

Government Orders

the Canadian government to undermine French language and culture in Canada.

The Department of Canadian Heritage administers all programs connected with clause 4(2)(g) of the Act, and I quote:

(g) the advancement of the equality of status and use of English and French and the enhancement and development of English and French linguistic minority communities in Canada;

First of all, it is strange the legislation does not refer to the equality of French and English. According to the department, however, this kind of wording would be far too coercive, although the present minister is French speaking. The legislation therefore refers to advancement, to moving towards a hypothetical equality.

Since for the past 125 years or more, we have been moving nowhere at all, francophones can hardly be expected to believe they will get there some day.

Similarly, the Canadian government is careful to avoid any reference in this bill to recognizing and promoting the position of Canada's two founding nations, since such recognition would have involved genuinely defending the French language and culture in Canada. Inequality between francophones and anglophones in Canada is systematic. There are many examples, and I will mention a few that struck me after I got to Ottawa.

Example No. 1: I suggest that members who receive their weekly green list of government publications compare the number of documents available to anglophones and francophones. On the list, it usually says that the French version will be available later on.

• (1245)

Example No. 2: It is a fiction that a francophone can make himself understood and obtain services in his own language across Canada. Even some of our so-called bilingual public servants are unable to provide services in French. Even here in the federal government, in the national capital, once you get past the token francophone, there is a complete vacuum: almost everything is in English. So much so that even the Assistant Deputy Minister for Cultural Affairs of the Minister of Canadian Heritage is losing his francophone roots and testifies in English before the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage. Thousands are being assimilated every day within the very precincts of the federal government, because they know that English means more status, more advancement and, as a result, better pay.

I challenge the government to order a private company that is serious and strictly impartial—which automatically excludes the Commissioner of Official Languages—to find out to what extent a francophone can expect to receive the same level of service from the federal government in his own language. If the government refuses to take up this challenge, I am prepared to

prove my point by revealing a number of bilingual positions held by people who do not know a word of French. When people find out what positions are involved and which citizens are affected by these positions, they will be flabbergasted.

Example No. 3: Contrary to their anglophone colleagues, francophones working for the federal government must, for the most part, work in what is for them a second language. It is a whole class of citizens who are being assimilated. In this respect, the federal government behaves exactly the same way—especially in the national capital region—that private companies did in the late 1960s in Quebec, when francophones were not allowed to speak French even while smoking in the cafeteria. As soon as they entered the plant, they had to speak English. I demand an independent and earnest inquiry into this matter. This of course excludes the Commissioner of Official Languages.

Moreover, I am asking all French speaking civil servants, especially those in the national capital region, who are required to work exclusively in English, to systematically complain to the Commissioner of Official Languages so that he can no longer hide behind the lack or small number of complaints to avoid taking action and severely reprimanding a government which claims to promote French language and culture but which forbids a significant number of its French-speaking employees to work in their own language. I will add that it would be useful to send me a copy of the complaints so that I can act upon them, while preserving the complainants' anonymity, and defend in the House of Commons French speaking civil servants who have been deprived of their fundamental rights.

Similarly, how can it be explained that the federal public service in Quebec, excluding the Outaouais region, is made up of 54 per cent bilingual positions, which are truly bilingual, whereas in Ontario, excluding the national capital region, only 8 per cent of positions are bilingual? Given the respective minority, English in Quebec and French in Ontario, to be fair, 25 per cent of positions in the Ontario federal civil service should be bilingual.

This shows how little the federal government cares about its French minority and how great his concerns for its English minority in Quebec are. As a matter of fact, the federal government is using its civil service to impose bilingualism on Quebec. After all, when every francophone can speak English, who will need French?

I will remind my hon. colleagues that the promotion and development of French and English minorities in Canada is one of the responsibilities of the Department of Canadian Heritage. The only minority in Canada which does not have its own schools—and when it does they do not have toilets or running water—, which hardly has any cultural instruments, which does not have health services or social services in its own language, is the French-speaking minority. The maximum of services should