

language violations in all parts of the country. We might not always like what the Commissioner states, but we have never questioned his right to report freely. In this respect, he is like the Auditor General.

I wish to ask the Acting Prime Minister if, in these circumstances, the resolution passed by Quebec Conservatives on the weekend is in accord with government policy? Further, does the Government agree with some of its members that the Commissioner should resign?

**Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister, President of the Privy Council and President of the Treasury Board):** Mr. Speaker, first I think the Hon. Member would agree that the Language Commissioner is not an officer of the Government. He is an officer of Parliament. He is independent and should be treated with independence.

Insofar as the alleged offensive words that have been used are concerned, the Commissioner himself has recognized that perhaps he could have chosen words that were less provocative. I think he has recognized that, and for that he has apologized. Perhaps it should be considered within the context of the various mechanisms that we have in this Chamber. There is a special language committee of Parliament, which is a joint committee. Currently hearings are being conducted with respect to Bill C-72. I understand that the Commissioner will be appearing before that committee. There are also Estimates which have been referred to the respective committees.

There are various ways in which an elaboration of the points the Commissioner has made in his report can be elicited by all Hon. Members. I would suggest that that would be the best vehicle and mechanism to seek that clarification.

[*Translation*]

COMMISSIONER'S FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION—GOVERNMENT POSITION

**Hon. Warren Allmand (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine East):** Mr. Speaker, while the Commissioner reported on the situation of English-speaking Quebecers, he also expressed dismay about the case of Mr. Piquette, MLA, and the rights of French-speaking Albertans. If it is considered as a whole, his report can be seen as well balanced.

My question is this: Is the Government ready to support and defend the freedom of expression the Official Languages Commissioner needs to go on with his job?

● (1420)

[*English*]

**Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister, President of the Privy Council and President of the Treasury Board):** Mr. Speaker, I think we have to take the Commissioner at his word. He has acknowledged the fact that perhaps he could have used less provocative language. In his press release he has said that while he may have pointed out his view in a

rather blunt manner, he did not, despite certain interpretations, condemn the Government of Québec in his report. On the contrary, he credited the Government with a number of positive initiatives and expressed his confidence in its ability to reduce present language tensions in Québec.

Having made that clarification, and with all Members having the opportunity to cross-examine the Commissioner before the respective committees of Parliament, it seems to me that if any further elaboration is required that is the place to seek it.

BILL C-72—POSITION OF MEMBERS

**Hon. Warren Allmand (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine East):** Mr. Speaker, if the Conservative Party wants to censure those who really oppose bilingualism and minority language rights, why does it not condemn and demand the resignation of those Conservative MPs who oppose Bill C-72?

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

**Some Hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Speaker:** The Hon. Deputy Prime Minister may choose to answer that question, but I point out that the question is an allegation which goes to the motivation of Hon. Members and is completely improper.

**Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister, President of the Privy Council and President of the Treasury Board):** Mr. Speaker, if the Hon. Member wants to degrade this very sensitive issue into a partisan issue, then he is certainly going the right way.

Quite frankly, if he wants to condemn the Conservative Party, there are certain members of the Liberal Party in the Province of Québec who voted to censure the Commissioner of Official Languages.

If he wants to talk about Bill C-72, maybe he might want to explain why the Liberal Opposition wanted to filibuster it at second reading when we were prepared to put it through.

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

**Some Hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Gauthier:** We could set the record straight on that last assertion.

[*Translation*]

USE OF FRENCH IN COURTS

**Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier):** Mr. Speaker, the language used by the Commissioner in his comments on the linguistic situation in Quebec was certainly not judicious.

The report of the Official Languages Commissioner is a well balanced one, in which 95 per cent of the comments are about the francophone diaspora, that is those who live outside Quebec like myself but still use French in everyday life. Only