

Official Languages Act

with respect to the importance of the Auditor General and the comptroller general.

Evidence of interest on all sides of the House with respect to the job of parliament in the twentieth century has been shown in this debate by the fact that the tools of parliament are inadequate as part of the function of Treasury Board, the comptroller general, the Auditor General, and ultimately parliament in the supervision of government expenditures.

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

Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton): Mr. Speaker, may I call it four o'clock?

Mr. Lefebvre: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. There may be some agreement now that everything to be said has been said on Bill C-10 and the office of the comptroller general. If you followed the debate, Mr. Speaker, everyone has emphasized how important this office is. Maybe there is now unanimous agreement and we can pass third reading. Perhaps we can make it official.

Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton): Mr. Speaker, I would be quite pleased to do that if I could say to my good friend, the Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board (Mr. Lefebvre), that I have completed what I wanted to say with respect to the matter. However, I understand there may be other members who might wish to say something on the matter. I must say to him in order to allay any fears he may have that I do not anticipate that the bill will be long before this House.

Mr. Lefebvre: Mr. Speaker, in other words there is no agreement to having third reading today.

Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton): Mr. Speaker, I would have liked that very much and I would have had no objection to the matter going to third reading today except that I just began what I wanted to say.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ethier): Order, please. I gather we do not have unanimous consent. It being four o'clock the House will now proceed to the consideration of private members' business as listed on today's order paper, namely, public bills, notices of motions, private bills.

● (1602)

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BILLS

[Translation]

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES ACT

MEASURE TO DEFINE STANDING OF BOTH OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

Mr. Pierre De Bané (Matane) moved that Bill C-202, to amend the Official Languages Act, be read the second time

[Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton).]

and referred to the Standing Committee on Broadcasting, Films and Assistance to the Arts.

He said: Mr. Speaker, the bill which I have the honour to introduce jointly today with my colleague the hon. member for Maisonneuve-Rosemont (Mr. Joyal) deals with the unity of the country or, in other words, with the inequality between both founding groups of this country. Indeed, Mr. Speaker, while most people agree to raise their voices in favour of a united country, when time comes to try to find the means to ensure that unity those same voices weaken, not to say that they express conflicting opinions. Let us recall the incident which occurred a year or two ago in Vancouver when one of the 12 TV channels was to become French-speaking and the strong protests which were raised by the Anglophone majority in the British Columbia metropolis.

I wondered then what group felt less inclined to defend the country. How sincere are we if on one hand we speak in favour of Canadian unity when on the other hand we are not ready to make the necessary sacrifices? How sincere are the people of Essex in Ontario where the members of the school board are no more separatists than the present Quebec government when they refuse to accede to the request of an important Francophone group? In my opinion, it is quite easy to speak in favour of Canadian unity, justice, virtue and motherhood, but the important point is to translate those words into convincing action.

To my mind, it is not just by talking about national unity that we are going to solve the problem but only when the English majority will accept measures which will give equal opportunities to both groups. I remember the famous statement made by the leader of the official opposition in 1930 when the then Liberal government introduced legislation to have bank notes and Canadian currency printed in both official languages. At the time the leader of the official opposition made the following comment which appeared in the report of the B and B Commission: I am against that legislation because it would jeopardize the harmony which has always existed between the two founding people. Where is harmony, Mr. Speaker, when one is afraid of recognizing the rights of Francophones? Surely we remember the famous speech which the deputy minister of federal-provincial relations, Mr. Gordon Robertson, delivered not long ago when he made a review of all injustices against Francophones in each one of the Canadian provinces. He concluded by saying that, in essence, the history of Canada has been one of meanness of mind and heart.

And that is why I suggest that we could progress enormously in the pursuit of this objective on which we have all set our hearts, namely the preservation of the Canadian unity, if as a first step we adopted a number of measures which come under the jurisdiction of our parliament and which would improve the position of our French Canadian compatriots within our