

*Bilingualism in Education*

professors and better teaching methods. At the present time there is a serious lack in this regard.

[Translation]

Mr. Speaker, as an English-speaking Quebecer, I can state that my language rights have always been protected and respected. I am sure that this will continue to be the case. For instance, as an English-speaking Quebecer, I have always been able to communicate with the federal government in my mother tongue. Unfortunately, in the past and even recently, the same situation has not always existed for French-speaking people throughout Canada, even if there has surely been some progress.

[English]

The minister's announcement should be greeted with a high degree of what I would call bipartisan spirit. Journalists and other individuals often ask me about our party's stand on bilingualism. Under the leadership of our leader we recognize, and we have said this time and time again, the positive benefits of the bilingual and multicultural nature of Canada. It has always been my view, and I have said this in both official languages, that when individuals or politicians play with the question of bilingualism or language rights for what they feel to be short-term advantage or political gain they in fact hurt this institution and Canada as a whole.

To reiterate, and I have spoken to many members on both sides of the House in this regard, there should be no specific Liberal, NDP, Social Credit or Progressive Conservative position on bilingualism. There should only be one united House of Commons bipartisan position. In this spirit of bipartisanship, I welcome the minister's announcement.

[Translation]

Mr. Mark Rose (Fraser Valley West): Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

[English]

Anyone listening to my pronunciation of those words will be convinced that I suffer as one of the victims of the lack of a bilingual program in our country in earlier years. My party and I have traditionally supported the bilingual program. We welcome the minister's announcement along with his courtesy, extended to the spokesmen for the various parties, in making certain that his statement was available at least an hour and a half before the House opened. Having said that, I have to ask myself: what was his hurry? I can see nothing in the new program that is not really in fact a continuation of the existing program, and he implies in the statement that funds appropriated some three or four years ago for that program have not been used.

The old program supported minority language instruction and second language instruction. What we cannot ascertain from the minister's statement is what proportion, within the broad parameters of the program, is assigned to each. It seems to me that phrases such as "the bulk" and vague language of that kind do not help parliamentarians or the spokesman for any party very much in judging whether this program is designed as a tokenistic approach or whether the government is serious in its stated objective of attempting to increase the degree of bilingualism and the number of people capable of biling-

[Mr. Grafftey.]

ual communication in Canada. We really do not know how much is allocated for each program in each province.

We are concerned as well about the contribution of 1.5 per cent of the annual per pupil cost to each provincial government for administration. In British Columbia this amount may be relatively minor because of the approach of the former government of the province. I am happy to report there is a new approach now, but the former provincial government either did not take advantage of the program or, if it did, the money was used to finance the status quo across the province and very seldom if ever passed on to the school districts.

Last year the Commissioner of Official Languages called second language instruction in Canada a national disaster. I notice that in his new report he has backed off somewhat from that statement. Perhaps he has been speaking to affluent English-speaking Canadians at cocktail parties, because I think there exists among the affluent and better educated Canadians a keen desire that second language instruction and bilingualism be enhanced. This is not true. What is actually happening in our country is that bilingualism and second language instruction are not increasing at all. In spite of the government's programs and policies the bilingual program is actually on the decline. With your indulgence, Mr. Speaker, I should like to cite briefly a few figures.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member will appreciate that at this point I should perhaps interrupt him just for a moment. I realize he has not completed his statement, but I think I have to remind the hon. member for Fraser Valley West and all hon. members that under the Standing Order comments should be brief. I have said before and I repeat that it is difficult for the Chair to determine the extent of brevity. I would think the guideline should be the length of the original statement by the minister, and when the statement takes five minutes and the comments ten minutes perhaps the hon. member who makes the longer statement is not respecting the spirit of the Standing Order. I mention this for the guidance of the hon. member and all hon. members who offer comments within the terms of the Standing Order.

Mr. Rose: Mr. Speaker, I am grateful for your advice and will be guided by your suggestion. I did not realize I had exceeded or was likely to exceed the time taken by the minister in making his statement. It seemed to me that he spoke for a lengthy period. I will skip the documentation of my argument that second language training is on the decline.

● (1420)

I suggest that a much larger program in the schools would accomplish our bilingual objectives much more expeditiously than the kind of programs that are embarked upon at the adult level. In my view it is much better to spend the available language instructions funds on school children than on 50 year old members of parliament, civil servants and about to be retired brigadiers.

I should like to observe in closing that universities across Canada by and large no longer require a second language. What we are doing about bilingualism through the program the minister has just announced today is a