

ber's bill, Bill C-214, is to refer the matter for further consideration to the new committee set up by Parliament to study the annual report of the Commissioner of Official Languages, which is to make recommendations to both Houses. If there is some hesitation in giving unanimous support to this bill, Mr. Speaker, I would be ready to agree that the matter be referred to the committee for further study, and as my time is somewhat limited because of the vote, I conclude my remarks expressing the hope that other members will give me their support.

[English]

Mr. Peter Stollery (Parliamentary Secretary to Secretary of State and Minister of Communications): Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member would agree to withdraw his bill, I would move on behalf of members on this side:

That the subject matter be referred to the Standing Committee on Communications and Culture.

Possibly that would be acceptable to other hon. members in the chamber.

● (1730)

[Translation]

Hon. Marcel Lambert (Edmonton West): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have this opportunity to talk on this subject as a Francophone from another area of the country. However, the hon. member and myself are neighbours in Ottawa. It might be possible, for instance, that because of our experiences and our requirements in the rest of the country, the very narrow principle of this bill might be prejudicial to us rather than helpful. However, I wish to draw the attention of hon. members to something which happened rather suddenly, and I do not even know if the hon. member remembers that he is on a joint committee of the House of Commons and the Senate that will study the question. It is precisely because it is something that was studied and decided during the previous Parliament and which is now in the implementation stage, the reports of the Commissioner of Official Languages, and I quote the *Votes and Proceedings* of May 23 as follows:

On motion of Mr. Pinard—

—government leader in the House—

—seconded by—

—his colleague—

—Mr. Lapointe, it was ordered—That a Special Joint Committee of the Senate and of the House of Commons be appointed to consider the report of the commissioner of Official Languages, 1978, tabled Tuesday, February 20, 1979, (Sessional Paper No. 304-1/301) and the report of the commissioner of Official Languages, 1979, tabled Tuesday, April 22, 1980—

And we have the reference number of that sessional paper.

Later, on June 9, the House passed the following motion proposed by Mr. Pinard, seconded by Mr. MacEachen, and I quote:

Official Languages Act

That the following members do represent this House at the Special Joint Committee of the Senate and of the House of Commons appointed to consider the reports of the Commissioner of Official Languages: Messrs. Beatty (Wellington-Dufferin-Simcoe), Corbin, Gauthier, Herbert, Joyal, Kilgour, La Salle, Nystrom and Stollery.

Some members I see here, let it be noted, might want to participate in this debate. But is that the purpose of this bill? Well, I wonder for my part whether this should not also be referred to the same joint committee. I say that with the text and the recommendations of Mr. Yalden, the Commissioner of Official Languages, we could now consider the problems raised by the hon. member, and I would certainly agree to be on it.

The suggestion was made by the hon. member for Spadina (Mr. Stollery) that the subject matter of the bill of the hon. member for Ottawa-Vanier (Mr. Gauthier) should be referred not to our broadcasting committee but to the joint committee, and then we would have the whole thing to consider, and indeed I think a joint committee of the House and the Senate has the advantage of not being under the pressure of time.

Quite often, we have thoughts that have not matured enough, reflections made without enough consideration for the whole of the country. And here I must warn particularly my colleagues in this House from the province of Quebec. I say in all sincerity that, notwithstanding the fact that I am also a Francophone Canadian, that is a Canadian of Francophone origin and from western Canada, the attitudes in that part of the country are not necessarily the attitudes in this part of the country, not the ideas of central Canada. Indeed, here they want signs to be bilingual everywhere, French and English to be on an equal footing everywhere.

Mr. Speaker, my dear friends and colleagues are not aware of the difficulty we had convincing people in 100 per cent English-speaking communities to accept that any instructions or signs in post offices or elsewhere, such as in the Canadian National railway stations, at the gate of the National Parks or in the mountains either in Alberta or British Columbia, be written in both languages even though not even two per cent of the people who go there would read the French version. These are some of the problems we have seen. As for generalizing the use of French, the hon. member for Ottawa-Vanier knows that we share the same objectives.

However, perhaps I do not share his views concerning the means to be used. We have spent and wasted perhaps hundreds of millions of dollars in the last decade, and I am thinking about the language program for public servants. This has failed. We simply have to look at the people we know who have gone through the Language School. Some of them have been able to learn the second language, and they are very happy to have done so. However, for others, it was simply torture. First, this has made people hate the language; second, this has cost a lot of money with which we could have achieved results much quicker by asking the co-operation of the provinces to train French teachers. There is a shortage of teachers in the coun-