

*The Address—Mr. Trudeau*

and to seek together ways of implementing its recommendations.

These decisions are important, Mr. Speaker, but constitutional protection is even more important. Canadians are not only entitled to a just and fair administrative and governmental policy in all parts of the country, but the basic law of the land, the constitution of the country, must guarantee that they and their children will, in this respect, receive a fair and just treatment.

We expressed our disappointment, last February, concerning the attitude of some of the provinces which refused to come to an agreement with regard to a constitutional guarantee of linguistic rights. The federal government, for its part, decided that French and English must have absolute equality in all parliamentary and federal institutions.

For several years, the government has administered an extensive program for the development of bilingualism in the civil service and some 7,000 public servants have attended various language courses which we have made available at public expense.

In addition, as we indicated in the Speech from the Throne, the government has prepared a bill on the official languages based on the recommendations of the royal commission on bilingualism and biculturalism. The bill will be introduced at an early date during this session and will put forward the principles governing the use of the official languages as far as the federal government is concerned.

For example, the plan will guarantee that in the different parts of Canada where the minorities using one of the official languages are large enough, the public may obtain in the official language of their choice, some services from all departments, agencies and other federal institutions.

There has also been some progress from the linguistic point of view in several provinces. A year ago, Quebec was the only province where the right to speak in either French or English in the legislature was formally recognized. From now on, the same will apply in the four Atlantic provinces and the two central provinces.

Some substantial progress has also been realized in the field of education. Now, for the first time, in the ten provinces, the use of the official language of the minority as language of instruction in schools is recognized in various degrees. This is important progress towards linguistic equality, Mr. Speaker. But

it would be tragic if, at the present time, disputes concerning the use of an official language in a province would mean the end of linguistic rights extended to people in other provinces.

The province of Quebec has, for generations, and more than any other province, assured linguistic equality to its English-speaking minority. I am sure that the great majority of French-speaking Canadians wish this equal treatment to continue.

• (5:30 p.m.)

[English]

English speaking Canadians must not allow a single incident to cause them to forget the basic principle that linguistic equality requires all provinces to recognize the right of parents to have their children educated in the official language of their choice. Despite recent developments we are far short of that goal. It will not be sufficient for government leaders or public bodies to declare themselves in favour of bilingualism or even to pass legislation on the subject. Facilities for education and public administration in both languages must be made available in practice. Governments must be prepared to spend the necessary funds and to insist on co-operation at all levels of the civil service. Until there are schools teaching in each language and government services operating in each language in every region where the composition of the population justifies it, our work will not be complete.

I spoke about this requirement for a strong and united Canada before I was chosen leader of my party, and our party continued to speak of it in all parts of the country during the election campaign. The evident enthusiasm of Canadians shows their agreement that a properly functioning bilingual state ranks high among our national objectives. As a government and as Canadians, we must accept nothing less.

[Translation]

I might add, Mr. Speaker, that until such practical things are done, we ought not to be surprised that linguistic minorities in Quebec or in other provinces look for support outside of their provincial governments or even the federal government, so that such pious intentions, even the legislation, may be put into practice.

I would be the last one to blame those minorities, especially French-speaking minorities which, for many decades, have had