

Oral Questions

[Translation]

SUPREME COURT DECISION—CONSULTATIONS WITH
FRANCO-MANITOBANS AND GOVERNMENT OF MANITOBA—
GOVERNMENT POSITION

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Winnipeg-Fort Garry): I have a supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

Considering the tremendous importance of this decision and of participation by all Canadians in the political process, could the Deputy Prime Minister give the House the assurance that the Government of Canada will be having consultations with the Franco-Manitoban community and the Government of Manitoba, with a view to proceeding together, with firm resolve, to put into effect the decision handed down by the Supreme Court?

Hon. Erik Nielsen (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Defence): Absolutely, Mr. Speaker.

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THE CONSTITUTION

SUPREME COURT JUDGMENT—SITUATION OF FRANCOPHONES
IN MANITOBA

Mr. Raymond Garneau (Laval-des-Rapides): Mr. Speaker, as a preamble to my question, directed to the Deputy Prime Minister, and following what was said by my hon. friend from Winnipeg, I want to say, as a Francophone, and I imagine all Francophones in the House must be delighted with the judgment handed down by the Supreme Court today that this is an historical gesture which I think guarantees not only the rights of Francophones in Manitoba but also those of Francophones everywhere in Canada where those rights are not yet fully respected. I think we can look forward to an even brighter future.

My question is directed to the Deputy Prime Minister. Does the Government consider that the resolutions adopted unanimously by the House of Commons in 1983 and 1984 can and in fact do constitute a minimum basis for seeking both a legal and a political solution for Franco-Manitobans?

[English]

Hon. Erik Nielsen (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Defence): Well, to begin with, Mr. Speaker, I am sure the Government would want to look at the judgment today in the context of those resolutions, which would require some memory refreshment. But I can assure the Hon. Members that we in this Party and this Government look upon languages in our country as an instrument of unity. That is our approach, and given that kind of approach by all Members of this House, indeed by our citizenry at large, we will achieve a far greater degree of unity than has ever been achieved in the past.

[Translation]

LEGISLATION PASSED BY MANITOBA LEGISLATURE

Mr. Raymond Garneau (Laval-des-Rapides): Mr. Speaker, I am quite pleased with what the Deputy Prime Minister had to say, but I think it should be understood that Francophones will never again tolerate second-class treatment, in Manitoba or anywhere else in Canada.

I would like to get back to a point made by my hon. colleague regarding the urgency of the situation. On page 65 of the Supreme Court judgment, which covers 88 pages, the following is said, and I quote:

As for the future, the Constitution requires that from the date of this judgement, all new statutes of the Legislature of Manitoba be adopted, printed and published both in French and English. Any statute of the Legislature that does not meet this requirement will be invalid and inoperative.

Therefore, regarding the point made by the Hon. Member for Winnipeg-Fort Garry, does the Government of Canada intend to give its immediate and urgent attention to this matter so that the Manitoba Legislature's operations will not be paralysed by a lack of resources for operating in French and English in its legislation?

[English]

Hon. Erik Nielsen (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, I want to respond very positively to the hon. gentleman, as I thought I was doing with the Hon. Member for Winnipeg-Fort Garry. Not having studied the judgment which, as he will appreciate, is very lengthy, it is my understanding that the laws passed by the Manitoba Legislature would in the interim have validity until such time as the 120 days—

Mr. Axworthy: Past laws, not future.

Mr. Epp (Provencher): Past laws.

Mr. Nielsen: That may be incorrect. I have not yet studied the judgment in detail. There may be a catch-up period in there. However, whatever is required to be done by the federal Government to assist in achieving the, I am sure, mutually desired objective of implementing the spirit of that judgment, will be done in order to achieve equality of language rights not just in Manitoba but throughout the entire country.

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[Translation]

THE BUDGET

CAPITAL GAINS TAX EXEMPTION

Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa): Since the Prime Minister is absent, Mr. Speaker, I will direct my question to the Minister of National Health and Welfare.

Today's *Globe and Mail* reports that the Minister of Finance knew before bringing down the Budget that one of the