

(b) these departments shall be autonomous entities with equal responsibilities up to the deputy minister level, both the English-speaking and the French-speaking deputy ministers having similar authority and similar responsibilities;

(c) promotions in each department shall be based exclusively on merit.

Mr. Speaker, that is the motion I wish to propose.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Boulanger): Would the hon. member for Compton have something to say?

Mr. Latulippe: Yes, Mr. Speaker. Again, we request earnestly that this motion be adopted. We would like that this motion be accepted, we would like that the feelings be a little unanimous, if I may say so.

Mr. Speaker, we are confident that we can give Canadians unity, that we can reinforce national unity to the extent that we give Canadians equal opportunities that are coming to them. This is the purpose of this motion: that there be equality in every respect within the government departments and that the participation of Canadians whatever their language, race or colour, be proportionate to their number.

Mr. Speaker, if we adhere to this principle, we will be on the way to unity and we will have, if we can achieve this unity, a great Canada, a united country, and thanks to some economic reforms, we will also have a prosperous nation.

• (1550)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Boulanger): Order. Does the Minister of Communications (Mr. Pelletier) wish to speak to the subamendment on which I was about to give a ruling or ask for the assistance of hon. members?

[English]

As I have said, I am ready to render a decision on the subamendment. However, if any hon. member wishes to express an opinion I will listen to it.

[Translation]

Mr. René Matte (Champlain): Mr. Speaker, I should merely like to point out that I moved an amendment yesterday after the hon. leader of the opposition (Mr. Stanfield) moved his; I know the debate may be limited which is why we return to the charge today and my colleague for Compton (Mr. Latulippe) has moved a sub-amendment to the amendment of the leader of the official opposition.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Boulanger): Order. With regard to the sub-amendment just moved by the hon. member for Compton, I certainly have doubts about its being in order, specifically about its having a bearing on the subject. May I refer to the 4th edition of Beauchesnes' Parliamentary Rules and Forms, before going into further details, and quote citation 202(3) on page 173 of the French version:

Since the purpose of a sub-amendment is to alter the amendment, it should not enlarge upon the scope of the amendment but it should deal with matters that are not covered by the amendment; if it is intended to bring up matters foreign to the amendment, the member should wait until the amendment is disposed of and move a new amendment.

Official Languages

On that basis, I would like to explain to the hon. member that under that standing order, he will be able, after all, to move his motion later on during the debate. After the House has dealt with the amendment of the Leader of the Opposition—whether it is defeated or passed—the member could always move another amendment in accordance with the standing orders or move an amendment such as the one he moved yesterday.

Now, for the above reasons, especially the standing order which I have just quoted, and since it is possible that the hon. member will move an amendment later on during this debate, I have to declare the sub-amendment out of order.

Hon. Gérard Pelletier (Minister of Communications): Mr. Speaker, I have been sitting in this House for nearly 8 years now and one thing has always struck me. With the accumulation of words and the series of speeches on a given topic after a while we always end up forgetting about the basic issue of any debate.

This is why, I would like first to reiterate this afternoon the position that the government has defined as its own right at the opening of this debate, a position which will force us to refuse both the amendment introduced by the official opposition and a potential sub-amendment, which the chair has just indicated as possible.

First of all, let us explain how the government looks upon the present situation concerning the official languages. Everyone, except for a few dinosaurs—and if the term is not parliamentary, Mr. Speaker, I am willing to substitute brontosaurus or diplodocus,—everyone, except in a very few cases, accepts the principles which have been enshrined in the Official Languages Act.

This is why this resolution does not bring forth these principles. On the contrary, it is most practical, since it concerns the implementation of these principles. With this resolution, we are out of the realm of theory and concerned exclusively with implementation.

The time had come to leave theory behind and I say that it was time for everyone to get out of it. To support generally accepted principles is relatively easy. It hurts when it becomes more complex, when one has to implement these same principles.

I must tell you, Mr. Speaker, that I myself had such an experience when I was Secretary of State and was responsible to the government for the official languages policy.

At that time, everybody, except a few "dinosaurs" had already approved the Official Languages Act. And yet, I often had to answer members who repeatedly asked questions and questioned principles to which they actually had only paid lip service.

For instance, as soon as an unilingual public servant had to be transferred, even without a loss of salary or any other inconvenience to him, some hon. members who had welcomed the passage of the Official Languages Act started to cry out and denounce the injustice, without any evidence whatsoever. What is even more serious, these very people generally condemned the implementation of the act without ever giving one specific, possible and documented example, without even taking the trouble of proving anything, being satisfied, on the contrary, with