

Supply

Members, including the Hon. Member for Chambly (Mr. Grisé), as Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Prime Minister, chose to blame the Hon. Member for Ottawa—Vanier... You can imagine the gall of a Tory member blaming the Hon. Member for Ottawa—Vanier for his contribution in the area of official languages! Just as the Hon. Member for Charlevoix (Mr. Hamelin) for that matter, the Hon. Member for Ottawa—Vanier has done a tremendous job on this issue. I see that someone is rising on a point of order.

Mr. Grisé: On a point of order, Madam Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): The Hon. Member for Chambly (Mr. Grisé) on a point of order.

Mr. Grisé: Madam Speaker, I listened to my friend from Glengarry-Prescott-Russell (Mr. Boudria). I never questioned the capacity and the work of the Hon. Member for Ottawa—Vanier this morning. I asked him the following question: What has his government done from 1980 to 1984? What has his government, the then Liberal Government, done, as far as official languages are concerned, from 1980 to 1984, Madam Speaker, since I never—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): The Chair appreciates the Hon. Member's remark but it was not a point of order. The Hon. Member from Glengarry-Prescott-Russell (Mr. Boudria).

Mr. Boudria: Madam Speaker, I am wondering how come the Hon. Member, the parliamentary secretary to the Deputy Prime Minister—

Some Hon. Members: The Hon. Member for Chambly.

Mr. Boudria: —the Hon. Member for Chambly—I thank my colleagues for reminding me—has such a short memory that he does not even remember the criticism he has made this morning. I suggest that he reads *Hansard* tomorrow and rather slowly at that so that he be able to understand what he has said.

So, I was mentioning the extraordinary contribution of the Hon. Member for Ottawa—Vanier (Mr. Gauthier) in the official languages field and I was saying that we could also praise the contribution of the Hon. Member for Charlevoix (Mr. Hamelin), who has chaired the Official Languages Committee to which I attend regularly when it is not sitting at the same time as the committee of which I am a member.

The Hon. Member for Ottawa—Vanier, as we know, has been and still is a member of the Richelieu Club, has been a school board commissioner and has worked for many years in the field of the official languages, has even been elected Man of the Year, Madam Speaker, in 1970, by the Junior Chamber of Commerce, and has been chairman of the Official Languages Committee for many years. So, Madam Speaker, you see and I trust all Members except the one for Chambly (Mr. Grisé) have seen that the Member for Ottawa—Vanier has done a good job, and I think it was my duty to mention it here

today if only in case other Hon. Members, following the example of the Hon. Member for Chambly, would question the competence of the Hon. Member for Ottawa—Vanier.

At last, we are talking about the question of official languages. Some were asking: What has the Liberal Party done in the field of official languages? Can you imagine once again the ignorance of some Conservative Members, of some ministers indeed who do not even remember the Liberal contribution! I have in front of me the five volume report of the Laurendeau-Dunton Commission, the so-called B & B Commission, which was active in the 1960s, and which had been appointed by Prime Minister Pearson to look at the whole official languages issue; it is as a result of that very famous report that we have developed a very much needed official languages policy in our country, a policy which was finally implemented because of a Liberal initiative many years ago.

A few years later, in 1969 I believe, this House passed the Official Languages Act which gave English and French equal status in this country. And we will recall, as was mentioned this morning by the Hon. Member for Ottawa—Vanier, the private member's motion, the 1973 resolution which not only reasserted the principle in the Official Languages Act, but also made clear the right of public servants to carry out their duties in the official language of their choice. However, I have to admit that this principle I just stated has not yet been implemented entirely, even today, even under this government, although they might want to brag about it. We know all too well that francophone unilinguals the public service of our country, particularly within the RCMP and other government agencies, will advance much less than anglophone unilinguals. I think we all agree on that. That is the sad reality. But I think all members of this House are unanimously willing to improve that situation, and the Standing Committee on Official Languages has looked at that issue. I have myself attended many meetings where that question was addressed, for example in relation to the RCMP as well as other police forces.

• (1630)

In 1978, the Liberal Government implemented the Court Challenges Program to provide financial support to Canadians who wished to have their linguistic rights recognized by the courts. Hon. Members will recall that a number of Canadians in Manitoba made use of such services to obtain recognition of their historic rights which had been ignored for nearly 30 years.

Finally, in 1979, the Conservative Government created the Official Languages Committee, but this Committee was not able to hold any meetings. In 1980, the Liberal Government re-established the committee and appointed as its chairman the Hon. Member for Ottawa—Vanier, whom we still have the pleasure of having among us today.

Bill C-72 is without doubt the most important official languages reform since the original piece of legislation in 1969.