

*Oral Questions*

Francophones still further by defending your thirty anti-Francophones?

**Hon. Flora MacDonald (Minister of Communications):** Mr. Speaker, I am not impressed by the sound and fury of the Hon. Member for Montreal—Sainte-Marie. As I said yesterday, there are limitations on what parliamentary secretaries may do. They know that when they take on their duties. They must abide by their obligations or take one of the options open to them. The Official Languages Bill will be voted on tomorrow, and it has the Government's unqualified support. Mr. Speaker, I want to say that each and everyone of us has a duty to act responsibly. That is the Government's position.

## QUERY CONCERNING WHO SPEAKS FOR GOVERNMENT

**Mr. Mike Cassidy (Ottawa-Centre):** Mr. Speaker, my question to the Acting Prime Minister concerns precisely that issue; everyone must shoulder their responsibilities. Has the Prime Minister asked for the resignation of the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Veterans Affairs, in the light of his public opposition to a basic element of the Government's policy, that is to say bilingualism? If not, can the Acting Prime Minister explain how the Government is going to operate in future with regard to Ministers and Parliamentary Secretaries? Will these two groups who express Government policy be forced to express only Government policy in the future? Will the Government speak with one voice?

**Hon. Flora MacDonald (Minister of Communications):** Mr. Speaker, let me reiterate that the Official Languages Bill will be passed tomorrow, without amendments that would affect the fundamental principle of bilingualism in Canada. That is the position of the our Government. We are united in that approach.

[English]

## PRIME MINISTER'S POSITION

**Mr. Mike Cassidy (Ottawa Centre):** Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is directed to the same Minister. Canadians believe that the credibility of the Government is at stake because of scandals and broken promises—

**Some Hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Cassidy:**—and now because the Government is not speaking with one voice.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. I am sure the Hon. Member would want to confine his preamble to the question he wishes to ask.

**Mr. Cassidy:** Mr. Speaker, how can Canadians in Quebec or anywhere else trust the Government when the Prime Minister is tolerating official spokesmen for the Government at the level of Parliamentary Secretary, like the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Veterans Affairs, taking public issue with the Government over an issue as fundamental as bilingualism, without any disciplinary action being taken?

**Hon. Flora MacDonald (Minister of Communications):** Mr. Speaker, it ill behooves the Member for Ottawa Centre to stand and talk about credibility when, time and again, he has come into this House and levelled charges which he has then had to withdraw because they have been without foundation.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Miss MacDonald:** The Prime Minister has provided leadership in a way unknown before in this House on the matter of official languages.

**Some Hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. de Jong:** At least blush when you say that, Flora.

**Miss MacDonald:** I can see Members from the NDP laughing. Where were they when the Prime Minister went to Manitoba and challenged even the Government of the day on the question of bilingualism in the Province of Manitoba?

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Miss MacDonald:** I say to the Hon. Member and all Members of this House that the question of official languages in this country is not and should not be a partisan issue. This is an issue which is one of unity for the country and one of leadership for the country. I hope that this Member and all Members in the House would recognize their responsibility to carry out that leadership, individually and collectively.

[Translation]

## QUERY CONCERNING WHO SPEAKS FOR GOVERNMENT

**Mr. Mike Cassidy (Ottawa-Centre):** I have a supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. I recall that it was the NDP Government of Manitoba that advocated the rights of Francophones in that province. The Conservatives were the ones who opposed them.

My question is the following: How can Canadian men and women trust this Government? When a Government allows the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Veterans Affairs to take a position which differs from that of the Government on a question as fundamental as bilingualism, the credibility of that Government is at stake. How can we tolerate a situation in which Parliamentary Secretaries, Government spokespersons, are issuing different messages on behalf of the Government?

**Hon. Flora MacDonald (Minister of Communications):** Mr. Speaker, as I have already said, there are limits to the actions and functions of Parliamentary Secretaries . . .

**Mr. Malépart:** In this case they have gone beyond the limits!

**Miss MacDonald:** That was another very strong voice, but it makes no sense.

Parliamentary Secretaries know what the situation is when they accept their position Mr. Speaker. They know their