

Supply

Being able to understand the Charter of Rights is very important, yet so removed to people who cannot read with comprehension. It is very difficult for illiterate people to find an amount on an income tax table, or to find a store listed in the yellow pages.

In closing, I want to encourage the Government to stop trying to find the future by gazing at the past, and to take seriously the plight of 20 per cent of our population over 15 years of age who cannot comprehend from the printed page either one of our official languages. The methodology exists now to combat illiteracy. It takes commitment and some imagination from the Government. This is in growing immediacy one of our major national problems. It has been my pleasure to address this issue and I hope the Government has been listening.

Mrs. Browes: Madam Speaker, I want to compliment the Hon. Member for his remarks today. A program dealing with this issue is probably one of the most important policies we can institute for the benefit of all Canadians. I am pleased that we can agree on the importance of literacy programs.

The examples set forth by the Hon. Member only show the importance of the announcement of the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) last year of \$110 million for a literacy program in Canada spread over the next five years. One of the projects that I am sure the Hon. Member would be pleased to hear about is at the Frontier College in Toronto, where \$417,000 is being put forward to launch a program called Read Canada.

Read Canada is encouraging Members of Parliament and members of the community to read to their constituents, to children and to people within the community in order to assist them to learn the importance of reading. The Prime Minister's wife will be reading on Parliament Hill on Canada Day and it is hoped that Members of Parliament from across the country will indeed take the opportunity on Canada Day to participate in this program called Read Canada. I hope the Hon. Member will do so.

I want to compliment him for his outstanding remarks and to indicate that we on this side of the House are doing everything we can. I look forward to working with him on these particular projects that will help all Canadians to participate in the economic and social life

of our community so they may fulfil their own opportunities in Canada.

Mr. Jordan: Madam Speaker, I appreciate those comments. I think we can get along well on this issue, but there seem to be a few obstacles. I am sure that in spite of those who think that this is not a major national concern we will be able to do something collectively.

The Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) said he would spend so many millions of dollars over five years. It is like saying there will be so much spent on health care and presumably, when that is gone, there will be no longer be an interest in health care. Of course, we have a much greater commitment to health care than that, but when there is a fixed amount over a span of time it seems to me that it is simply a band-aid approach. I think illiteracy requires a much stronger commitment if we are going to make any inroads.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): Order. It being 5.45 p.m. it is my duty to interrupt these proceedings and put every question necessary to dispose of the supply proceedings now before the House under the provisions of Standing Order 81(14).

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Some Hon. Members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some Hon. Members: Yea.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some Hon. Members: Nay.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): In my opinion the nays have it.

And more than five Members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): Call in the Members.

The House divided on the motion (Mr. Duhamel), which was negatived on the following division:

• (1750)

(Division No. 31)

YEAS

Members

Allmand
Assad
Baker

Arseneault
Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre)
Barrett