

This motion was not moved today because we want to be obstructionist, we want to ensure that this Bill receives the acknowledgement and study it requires.

This Bill has been long awaited by various parties concerned with the issue of official languages. They include, among others, the Joint Committee of the Senate and House of Commons, the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages and representatives of official language minority groups.

The Official Languages Act of 1969 has become outdated. A number of problems have surfaced as a result of applying the legislation on a daily basis for 19 years. This becomes particularly significant for Canadians who find that they are unable to live and work and express themselves or be served in the language with which they are most comfortable. It is very important that this Bill, which is practically new legislation, sees the light of day and is given the proper attention. The attitudes of Canadians have changed. They would like to see the application of the amendments which are warranted.

• (1540)

All Parties came to an agreement with respect to the new legislation which marks a turning point in the evolution of the language issue. It is likely one of the best pieces of legislation that the House has seen, and I congratulate the Government for it. We can follow up on all the criticisms and recommendations put forward in the different reports to the Standing Committee. We could be listening much more carefully to the Official Languages Commissioner.

A very fine article appeared in a magazine entitled *Language and Society*. It appeared in the fall issue of this magazine. In the article the author, Stuart Beaty, wrote about acts of faith and the relationship between the old and new Official Languages Act to the fundamental political and linguistic nature of Canada. He asked how the proposals to amend the Official Languages Act tabled on June 25 were to be interpreted, applied or enforced.

He went on to consider many of the aspects that are found in the Bill. He expresses an exciting concept in his article. He wrote about the relationship between the Act and the fundamental political and linguistic nature of our country. That is to say that he looked at this matter in the constitutional context. He considered the impact of our national commitment in this area and other sectors of society.

He commented on the primacy of the Act over other federal statutes as well as the executory nature of the Act and the need to spell out clearly application measures. He commented also on the ways of adapting bilingual services to regional and other differences, for example, by replacing the formula for designating federal bilingual districts which, as it so happens, have never been proclaimed, with a more practical one. This is something I would like to address in a moment, especially in terms of the practicality of the application of the Bill.

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The two other major areas which he considers have to do with the integration into the Act itself of the objectives in the 1973 resolution relating to "language of work" and "full participation". Finally, he considers a better definition of the roles and responsibilities of the main federal agents active in this matter, including the Commissioner of Official Languages, with respect to prompt application of the provisions of the Act.

It is important that the Bill be sent to committee quickly in order that there can be open hearings and so that small amendments can be made to it. This will bring it into practical use for those Canadians who need it on an everyday basis. When we look at the preamble of the Bill, which is beautiful, we see that there is no definition of linguistic minority. It is important that we define it in the most generous of senses. It cannot deal only with the mother tongue or the language first learned. It has to deal with the language of use. If that is the case, then there will be a better application of the intent, the thought, the will and the wish behind this Bill.

Before I move on to another aspect I wish to point out the fact that with respect to hiring practices in the Bill there has been some deterioration. In this respect let us consider the civil service. In terms of percentages some 30 per cent of the civil service is francophone. However, that is misleading, particularly if one happens to live in northern Ontario, New Brunswick or in parts of Alberta or Saskatchewan. If one happens to be an anglophone in Quebec, then it is a serious problem. Some 5.5 per cent of the federal civil service in Quebec is composed of anglophones. Yet, in Quebec, people whose mother tongue is English make up 11 per cent of the population of that province, whereas those who claim it as their language of use total 13 per cent. In this respect we are talking about 800,000 people who live in my province and who have certain services but who are not represented and who are not supported in the hiring practices of the federal Government. Treasury Board was lax in the application of its responsibility and its mandate in this particular area.

In 1976, 12 per cent of the civil service of the federal Government in Quebec was English-speaking. The figure today is 5.5 per cent. That is very severe under-representation. In the Bill there is a recommendation that one should "tend to reflect" the distribution of linguistic minorities across the land. I think it should state instead "reflecting" linguistic minorities and not tending to reflect them. That is only one aspect of the Bill which I think needs to be addressed with a slight amendment.

I bring to the attention of Hon. Members an aggravating issue which arose recently. Hon. Members will recall that the Government decided that it would get rid of the \$1 bill and replace it with that candy-shaped bronze-coloured dollar coin. In this respect the Government let a contract to promote its campaign in order to make the public comfortable with this new coin. Ads appeared across the country. Although they did not bear the logo of the Government of Canada, it was