Ontario. But there was a small group in Ontario called "The Alliance for the Preservation of English in Canada", and that group decided to go to work so to speak against an Ontario act ensuring French services. And during last year's provincial elections, they got support from the then leader of the Ontario Conservative Party, Mr. Larry Grossman.

**Mr. Prud'homme:** What arrogance!

**Mr. Boudria:** The Hon. Member for Saint-Denis is right: it takes a lot of arrogance to prevent French-speaking Ontarians from getting what they had expected for so long. But even so, the situation, as it happened, fueled discussion in certain areas and I think that some government members in this House who oppose the Official Languages Act have been inspired by those discussions that took place last summer. The Hon. Member for Chambly is certainly not one of them but I urge him to talk to some of his colleagues from Ontario and he will realize like me that it is true.

I am sure the Hon. Member for Chambly wants this bill to be passed. But, like the others, like the Hon. Member for Témiscamingue who was addressing us earlier, like the other government members in this House, he would certainly not want this Official Languages Bill, which is central to the preservation of the bilingual character of this country, to be passed by the House after only three of 282 Hon. Members have been heard.

Madam Speaker, last year we held a debate that I would describe as useless on capital punishment, which lasted countless days in the House when it should not have been held in the first place because the issue had been settled a decade before. If such were the case last year with capital punishment, why not then dedicate a few days to Bill C-72, a bill of capital importance, I might say, as far as this country and its citizens are concerned.

• (1640)

[*English*]

That is the proposition we have before us today. The Government introduced a Bill in June of last year with the avowed intention of adopting the proposed legislation. As a matter of fact, the Bill was introduced with great fanfare. The opposition Parties in this House gave the Bill their support. However, there is now an unwillingness on the part of the Government to proceed with this legislation.

In closing, Madam Speaker, I invite the Government to put this Bill on its agenda for it is the role of the Government House Leader to ensure that this legislation proceeds. I hope the Government recovers some of its courage. If the Government House Leader has a problem with the Conservative Members of Parliament who are not in favour of this Bill he can give us their names and we can assist him by lobbying them. We want to be co-operative, as the Opposition always is.

I want to take this opportunity to state again my support for this Bill and my condemnation of the Government for refusing to proceed with it.

**Hon. Doug Lewis (Minister of State and Minister of State (Treasury Board)):** Madam Speaker, thank you very much for giving me an opportunity to enter into this debate. I want to preface my remarks by advising my hon. colleague who just spoke that assistance from that particular Member is about the last thing one would need if one were governing anything. That was probably made evident by Premier Peterson's relief when the Member left the Ontario Legislature.

**Mr. Boudria:** Be nice.

**Mr. Lewis:** I can assure him that we have absolutely no need of any assistance from him.

**Mr. Boudria:** Well, no more Mr. Nice Guy.

**Mr. Lewis:** I reject outright the premises in this particular motion. I reject any suggestion that there is inaction on the part of the Government. I reject any suggestion of lack of political will, and I suggest to the Hon. Member that there is absolutely no way that the actions of the Government are having any detrimental effects on national unity.

If one wants to deal with national unity one should remember that it was the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) who unified the country under the Meech Lake agreement.

**Mr. Boudria:** Brian saved Canada?

**Mr. Lewis:** No, I said it and the country is saying it. Just to be clear about that, the country knows who made that deal work. It was our Prime Minister because the previous Prime Minister failed. That is who is saying it. They are saying it not only about Meech Lake but about the free trade consultations. Whether or not the Hon. Member likes free trade, he should bear in mind that there has been no suggestion from any Premiers, Liberal, NDP, or Conservative, that they were not consulted at the Premiers' level or the bureaucratic level.

Take as an example the legislation which allows all provinces to co-operate to chase people who are not making maintenance and alimony payments. We created that by co-operation and unity. It was not only through the legislation but through the atmosphere we created. To put a motion on the floor suggesting that the Government is doing anything to disrupt national unity, when you look at our record, is nonsense.

The Hon. Member is suggesting that we are not plowing ahead with legislation. I point out to my hon. friend that in the previous Parliament 229 pieces of legislation were introduced and 179 were passed in four and one-half years. We have introduced 232 pieces of legislation, up until today, and passed 181. That is in three and a half years.

**Mr. Boudria:** That is because of the excellent co-operation of the Opposition.