

**Some Hon. Members:** No!

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** There is not unanimous consent.

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[Translation]

### OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

#### CONCURRENCE IN FOURTH REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

**Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier):** Mr. Speaker, I wish to move concurrence in the Fourth Report of the Committee on Official Languages, which, if I am not mistaken, was tabled in the House on June 25, 1987.

• (1250)

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Mr. Gauthier, seconded by Mr. Gray (Windsor West), moved that the Fourth Report of the Standing Joint Committee on Official Languages, tabled in the House on Thursday, June 25, 1987, be concurred in.

The Hon. Member for Ottawa—Vanier (Mr. Gauthier).

**Mr. Gauthier:** Mr. Speaker, the House is aware that the Liberal Party and Members of the Liberal Caucus have an abiding interest in official languages, and especially in the work of the Standing Joint Committee of the House and the Senate, whose Members see this as a very important issue.

The report tabled by the Committee on June 25 last year was, by a strange coincidence, tabled on the same day as Bill C-72. The Chairman of the Legislative Committee will admit this was a good omen, and I for one think the Committee is to be commended for its work on matters dealing with the application of the Official Languages Act, the old Act, as it were, the 1969 legislation, and I hope that Bill C-72, the new legislation, will soon be adopted, so that we can update and harmonize all the language policies of this Parliament and the Government, the purpose being to provide for equity, justice and fair representation of the linguistic interests of Canadians.

Mr. Speaker, on October 24, 1985, the Government responded to the Committee's second report through the then Deputy Prime Minister, Mr. Nielsen. The Government promised at the time to ensure that the equal status of both official languages would be respected, both in law and in fact. Those were the words of the former Deputy Prime Minister.

The Government also reiterated Treasury Board's responsibility for language programs. Furthermore, it promised that the President of the Treasury Board would ensure that language programs of departments and agencies were satisfactory and that existing mechanisms to monitor their implementation were effective.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to make a few comments at this point. I referred to the Deputy Prime Minister and the President of the Treasury Board. We also have the Secretary

### Motions

of State who, as you know, plays a very important role in this area. I do not need to tell you, Mr. Speaker, that we have had many statements lately from the Secretary of State who is running for election in Lac-Saint-Jean, and the Conservative candidate in that riding gets a kick out of making statements to the press that in our opinion are just electioneering and do not have much to do with the facts.

This morning, I was able to pick up a bunch of press clippings where we see the Secretary of State talking about official languages and Bill C-72 and saying—let me just read the headlines:

PQ accuses Rémillard of weakness on Bill C-72 English dealt another blow on language

... by William Johnson, regarding the same subject of languages.

"Official languages: Rémillard optimistic." And I could go on, Mr. Speaker, and read you an article on Lucien Bouchard "On a hard road home" by Daniel Drolet. And there is more. Regarding Bill C-72, a headline reads, "Ottawa's proposal satisfies Rémillard," Quebec's Intergovernmental Affairs Minister. In *La Presse* of June 9, 1988, "Liberals want Bouchard to explain himself." And on that point, Mr. Speaker, I am a Liberal and I want the Secretary of State to explain himself. I want him to explain himself to the Committee first and then perhaps to the House one day. Let him tell us what he wants, what he wanted to accomplish by saying that in applying Bill C-72, the provinces would first be consulted and that there would be a memorandum of agreement signed with the provinces for the implementation of Bill C-72.

You will recall that Section 42 of Bill C-72 causes some problems in Quebec. This section allows the Secretary of State to promote—that is the key!—linguistic minorities in the provinces and in particular to help them exercise their rights and survive. I consulted several organizations and I also received telephone calls this morning from representatives of minority associations because that statement bothered me a little and I wondered why the Secretary of State was using such an important issue for petty politicking in Lac-Saint-Jean. I wonder why Rémillard and Bouchard are quarreling, or if it is not a political bluff to attract the attention of journalists and get them to talk about the candidate in the riding. We know that Mr. Rémillard, like many Members of this House, knew that Section 42 was in Bill C-72. This Bill was published on June 25 1987.

At that time there was a good understanding at the provincial level, at least with respect to what was meant by clause 42, and I fail to understand why Mr. Rémillard and Mr. Bouchard all of a sudden decided to launch this kind of verbal warfare, publicly questioning guarantees and general agreements between Quebec and Ottawa, although they both know perfectly well that this type of agreement was acceptable. After all, the federal Government signed this type of agreement with New Brunswick and is in the process of doing so with Prince Edward Island. So why not have one with Quebec,