

am sorry, but I did not translate the text. They do not like the word "extend". My colleague from Saint-Jacques (Mr. Guilbault) will I hope be introducing an amendment soon to correct the English text that was tabled. My intention was to restore in its entirety the wording the Government had proposed, that is to say that in English one would read:

[English]

2. The purpose of this Act is to extend the present laws of Canada relating to official languages . . .

That is the original wording in the Bill introduced by the Government in June, 1987. I think that it says—

[Translation]

in French clearly that the purpose is to strengthen and

[English]

If people do not like the word "extend", and I understand that there was some confusion, because it was even translated in my own office as "reinforce". I do not think that the word "reinforce" is appropriate. My colleague, the Hon. Member for Saint-Jacques (Mr. Guilbault), will move an amendment to reinstate the word "extend", which I understand is the correct English expression. Not being a specialist in those terms, Mr. Speaker, I will say nothing further.

[Translation]

Mr. Speaker, the tendency of Canadian jurisprudence at the present time is to use the teleological method I referred to earlier. That is why the purpose of Bill C-72 is important in the initial version and in the amendment moved by the Member for Ottawa—Vanier, myself. I and my colleagues in the Liberal party, including the Member for Saint-Denis (Mr. Prud'homme), want to ensure that the Official Languages Act will be given a broad interpretation by the courts, and, I repeat, a liberal one. Hence the necessity of stating that the purpose of this Act is to strengthen the legislation on Official Languages.

For instance, if someone makes a complaint pursuant to a right granted by Bill C-72, the federal institution concerned might defend itself by saying that the situation at issue is the normal institutional practice. We have always worked that way. What do you want? That is how it works. With the purpose of the bill being to strengthen the legislation, I think that the plaintiff could rightly argue that new procedures will have to be created and that we cannot be satisfied only with what exists.

With the word "reinforce" in the purpose of the Act, it will be clear that it is not the status quo, but rather a big step forward. The original version of clause 2 of Bill C-72, my amendment, represents a quantum leap, an obligation to do more, and that is what we want, Madam Speaker.

The Liberal amendment, as I just said, simply restores the Government's wording. I do not see why the Government, which was deceived by its backbenchers who said that if they were granted some amendments, they would vote for or

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support the Bill . . . They did not do so, Madam Speaker, and the Government was had in this deal. And I say to the Government that since that is so, since your recalcitrant caucus members do not want to play the game, let us restore the original wording of the Bill and we will vote for it.

• (1610)

[English]

Mr. Dan McKenzie (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Veterans Affairs): Madam Speaker, I gather that I am speaking to my amendment now.

I would like to point out and explain why so many amendments were tabled. We felt because a great number of witnesses who wished to appear before the committee, which was considerable—and they were very important witnesses from very important organizations, legal societies and individuals—were denied an opportunity to appear before that committee, we did not support the committee's decision that it would not travel.

This particular piece of legislation has caused great and serious concern right across the country. I can tell you, Madam Speaker, that it has very little support across Canada, especially western Canada. More time should have been spent hearing witnesses. It was a very serious error to deny all these responsible people a chance to appear. That was one of the main reasons why we had to table a number of amendments.

I would also like to point out that there is a theory among many Members in the House, which has been around a long time, that any time a language Bill comes up or anything to do with language, not one Member of Parliament is to question it. One cannot ask a question or make a statement about it. One cannot propose an amendment to it. If one does then immediately one is slandering. I do not mind being slandered, but I do not like my constituents being slandered, and Canadians being slandered because they ask questions about Bill C-72. I think that the comments that are being made by many Members of Parliament here daily about Canadians who would dare ask a question about official languages or any language Bill are absolutely insulting and intolerable. I will speak up for them at any time. No one will stop me with their name calling. I will try to be as constructive as I possibly can at all times.

With respect to the amendment, Motion No. 2, the clause would read:

The purpose of this Act is to

(a) ensure respect for English and French as the official languages of Canada and ensure equality of status and equal rights and privileges as to their use in all federal institutions, wherever it is reasonable to do so in the circumstances.

This amendment would prevent the emphasizing and the segregating of certain institutions, for example, a parliamentary proceeding. This amendment would also ensure that only where it is reasonable to do so would both languages get absolute equality of use. This amendment seeks to prevent a