

Official Languages Act

try, a great shortage of qualified people—and I underline the word “qualified”—who can teach French to our young people.

I know quite well that in my area of the country, several school boards have not been able to obtain trained personnel, because it is not the first person named Jean, Pierre, Paul or Marie, with apologies to the ladies who are named Marie, who can teach a second language to children. You must start with the young children if you want to make progress. We have done so in some schools and considerable progress has been made. I am happy to note that there has been some progress, perhaps not as much as we would have liked, but there has been some progress. However, I would not want someone to impose something which might go against the objective of this bill, and I hope that my friend the sponsor will permit us to associate with the suggestion made by his colleague to refer the subject matter of this bill, not to the committee which deals with communications, but rather to the joint committee which was established and of which he is a member with some of our distinguished colleagues who are openminded and who might find, perhaps not right now, but at least in the near future, the means to meet the objective we all have, I hope, because there is no question that every party in this House supports the Official Languages Act. Certainly there is no question from this side of the House as to principle. Quite possibly we may object from time to time to the way it is implemented. Although someone may approve of medical science and recognize that some dentist is supposed to help him, this does not preclude his objecting to the way that dentist goes about it, especially if he breaks a tooth.

● (1740)

In that spirit, Mr. Speaker, if I may move an amendment to that on the order paper accepting the motion made earlier, that the subject of the bill be referred to the Joint Committee of the Senate and of the House of Commons established on May 23 with members named by the House on June 9, we would be ready to accept the motion.

Mr. Stollery: Mr. Speaker, we are in agreement on this side of the House.

Mr. Lambert, seconded by the hon. member for Madawaska-Victoria (Mr. Corbin) moved:

That the motion be amended by striking out all words following the term “That” and substituting the following therefor: Bill C-214, an act to amend the Official Languages Act (supremacy of the Act), be not now read a second time, but that the order be discharged, the bill withdrawn and the subject matter thereof referred to the Joint Committee of the Senate and of the House of Commons on Official Languages.

[*English*]

Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton-Melville): Mr. Speaker, I will take just one minute of the time of the House to indicate that we too are in agreement with this. I point out to the House that the special committee is meeting anyway for an organizational meeting on Thursday, July 17. I think it makes a

considerable amount of sense to refer this to the special mixed committee on official languages in which we are studying the Official Languages Act and the application of the act in this country.

I do not want to go on at great length, but I just want to say that our party is one which has been a supporter and promoter of the Official Languages Act—

[*Translation*]

—since 1969, for 11 years now, and we still support the Official Languages Act in this country. In my capacity as a member of the special committee, I will represent the New Democratic Party to support all suggestions that are fair to the French and English languages in Canada.

[*English*]

I think there are many things which have to be ironed out regarding the Official Languages Act. The hon. member for Ottawa-Vanier (Mr. Gauthier) is making some excellent suggestions. The hon. member for Edmonton West (Mr. Lambert) made some other excellent suggestions, and rather than repeat all those things and rehash all of the arguments here in the House, I will save my comments for the committee meetings. I just want to indicate once again our party's support for the principles and the thrust of linguistic equality in our country.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ethier): Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. Members: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ethier): The question is on the amendment.

[*Translation*]

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the amendment?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Amendment moved by Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West) agreed to.

Order discharged, bill withdrawn and the subject matter of Bill C-214 referred to the Joint Committee of the Senate and of the House of Commons on Official Languages.

[*English*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ethier): Shall I call it six o'clock?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ethier): It being six o'clock, I do now leave the chair until 8 p.m.

At 5.45 p.m. the House took recess.

● (2000)

AFTER RECESS

The House resumed at 8 p.m.