

*Supply*

reasonable to assume that they came from the federal Government since this was a federal Government initiative. In the year that the new Official Languages Act was in the making, an Act which speaks eloquently of the need to ensure the vitality of the linguistic minority communities, the federal Government felt quite comfortable about seeing advertising exclusively in French about this dollar coin in Quebec and exclusively in English in Ontario. That does not reflect the spirit and the intent of the law.

Under this Bill there is no control with respect to the responsibility for the promotion of federal initiatives unless they happen to deal with a federal Crown corporation. This is an area which needs to be looked at. What happens if the issue does not deal with a Crown corporation? What happens if a Crown corporation is privatized or semi-privatized?

An area which bothers me in particular, especially after reading the preamble, is the area of the Bill which deals with communications in terms of services to the public. There is a reference to significant demand. In this respect the concept is to determine in which region bilingual services will be delivered. In this respect what will be the determination of significant demand? How will we find it out? What are the demographic criteria that will be used? How will census data be interpreted? This is why a definition of linguistic minority, be it French or English, is key.

When one is obliged to provide a service it is important to know to whom the service is to be directed. I suggest that when the Act was enacted to reflect and to promote the linguistic duality of Canada the existence of a French-speaking majority in Quebec, an English-speaking majority in the rest of Canada, and the presence of official language minority communities in a number of provinces were the concrete manifestations of the promulgation of this Act. In this way we could support the linguistic duality of Canada, which is a fundamental characteristic of our country, something that is a principle accepted by all Parties in the House. Serious care has to be taken in how we define this significant demand. We need to examine carefully Clause 21(b) and Clause 22 to make sure that we reflect the spirit in this Bill.

● (1550)

I would also suggest that, when we talk about the nature of the office and the regulations that are to be enunciated, we have to be very certain that those regulations are carefully examined and the parties that are to be involved are consulted.

We talk about third parties and the services that are to be provided. In Clause 24 it states:

Every federal institution has the duty to ensure that, where services are provided or made available by another person or organization on its behalf, any member of the public in Canada or elsewhere can communicate with and obtain those services from that person or organization in either official language in any case where those services, if provided by the institution, would be required under this Part to be provided in either official language.

I would like to suggest that we need to consider extending the obligations to render services, and such responsibilities

should be extended to federally regulated utilities or enterprises which fall under federal jurisdiction, such as banks, airlines, railways, interprovincial transport companies, and telecommunications and broadcast policy. It is very important that this country have a stamp and footprint across this land that states that English and French wherever you may live should be available and the potential to understand the information that is being disseminated should certainly be the primary concern.

It is very difficult to speak to this Bill because we do not know what the regulations are and we do not know the definition and the criteria of certain of the services. In the interests of good will, in the interests of a new Canada, this new generation of Canadians, and the excitement of this experiment that is in such a wonderful place in the spectrum of the world, it is important that the principle of equality be brought to our attention and that we deal with it expeditiously.

The preamble sets the stage for the Bill. It provides a guide to the spirit of generosity and reform in which the new law is to be interpreted. With a few amendments, this Bill supplies the glue that will mark the vitality and the difference that is this nation of Canada.

[*Translation*]

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne):** Resuming debate. The Hon. Member for Témiscamingue (Mr. Desjardins).

**Mr. Gabriel Desjardins (Témiscamingue):** Madam Speaker, I welcome this opportunity to take part in the debate today. I do so as a Member of this House who has a keen appreciation of the importance of the official languages question, and especially as Joint Chairman of the Standing Joint Committee of the Senate and the House of Commons on Official Languages.

Madam Speaker, before I start my speech, I want to congratulate and thank all Members on the Committee, both from the House of Commons and the Senate, who in the past few years have made a vital contribution to the committee's work. I say this in a strictly non-partisan spirit, since we are all working for the same cause, which is to defend and promote the status of official languages in this country.

I also wish to thank all members of the Committee's staff for their dedication. They often work 18 or 20-hour days, providing our Committee with what it needs, often work under difficult conditions.

Finally, I think we should recognize the important work done by the Commissioner for Official Languages and his team who, in the Commission's annual report, provide us with a picture of the status of official languages in this country, thus helping our Committee set its priorities.

That being said, Madam Speaker; I have been listening very carefully to the various speeches we have heard in the House today on the Opposition motion. For the benefit of Hon. Members, I would like to read the motion presented by the