

Oral Questions

three provinces out of ten have education programs in the minority official language under Section 23 of the Constitution. There are still three provinces where it is impossible to have a criminal trial in French, according to the most elementary principles of justice. What does the Government intend to do to remedy this situation, where you have to beg permission to speak your mother tongue in a legislative assembly, which is quite humiliating. What is the Government going to do to convince the six remaining provinces to abide by Section 23? What does he have in mind to protect our right to be judged in French in the three provinces that do not provide French in courts?

[English]

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister, President of the Privy Council and President of the Treasury Board): Mr. Speaker, if the Hon. Member wants to quote selectively from the report of the Official Languages Commissioner, perhaps I could do the same thing.

He has been very complimentary about a number of initiatives this Government has undertaken. He starts in Part I by saying the following:

The introduction to the proposed Canada-United States trade agreement offers the prospect of a "richer Canada—which can afford to enhance the quality of life through and for Canada's cultural endeavours."

The Meech Lake accord, Bill C-72, a Multiculturalism Bill and possible new laws and policies on communications, broadcasting, citizenship and immigration convey some idea of what those cultural endeavours comprise and of the cost of maintaining Canada's distinctiveness.

Those are all initiatives which have been taken by this Government, and I think he is very complimentary in stating that.

[Translation]

REQUEST THAT DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER CONTACT
SASKATCHEWAN PREMIER

Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier): Mr. Speaker, we are still waiting for an answer.

I want to ask the Deputy Prime Minister what he intends to do. What do he and his Government intend to do to encourage, urge and if necessary pressure certain provinces to recognize the Canadian reality, the linguistic duality of Meech Lake? What does he intend to do to ensure that Canadians, wherever they happen to be in this country, are entitled to two fundamental services, education and justice, in their own language?

Is he prepared to invite the Premier of Saskatchewan and ask him, face to face, to take concrete action? A month ago, on February 25, the Supreme Court ruled that Section 110 applied to Saskatchewan. Not a word since then. The Legislative Assembly has been sitting in Saskatchewan since February 21, but not a word, not in the throne speech or anywhere else, about this matter . . .

Mr. Speaker: I am sorry, but I must ask the Hon. Member to put his question.

Mr. Gauthier: Does the Deputy Prime Minister intend to invite Premier Devine and talk to him and persuade him to do something in Saskatchewan? Will he bring him here to Ottawa to rap his knuckles and tell him to move, and move fast?

• (1425)

[English]

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister, President of the Privy Council and President of the Treasury Board): Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member being a member of the Liberal Party would always choose the option of confronting rather than co-operating. I think that in the course of this Government's initiative toward national reconciliation much has been gained in terms of bringing the country together and healing the wounds of the nation which were so bad during the course of the previous five years.

The Hon. Member talks about the Premier of Saskatchewan and mentions the Premier of Alberta. These two Premiers signed the Meech Lake Accord and all that goes with it. I think that is the best measure of confidence in the future of Canada and of preserving the duality of the two official languages in Canada.

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CANADA ELECTIONS ACT

DISTINCTION BETWEEN CAMPAIGN EXPENSES AND ELECTION EXPENSES—REQUEST FOR AMENDMENT

Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Deputy Prime Minister. He will know that the federal wing of his Party met in Quebec on the weekend, during which time they discussed the federal Election Expenses Act. During the so-called Masse affair, a very substantial loophole was discovered in the existing law permitting a Party to avoid dealing with any serious limits on election spending because of the distinction that has been made between so-called campaign expenses on the one hand and election expenses on the other.

Since both opposition Parties have called for this to be dealt with promptly before the next election is held, will the Government demonstrate its good faith and its commitment to this legislation by making sure that it is dealt with promptly before the next election?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister, President of the Privy Council and President of the Treasury Board): Mr. Speaker, if the Leader of the New Democratic Party is so sure that that is the position of his Party, I wish he would talk to his members. We brought the Bill forth for debate with the hope of moving it into committee where we could discuss—

Mr. Broadbent: What Bill?