

Oral Questions

Mr. Gauthier: I want to ask the Minister of Energy, the Secretary of State, the Minister of Justice or the President of the Treasury Board—

Mr. Speaker: The Hon. Member for Athabasca will withdraw.

Mr. Andre: He should be asking questions, not making speeches.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: I know that the Hon. Member for Athabasca would want to withdraw what clearly he was saying, and it was unparliamentary. I understand that there is a certain amount of agitation on this issue on both sides of the Chamber, but I think that we can all approach it in a civilized manner.

[*Translation*]

I will listen to the Hon. Member for Ottawa—Vanier and hope that he will put his question in an appropriate manner.

[*English*]

Mr. Gauthier: I think it would be quite appropriate, and I would like him to withdraw, but I will not bother with that.

My question is directed to any responsible Minister. In the question of the court challenge against the Minister of Energy for hiring Francophones in his Department, will the Government, any responsible Minister, explain to the House how public funds could be used to attack and destroy the Government's own fundamental law? Why should Canadians pay for such a vindictive exercise? Explain that to the Canadian people.

Hon. Ray Hnatyshyn (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member, I am sure, does not want to leave the impression that somehow the Government is paying for a lawsuit initiated by a Member of Parliament.

Mr. Gauthier: The Court Challenge Program.

Mr. Hnatyshyn: I am not aware of the Court Challenge Program being utilized in any respect in this particular matter. There is an application obviously being made by a citizen of Canada who happens to be a Member of Parliament. That is not to say that the matter will be entertained.

With respect to any action taken, I can only say that the taxpayers' money will be used to defend the Government's policy and position in this matter which is one that—

Mr. Gauthier: Why should it, it's one of your own Members?

Mr. Hnatyshyn: The fact is that we are putting forward a Bill which is fair and equitable and which has the support of the overwhelming majority of Canadians. The fact is that we

will defend the legislation and the operations of the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources which have also been fair.

[*Translation*]

SITUATION OF FRANCOPHONES—GOVERNMENT POSITION

Mr. Jean-Claude Malépart (Montreal—Sainte-Marie): Mr. Speaker, thirty Tory Members have insulted Francophones, and yesterday three more asked to be added to the anti-francophone list. The Acting Prime Minister's answer is that the Prime Minister has been an agent of reconciliation. My question for the Acting Prime Minister is this: Is it the Tory Government's definition of national reconciliation that Francophones will have to wait, and wait patiently, because your Government has accepted 52 amendments? You used a Francophone to . . .

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Malépart: . . . There are thirty Members in this group. Does national reconciliation mean that we as Francophones from Quebec and across Canada have to be patient and wait a little longer? We have waited long enough!

• (1430)

Hon. Flora MacDonald (Minister of Communications): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has provided the necessary leadership to improve some very bad conditions we had in this country when the previous Government was in power.

[*English*]

The Prime Minister of this country has provided the leadership on the question of reconciliation between French-speaking Canadians and English-speaking Canadians which was so badly needed in this country. Any of us who are here in this House saw that time and time again.

I would ask the Member to honour the work that is being done in this House jointly by all Parties to further the cause of official languages.

[*Translation*]

WHEREABOUTS OF SECRETARY OF STATE OF CANADA

Mr. Jean-Claude Malépart (Montreal—Sainte-Marie): Mr. Speaker, Francophones will not tolerate national reconciliation on the cheap. We have waited long enough for orders to come from the Conservative Party. Do you think we are going to let thirty Conservatives insult us? We won't stand for it!

Could the Acting Prime Minister explain to the House why this morning, the Prime Minister did not throw out the two parliamentary secretaries and the Tory Joint Vice-Chairman of the Committee on Official Languages?

And, why is the Secretary of State, the defender of Quebecers, not in the House to defend official languages?

And why haven't these Members apologized to the Francophones of this country? Why do you insist on insulting