

Language Rights

Mr. Jones: If I might be permitted to continue, this bill obviously is going to entail expenditure of additional moneys than those budgeted for. There is nothing in the bill to indicate otherwise. When you change signs, when you provide simultaneous translation, you just do not call for expenditure of thousands of dollars, you call for expenditure of thousands and thousands of dollars. You do not have to be any mathematical accountant to come to the conclusion that this is in fact a money bill. If it entails the expenditure of money it should not be here at all.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Maybe there is money in the original act.

Mr. Jones: If there is money in the original act, then it should not have been there.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ethier): Order, please.

Mr. Young: Mr. Speaker, I would like to confirm what the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) has said. I would be prepared to move a motion that the bill be withdrawn but the subject matter be referred to committee. If it will assist in resolving the procedural wrangle that we seem to be caught in, I would be prepared to do so now and put to rest that problem. Perhaps we could use the balance of the house to discuss the subject matter. If my understanding is correct and my amendment is accepted by the House, then the subject matter would be referred to a committee. If that will solve your problem, Mr. Speaker, I would be glad to make that motion now.

Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the parliamentary secretary. I think it is an excellent suggestion and one with which I am in accord.

I said at the outset, as my hon. friend will note, that I made my argument on the procedural problem extremely short for the very purposes about which he is concerned. I would think it would be appropriate if the hon. gentleman wanted to move the motion now, that we deal with the matter and then perhaps that can be the end of it.

Mr. Young: Mr. Speaker, I have only one question. I would like to allow my colleague from Ottawa-Vanier who has proposed a motion to be able to speak on it. If I propose the amendment now, am I going to be required to speak to the amendment right away with the possibility that he will lose his turn?

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): You cannot move an amendment until the motion is put.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ethier): Order, please. If you are seeking guidance you cannot move the amendment now.

Mr. Gauthier (Ottawa-Vanier): Are we on the bill now?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ethier): Order, please. Perhaps we should seek the consent of the House. Is it agreed, if there

is a forthcoming amendment, to refer the subject matter to the committee and that the point of order will be withdrawn?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gauthier (Ottawa-Vanier): Mr. Speaker, we are therefore discussing the subject of Bill C-210 rather than the bill itself, but I am somewhat confused and perplexed by the comments made on the point of order because, as indicated by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles), although there are monetary provisions in the current Revised Statutes of Canada, Bill C-210 does not address itself to them but rather to the intent of statutes, and the Official Languages Act in particular which, in my view, should be paramount as regards language rights in Canada.

Bill C-210 would correct some anomalies and inconsistencies in the Revised Statutes of Canada 1970 pertaining to language rights in Canada. Moreover, it would delete references to bilingual districts which were never implemented, and finally it would give the accused the right to be heard and dealt with in his official language. The bill is the result of extensive study and is based in particular on the conviction that Canadians in 1978 are ready and willing to recognize equal legal status to this country's both official languages. I would like to pay tribute and extend my sincere thanks to counsel, and especially his assistant Mr. R. M. Beaupré, for the advice and expertise they so generously extended in the preparation of this legislation.

Since tonight's debate is on the bill at second reading stage, or the principle of the bill, I would like to briefly review the situation as it now exists and then discuss in general terms the amendments proposed in Bill C-210. The issue of language rights has been widely publicized and is closely linked to that of national unity. If the official status of the English and French languages is accepted, their equal status must also be recognized in the courts of justice as well as before all government institutions, and both official languages must also be accepted in the day to day cultural, educational, social and economic life. Bill C-210 brings a contribution to language equality, and that concept of natural justice that will give every Canadian a feeling of belonging and true equality.

[*English*]

Historically, Mr. Speaker, it was only in the province of Quebec that Canadians had a right to a trial in the language of their choice. In the last decade, major changes were brought about in a few other provinces, allowing the accused the right to use the language of his choice. It has been argued convincingly that amendments to the Criminal Code were required before language rights could be given to all Canadians. Hon. members will remember that as recently as last summer the attorney general for Ontario, the Honourable Roy McMurtry, had indicated that his province was proceeding with its provincial program to provide court services in French in designated areas and that amendments to the Criminal Code were required to permit French trials in Ontario. This the federal