

are economic imperatives, that business is business, that transfer of these airports to private companies has been negotiated, that the contract is almost finalized, that the ink is dry on the documents, that we must sign, that this is a rush job.

I agree that the omelet, that it is time to move on to something else. But we ought not go from the frying pan to the fire. You'll get your omelet, but not at the expense of official language minorities elsewhere in Canada. That is what you are doing when you refuse reasonable and well-thought out amendments set forth by this side of the House. This is not party politics, honourable senators. We are not about to launch a filibuster in this regard. You have the majority, you can tighten the noose anytime you want to do so. I challenge you not to do so. It is in this spirit that I am speaking today.

What I want you to understand is that if you pass up the opportunity provided by this bill, your officials will be tempted to do likewise with other bills. That would be regrettable. These days, we are so very aware of Quebec's self-centredness. I was blessed and pleased to grow up in a mixed society where my culture, my language and my faith were recognized and respected. I was not living in Quebec.

I was blessed and pleased to study in Quebec. I consider Quebecers to be my brothers and sisters, but I am not convinced that the Quebecer tilling his soil in Sainte-Anne de la Pocatière, working in the aluminium plants in Bécancourt, in the Lac-Saint-Jean area or elsewhere, or working for a logging company, is prepared to accept a certain mindset according to which business is business and minorities can be left to fend for themselves.

I was about to say that on February 27 last, a senator was urging us to pass the bill so that the contract could be signed. Everything was ready for Dorval, for Mirabel, for Edmonton and for some other airport.

I agree, this makes good sense. But why crush a minority at the same time? Why say let's sign now and we'll see to your needs later? That was said in this House, and I am very sorry to have heard it.

Most Quebecers who have lived in a minority group have not lived with such group long enough to know the full meaning of being in a minority. You have to work twice as hard. Often, you have to pay more taxes and put up with insults, with having doors slammed in your face. This we have seen and this we have put up with; we are though, we can get through the situation.

Little by little, over the years, we convinced the federal government and the government of New Brunswick to recognize our rights. Many programs have been launched in other provinces also. Good will was shown to linguistic minorities in most Canadian provinces. And now the great federal manager says that we can give up acquired rights and linguistic advantages under certain conditions. We are ready to do so. If we are prepared to be high-handed with business, we are ready to make some concessions in linguistic matters. If these rights were maintained, these concessions would not be anymore costly for the companies which will grab the airports, rent

them or manage them for sixty or ninety years. It will not cost them an arm and a leg, no, not at all.

Earlier today, I adjourned the debate on a motion of Senator David. I will come back to that subject now and then. For today, I will be content—how much time do I have left?

The Hon. the Speaker: Eight minutes, Senator Corbin.

Senator Corbin: At the Transport and Communications Committee, on November 21, 1991, Mr. Goldbloom, the Commissioner for Official Languages, responded to a specific question by Senator Molgat—this can be found on page 49, Issue 3, Proceedings. Senator Molgat asked, and I quote:

Senator Molgat: Otherwise, this would in fact be a weakening of the Official Languages Act for these airport employees, would it not?

An Mr. Goldbloom replied:

Mr. Speaker, honorable senator, I would like to say something that concerns me greatly. Throughout history, there are great swings in trends. At times, the trend is towards nationalization, at others, towards privatization.

I—

Mr. Goldbloom said:

—have trouble imagining two Canada, a public Canada and a private Canada, which would be very different one from the other. I am of the opinion that if, at a given point in time, for reasons of economic order and efficiency, it is decided to privatize, and if this privatization alters the pattern of services to the public and working conditions, and if, a few years later, another government decides to nationalize and is obliged to recreate what had been dropped during the previous privatization, we would put ourselves in a situation where it could be difficult to maintain Canada's cohesion, as a country with two official languages, and that is why, like Mr. Fortier—

Mr. Goldbloom's predecessor

—it would have been preferable to have the Official Languages Act apply fully.

And Senator Molgat added, for clarity:

So the big question in examining clause 4—

Of Bill C-15

—is as follows: we ought to put back into clause 4 as worded here Parts V, VI and VII.

Of the Official Languages Act. And Mr. Goldbloom said:

That would be my recommendation.

So, honourable senators, it must be remembered that the Commissioner for Official Languages is a creature of both Houses of the Parliament of Canada, just as the Auditor General is a creature of the House of Commons.

It would seem to me that if we are serious about protecting the interests of linguistic minorities, we must carefully consider the recommendations of the Commissioner for Official Languages who, more than any of us, is aware of the conditions of minority linguistic groups in Canada. His files are extensive. He knows what is going on throughout the country.