

*Oral Questions*

Accords which they all signed. Quiet diplomacy, unfortunately, is all too often met with quiet denials. Therefore, in the last remaining days of the conference I urge the Government to take to the high road, to publicize the harsh realities, and name the names, for it is in the court of public opinion that the guilty will be judged, and in which we will bring to an end the immoral and unacceptable oppression of humanity. It is a battle we cannot afford to lose.

\* \* \*

## HOUSE OF COMMONS

## PRESENCE IN GALLERY OF UNITED KINGDOM MINISTER FOR OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENT

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** I should like to indicate to the House the presence in our gallery of the Right Hon. Timothy Raison, Minister for Overseas Development, of the United Kingdom.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

## ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

## OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

## SUPREME COURT RULING ON MANITOBA MINORITY RIGHTS

**Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Winnipeg-Fort Garry):** Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Prime Minister I would like to direct my questions to the Deputy Prime Minister. I believe everyone in this House recognizes that this is a very historic day in the establishment of a more civil, tolerant, and equitable society in Canada. The opinion rendered by the Supreme Court on the establishment of minority rights is a very clear verdict and a very clear signal which, considering the past judgments of this House, I am sure we all endorse.

However, I think it also raises some very crucial and immediate questions about the kinds of initiatives which will have to be taken by the Government of Canada and by the Government of Manitoba. Because of the very immediate timetable which was set out by the Supreme Court in terms of a response to the establishment of minimum standards, I would like first to ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the Government of Canada intends to do to respond to those invitations and directions from the Supreme Court. In particular, can the Deputy Prime Minister give us assurances that the Attorney General of this country will clearly submit, within the 120-day period, a timetable? Or will the Government follow the option of negotiating and consulting with the Government of Manitoba to see if there is another political solution, to avoid the major expenditure of time and resources which would be required under the decision by the Supreme Court?

**Hon. Erik Nielsen (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Defence):** Mr. Speaker, I understand that that decision was rendered at 10.30 this morning. It is a very lengthy judgment, well in excess of 200 pages. The Hon. Member would, as would all Hon. Members, I am sure, expect the Government to examine very carefully the detail of that judgment before arriving at any conclusions. That will be done, and it will be done as quickly as is reasonably possible.

Of one thing the Hon. Member can be assured. As has been demonstrated while we have been sitting on this side and the other side of the House, this Party is and remains unequivocally committed to the official languages course in this country.

## REQUEST FOR FEDERAL ASSISTANCE

**Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Winnipeg-Fort Garry):** Mr. Speaker, we fully recognize the importance of taking a proper and careful look at the decision. I would want to remind the Deputy Minister that part of that decision states that any law which is passed by the Legislature of Manitoba from this day hence forward, which is not in conformity with the decision, is invalid. That, therefore, puts an incredible responsibility and onus on the province for the provision of language services so that the Legislature can continue to function as the proper body for that jurisdiction.

Can we receive assurance from the Deputy Prime Minister that the Government of Canada will immediately offer every assistance, by way of resources and personnel, to ensure that proper language services can be obtained by the Legislature of Manitoba, so that it can continue to function in its proper capacity?

**Hon. Erik Nielsen (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Defence):** Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member can be absolutely certain that the federal Government will offer whatever resources are necessary to ensure that it fulfils its obligations under the official languages policy, and to comply with the often expressed views of the Prime Minister and this Party with respect to the obligations of government to two official languages in this country.

● (1420)

It may well be that the Hon. Member's interpretation of the laws passed from this date on in the Province of Manitoba requires that sort of immediate attention which might well become the focus of some initial action by the federal Government. My information is that laws passed have effect for the time being, but whether it is—the Hon. Member shakes his head. That is our problem. The judgment is extremely lengthy, as I say, and will have to be examined very carefully. But whatever is required of the federal Government in that regard will be done.