

by the courts. This implies the use of judges and juries which can understand the language of the accused, and provision of the necessary administrative court services in the language understood by the accused.

In addition to the required amendments to the Criminal Code, amendments to the Official Languages Act would be required, making it the duty of federal courts to provide simultaneous translation of the proceedings, including the evidence given, from one official language to the other, and this everywhere in Canada.

Additional amendments would be required to allow an accused who was arraigned before a court of criminal jurisdiction and who speaks an official language other than that in which the proceedings of the courts are conducted the right to request a change of venue, making it possible for his case to be heard in a judicial district in Canada where his language is used.

As you know, Mr. Speaker, I have tabled before this House Bill C-210, an act to correct certain anomalies and inconsistencies in the Revised Statutes of Canada pertaining to the protection of Canadian language rights. I hope to be able to debate this bill in the near future.

In short, Mr. Speaker, I am asking the Minister of Justice of Canada for a progress report on his negotiations with the province of Ontario to make it possible to amend the judiciary act of Ontario, the Criminal Code and the Official Languages Act. The province of Ontario has demonstrated its willingness to recognize that the use of the French language in Ontario is of fundamental importance in the administration of justice in this province. I am aware also that the federal government through its Department of Justice is co-operating with the province of Ontario in bringing forward the required amendments to make this possible. In times when we speak of justice, equality, tolerance and understanding, it is a measure of Canadian unity when provinces and the federal government can work together for the benefit of the citizens of this country.

Adjournment Debate

Mr. Roger Young (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Justice): It gives me great pleasure to be able to respond this evening to this very interesting and important question and argument posed by my colleague, the hon. member for Ottawa-Vanier (Mr. Gauthier). I would take note at the same time, Mr. Speaker, that there is not a single member of the opposition present here in the House.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Order, order!

Mr. Young: Excuse me, Mr. Speaker, one has just come in; the one who is always here.

The Minister of Justice (Mr. Basford) does not intend to bring specific pressure to bear on the attorney general of Ontario in view of the fact that the federal parliament has no particular authority of jurisdiction over provincial judicature acts. However, I point out that Department of Justice officials have met with almost all of the provinces in an effort to obtain provincial co-operation for the implementation of amendments to allow for choice of language in a trial. I might add that the consultations with Ontario were especially productive. Ontario is well geared in the way of court staff and judges to implement bilingual trials.

Hon. members will appreciate, I am sure, that the administrative ramifications of these measures are significant. The support staff will have to be as bilingual as the judge and jurors and the court reporters. For some provinces these people will have to be trained as they are starting virtually afresh.

In respect of the introduction of amendments to the Criminal Code, there are finishing touches required for the consultations and the drafting of the bill itself. The Minister of Justice expects to be able to introduce these amendments very soon, although no specific date can be given at this particular time.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 2 p.m.

Motion agreed to and the House adjourned at 10.26 p.m.