

followed. The government does not want to impose on a private company the obligation to abide by other parts of the Act, as you would like to do.

[English]

Senator Frith: That is what the whole act is about. If you are doing business with the federal government, you have to. That turns the clock back 20 years.

[Translation]

Senator Gigantès: Honourable senators, would you take a two-part question? If what you say is right, why would the minister promise to specify compliance in the contract rather than through the act? Secondly, do you think that a francophone worker in some private company administered by anglophones would like to be told "speak white"?

Senator Grimard: I think that the minister took a step forward when, following the suggestions that were made to him, not only by the other side of the House but by us, he committed himself in a letter that the contracts would specify compliance with the language of work provisions, of the Official Languages Act. I think that is a step forward.

We must still face reality. When the Montreal Airport Commissioner appeared before us, he specifically told us that he could live with the act as written. There was no problem in Montreal. I echo the words of our Deputy Leader of the Government, who told us earlier that, in fact, we wage a battle. I have a lot of respect for New Brunwickers. I understand their problem. We wage a remote control battle, because we are currently solving the problem of Montreal, Vancouver, Calgary and Edmonton.

When we talk about Moncton, there are absolutely no discussions going. It is only a wish, an intention. I suggest, and I say frankly, that essentially (I know you did not like it, but I will repeat it) the government does not want to require a private company to comply with the language of work provisions of the Official Languages Act.

I have given examples. Let's take Air Canada for instance. Everything has been laid down. The working language has been laid down. The service language has been laid down, and it is fine, since Air Canada is a unit all across Canada. It is only one unit, whereas airports are different entities.

In every other privatization done by contract or in legislation, it has never been a requirement to enforce the working language provisions. Why do it today?

Hon. Norbert L. Thériault: May I ask a very simple question to Senator Grimard? Would you take the same attitude if the government had decided to privatize Canada Post?

Senator Grimard: Honourable senators, this is a very interesting question you are asking. I consider Canada Post and Air Canada as identical. I think they should be treated the same way. Honestly, again, Canada Post is a national entity while airports are local entities. As far as I am concerned, Air Canada and Canada Post are on the same level.

If it was privatized, Senator Thériault, I believe then the government would have to apply the same principles as in the

case of Air Canada, that is to enforce fully the *Official Languages Act*.

Senator Corbin: Senator Grimard, I have listened closely to your argument since the beginning of that debate in the Senate but I have failed completely to understand your logic as regards the distinction between "national unity" on the one hand and "local industry" on the other.

It turns out that in the field of . . .

The Hon. the Speaker: Are you asking a question, Senator Corbin?

Senator Corbin: Yes, Mr. Speaker.

The Hon. the Speaker: So be it. Otherwise, your rising to speak would have the effect of closing the debate.

Senator Corbin: I have the right to close the debate?

The Hon. the Speaker: Pursuant to our Rules, you will automatically close the debate if you take the floor.

Senator Corbin: I was only rising to ask senator Grimard a question. You are telling me that, if no other senators wish to speak, I could close the debate with another intervention. Is that it?

Senator Grimard, managing airports at the local level is not like growing potatoes, where the farmer can decide on its own when the time has come for ploughing, seeding, watering, spraying, et cetera.

Airports in Vancouver, Montreal, Moncton, Saint-Léonard, in New Brunswick, are all part of a national network. Inside this network, areas of jurisdiction can be transferred. Under the present system, the control is in the hands of the federal government, so how can you say bilingualism is not a consideration? Are you telling me that if the airport in Edmonton, Moncton, or elsewhere is transferred, and if a French-speaking employee from Montreal is transferred to Edmonton or Moncton, he will have to use English as a working language, even if he used to speak French at his workplace in Montreal? That is what one could conclude from your reasoning.

Hon. John Lynch-Staunton (Deputy Leader of the Government): Senator, could you ask your question?

Senator Corbin: Senator Lynch-Staunton, I have asked my question. I am one of the most reasonable senators in this place. When I have something to say, I say it and then I sit down. I have never wasted the time of anyone here. Let me finish, so that senator Grimard can answer.

You seem to forget that the transportation network in Canada is like a seamless web and is controlled by one authority, the federal government.

The system of official languages will come unravelled if it is no longer under federal jurisdiction. It is as simple as that.

The minister's letter referred to here is a strictly arbitrary measure that is good only as long as the person who signed it remains in office. After he goes, the letter is worthless. If Mrs. Martin became Minister of Transport, do you think she would subscribe to Mr. Loiselle's commitments or to those contained