

Official Languages Act has caused Mr. d'Iberville Fortier to threaten to resign? Also, he was forced to table an emergency special report pursuant to Section 67 of the act. Is the leader aware that by not tabling these regulations, the government is endangering the health and the safety of Canadians? I will give you an example. Announcements on board trains, airplanes and ferries are often not made in both languages. Another situation arising from the lack of regulations is the fact that anglophone inmates in a detention centre in Quebec do not have access to professional care in the language of their choice.

Can the senator tell me when to expect these regulations?

Hon. Lowell Murray (Leader of the Government and Minister of State for Federal-Provincial Relations): Honourable senators, I had an exchange on this very matter the other day with our colleague, Senator Thériault. As I explained at the time, the regulations under this act have been the subject of very extensive consultations between the government and the Canadian public, in particular the representatives of the minority language groups. The short answer to her question is that I expect the regulations to be tabled very soon.

Senator Wood: Honourable senators, don't mind if I am sceptic about that, because some time ago when I questioned you—I think it was a year ago, on September 21, 1988, you told me then that they would be imminent. So, today I thought I had better look it up.

Senator Croll: She has a different meaning of "soon".

Senator Wood: Well, I looked it up.

Senator Croll: Delay, inventory tactics.

Senator Wood: It was soon to happen. Well, it didn't happen. I noticed that before that, in reply to another question I asked on the same subject, you said, "very shortly." I don't think those words have the same meaning for each of us. Then in April, 1989, the President of the Treasury Board said, "Long before Christmas." Two Christmases have now gone by and we still haven't seen the regulations. I would like to have a better answer than "very shortly." I would like to have a date.

Senator Murray: The consultation process has taken a good deal longer than we had anticipated, and I appreciate the patience of my honourable friends and others on this matter. I think I can assure her with some certainty this time that the regulations are in their final form and will be tabled very shortly. If later today or tomorrow I find that I am wrong in that expectation, I will say so in the house tomorrow.

Senator Wood: I would like to remind the honourable senator that the consultation with the minority groups has long since passed. They went two rounds on the consultation. I was in touch with them recently and they are not expecting any further consultations.

• (1610)

I believe the government has all the information it needs.

COUNCIL OF EUROPE

CANADA'S ROLE IN PROPOSED PARLIAMENT—GOVERNMENT POSITION

Hon. Jeremiah S. Grafstein: I should like to ask a question of the Leader of the Government in the Senate. Yesterday the Council of Europe marked the 40th anniversary of its human rights charter and at that meeting declared that it now wants the United States, the Soviet Union and Canada to join some of its functions. As honourable senators are aware, the Council of Europe is the oldest post-war body promoting European cooperation. Today it will admit Hungary as the first member from the former communist bloc. The 23-nation council issued a statement at the end of the meeting yesterday saying that it wanted to help coordinate human rights issues for the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe. That organization, as honourable senators know, is a loosely-defined body of some 34 nations, including Canada, and has been a forum for talks between cold war adversaries.

Yesterday, as well, the Foreign Minister of Italy opened the session by calling for the council's assembly to develop into a parliament to bring together the former Communist Bloc countries with the West, including the United States. The United States responded by saying that it was unlikely to become a member of the Council of Europe.

Could the Honourable Leader of the Government in the Senate advise us as to Canada's position with respect to becoming a member of the proposed parliament? What does Canada intend to do in terms of furthering its role with respect to the new functions now proposed by the Council of Europe? Does it intend to follow the lead of the United States and not actively participate in the way proposed by members of the Council, or will it choose to adopt a unique North American path and become active in the deliberations, not only of the Council and its attendant committees, but hopefully the proposed parliament?

Hon. Lowell Murray (Leader of the Government and Minister of State for Federal-Provincial Relations): If I understand my honourable friend correctly, the recommendations from the Council of Europe have been sent to the CSCE, the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe. Shortly that conference will reconvene in Europe. For the moment, all I can tell the honourable senator is that the Prime Minister himself, together with Mr. Clark, the Secretary of State for External Affairs, will be attending that conference and taking an active interest—as we have been from the first Helsinki conference—in those deliberations. The deliberations of the Council of Europe, to which my honourable friend refers, had not been brought to my attention until now, and I would want to consult with colleagues before making a definitive statement as to what our position will be.

GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

TIMETABLE FOR PREPARATION OF REGULATIONS

Hon. H. A. Olson: Honourable senators, I should like to ask the Leader of the Government in the Senate a question. I must