights but also to circumvent their own Charter of Rights.

Senator Flynn: Not at all. You are all mixed up.

[Translation]

Senator Thériault: You think you are the only one who understands. We have been following this story for a long time. Quebec never made a great effort to help the minorities outside Quebec. We have no lesson to learn from you or anyone else.

Senator Flynn: We shall not give any either.

Hon. Jean-Maurice Simard: Let us return to the subject at hand!

Senator Thériault: If you have something else to say, I am ready to listen.

[English]

Senator Frith: If the dog sleeps, let it lie.

Senator Thériault: The fact of the matter is that you skate around as Leader of the Government in the Senate. That is what you have been doing on Meech Lake, on the "notwithstanding" clause and on the issue of "distinct society". According to your interpretation when we were discussing Meech Lake earlier in the year—By the way, I was prepared to support Meech Lake at that time.

An Hon. Senator: Ah ha!

Senator Thériault: I was, yes, because I thought there was some fairness in this country.