

Routine Proceedings

fundamental resource of our country, there are certain challenges to be met.

While Quebec's language minority has access to schools, to the courts, to the legislature, and a range of social services, in most other provinces the Francophone minority is still denied, in addition to the right to be educated in its own language, access to control over institutions, access to the courts, access to the legislature, to health services, and so forth. Some groups are now asking the courts to acknowledge their right to have their children educated in their official language.

Although the federal government already supports the provinces in this area, we must intensify our efforts to make Canadians understand that giving rights to a minority in no way diminishes the rights of the majority.

When we see a situation like the one that arose this week in Sault Ste. Marie, we have every right to start asking some serious questions. To deny a minority rights it was never given is like trying to cure a disease before it has been diagnosed. Madam Speaker, I think this is a deplorable situation, and I am very sorry this had to happen. How could anyone seriously think that a 4 percent of a community could be a threat to 85,000 of its members?

If we want to ensure that our country can look forward to a harmonious future, the majority must stop holding hostage the minority group. We must stop these scare tactics. Hate never brought people together. In the case of Sault Ste. Marie, the only thing they have to fear is fear itself.

[*English*]

Our two official languages are Canada's precious jewels. Our two official languages are the most important aspect of our heritage. Our two official languages are one of the most differential characteristics of what Canada is all about. It should not be divisive. It should unite us, because that is what makes Canada a special country. Linguistic minorities should not have to struggle to survive. Linguistic minorities should not have to struggle to get what is rightfully theirs. They should be able to enjoy and share the heritage left to them by their ancestors.

Whether we are French-speaking Canadians or English-speaking Canadians, are we not all Canadians? Does Canada not belong to all of us? If it does, why can we not live together in harmony and respect and trust each other? Ignorance and intolerance toward our minorities damages Canada. And if you kill one's language, you kill part of the country with it.

Canadians gave themselves a Constitution which recognizes two official languages. The law of the land should be respected and protected by all governments and all individuals. If we are not able to do it in our country, Canada, then Canada is nothing but a sand castle.

In order for our mutual respect to develop, we must pay attention to the important fact of Canada. We indeed must try and develop strong bonds with each other. We must compromise, we must respect our spirit, we must respect each other.

There is still hope. I hope the next 25 years show us the way with strong leadership as to how we will succeed in peace and equity in matters of language.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Ian Waddell (Port Moody—Coquitlam): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise today as a member from the West and for the New Democratic Party of Canada to recognize the 25th anniversary of the Royal Commission of Inquiry on Bilingualism and Biculturalism.

[*English*]

When the commission was established, Andre Laurendeau, a great Canadian and co-chairman said, that, as history tells us, Paris was worth a mass and Canada surely is worth a commission. What a commission it was, it had a profound impact on Canada.

[*Translation*]

The vision expressed in the recommendations of this report had a considerable influence on the history of our country. The key recommendations—the principle of ensuring that the official language minorities of Canada receive public services in their mother tongue, the idea that French as well as English must be a working language in Canada, etc.—were reflected in the Official Languages Act of 1969, the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and more recently in Bill C-72 which was passed before the last election.