

I listened carefully to my colleague. After going over 200 to 300 years of history, she said we should forget all that. But she did not mention the events that have occurred in the last 20 years.

I would like to remind her of the reasons why Quebec is so distrustful and why it is asking for this protection. As recently as 1980, the federal government defeated the Yes side in the Quebec referendum after spending hundreds of millions of dollars. In 1971, for instance—why was it not mentioned?—Parliament passed the Official Languages Act, which since then has become the perfect instrument of assimilation.

• (1340)

In 1970, the Canadian government invoked the War Measures Act in the middle of the night in order to send in the army and stifle the separatist, the sovereignist movement. They arrested 500 people without warrants. Do you think we will forget this overnight? No way. One cannot forget those events.

More recently, there was Meech Lake. I will not spend too much time on this, since a member of this House sitting across the way, who was then a member of the Manitoba legislature, prevented debate on this matter, thus killing the accord. No one seemed to be sorry about the Meech Lake failure, except Quebecers of course.

Today, the hon. member, who claims to be a good teacher, would like to wipe the slate clean and forget about those events.

My question is this, Mr. Speaker: Do you think Quebecers can trust this government to set the record straight regarding those events?

[English]

Mrs. Jennings: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for his comments.

First, his history professor feels very strongly, as does he, about the pain people experience. I understand his pain. I do not think it can be forgotten. I do not know if anyone could forget the pain. I do not know if my father could forget everything he saw in the four wars in which he fought. I do not know if my grandmother could forget that she lost four sons, 17, 18 and 19 years old. I do not know if people can forget those things. I know that we had better start looking at making a change. I know that they are still trying to get reparation.

No one can say that our friends in Quebec have been assimilated. I do not think that would ever happen. They are very proud of their culture. They have done a wonderful job in maintaining their culture. Every year in my classroom I had six students who came from Quebec. It was a wonderful experience. There is no danger of our friends in Quebec ever being assimilated.

However, I am asking them to do something for all Canadians, as well as for the people of Quebec. We are all one country. It is a

rich country. We can set an example for the world if we are willing to work together. Please help us make that change.

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre de Savoye (Portneuf, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I listened to my hon. colleague from the Reform Party. I heard him say, referring to the Loyalists, that: "There were so many in Quebec that Upper Canada had to be created—To be created out of what exactly?"

Does this mean that we were confined to a smaller territory; by "we", I mean francophones?

We are reminded of the massive influx of immigrants in 1815. The hon. member from the Reform Party said: "Those people were lied at. They could see no chance, no change coming into the system". Have we not been seeing the same thing happen over and over again for years.

She also said: "Reformers arose in the 1800s out of necessity". Does this statement not also apply to the sovereignists who have been pursuing their action for 30 years already and perhaps more?

I would like to leave you with this thought and I would like the thoughts of my hon. colleague from the Reform Party on this. "History tends to keep repeating itself mainly because we do not listen to it". And that is a question I would like an answer to.

• (1345)

[English]

Mrs. Jennings: Mr. Speaker, yes, I would agree with the hon. member, history does keep repeating itself.

What happened when the Loyalists came there? We know that in the 1850s there were 400,000 people in Upper Canada. After the division in Lower Canada there were about 150,000 English compared to 450,000 French. When we look at that balance it is a lot of people to govern.

In the wisdom of the people at that time, I would assume it would only make sense to make a geographic division, the Ottawa River being the dividing line. That is all I can give the member in that answer.

Yes, there were reformers in Canada in the 1800s. The member said that history keeps repeating itself. I must tell the member that Upper and Lower Canada both had their reformers. Lafontaine and Baldwin were both recognized by the Canadian government. History keeps repeating itself. That is why there are reformers today. If we do not pay attention to history, then necessity comes again.

[Translation]

Mr. Gilbert Fillion (Chicoutimi, BQ): Mr. Speaker, first of all, I must denounce Bill C-69, which, in my view, is a farce.