

*Official Languages Act*

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne):** The Hon. Member has spoken to the principles of the Bill. He was mentioning Clause 2 a second ago.

In the last few hours we have been debating the Bill in general, and no one has raised any objections to that. I am sure that the Hon. Member for Charlevoix (Mr. Hamelin) should be given some leeway by the House, considering the limited time given to debating the Bill. The Hon. Member for Charlevoix.

**Mr. Hamelin:** I am rather proud that in Clause 42 it states that the Government is now committed to "enhance the vitality of the English and French linguistic minority communities in Canada . . .". That speaks for the English minority in Quebec. I am very proud to see that the Government and Parliament will now enhance the vitality of the English community in Quebec. I know the preoccupation of this community in Quebec. We need this community in Quebec. We need a strong English community in Quebec.

[*Translation*]

I also need, in this Government, in this Parliament, in our country, to feel I am a full-fledged Canadian. With the new provisions of this Bill, with the approval and generosity of my colleagues, today I feel I am more a Canadian than ever, a full-fledged Canadian. As a Quebecer and a Francophone, whether from Quebec or outside Quebec, I want all people everywhere in the country to be full-fledged Canadians, without arrogance but with tolerance, with mutual respect, with respect for others' opinions. Through our caucus and our Party, we have worked extremely hard. True, we negotiated. It has been difficult. But we never lost sight of the substance of the Bill, which is the very spirit of our country, of this big dream. We never compromised on its substance. And that is true!

[*English*]

When we speak about fairness and equity, let me say that we really tried that within our own caucus and within our own Party. That is the mission I have for my colleagues.

• (1720)

[*Translation*]

My colleagues and myself were really committed to working together within this Party and now within this Parliament so we could understand each other better even though it's difficult, because you and I believe in this country.

[*English*]

Do you believe in Canada? I believe in Canada.

[*Translation*]

As long as I am respected. I do not feel superior. I want to join you all in building this great country.

I take this opportunity to thank the leader of the Opposition (Mr. Turner) and the leader of the New Democratic Party (Mr. Broadbent) for endorsing this bill. I want above all to

thank my leader (Mr. Mulroney) who has inspired and supported me. I also want to thank all the linguistic communities that, in the last four years, have helped us develop a significant bill which makes this country grow. This legislation makes me feel better and I really believe in it. Otherwise, I shouldn't be here. I never intended to diminish people or their rights or shove legislation down their throats. What I wanted to accomplish with you all was to improve on the Canadian dream: a country united but respectful of its elements. And it is true that some provinces are taking certain measures. But it is in a spirit of generosity that one day we will understand each other and our first task is to start working on that goal today. I am calling on all my colleagues to unite. Despite all their reservations, we will all examine together, as we have done, this legislation and its application. And that is why our committee made some fifty amendments. The objective is not to win over anyone. It is Canada that must win.

[*English*]

For the sake of Canada and for the sake of its people.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Raymond Garneau (Laval-des-Rapides):** Madam Speaker, I want to take part in the debate this afternoon, particularly with respect to the amendment of my colleague from Ottawa—Vanier (Mr. Gauthier) who is proposing that the original text concerning the application of this legislation be reintroduced in Bill C-72.

Madam Speaker, the amendment moved by my colleague considerably strengthens the Bill, especially concerning its interpretation by the courts. This is why I draw this amendment to the attention of my colleagues in the House and I urge them to support it since all it does is restore the original text on which the House of Commons voted at second reading. This is a rather important principle and I wonder to what extent the committee could amend it without changing the basic thrust of the Bill itself and the principles which had been adopted during second reading debate.

Madam Speaker, any debate on linguistic issues invariably stirs emotions and Members have an opportunity to make speeches which convey their deepest feelings. Earlier this afternoon I listened to the Hon. Member for Simcoe South (Mr. Stewart), the Hon. Member for Winnipeg—Assiniboine (Mr. McKenzie), and the Hon. Member for Charlevoix (Mr. Hamelin) when, with a certain passion, they expressed their views on Bill C-72.

Naturally, Madam Speaker, given the attitude of some Members of the House we may be strongly tempted to politicize the debate but, as it happens, they all belong to the same political Party.

But I do not think our country will be any richer if Canadians start bashing each other on the head. Mistakes do occur now and then, of course, but Bill C-72 now before the House is the result of a long process which began late in the last century