

experiment to see whether it is better than the more severe lighting lower down.

Oral questions.

● (1415)

## ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[Translation]

### OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

#### REQUEST MINORITY RIGHTS BE ENTRENCHED IN CONSTITUTION

**Mr. Donald J. Johnston (Saint-Henri-Westmount):** Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Prime Minister, I shall direct my question to the Minister of State for Federal-Provincial Relations.

Today, Mr. Speaker, the Supreme Court of Canada has ruled on two historic cases concerning the protection of official languages in Quebec and in Manitoba. Mr. Speaker, that judgment demonstrates the protection our federal system could give us concerning the rights of minorities and basic liberties. My question to the minister is the following: During the negotiations on the constitution, is he now going to insist on having the rights of minorities, and basic liberties, protected in the renewed constitution?

**Hon. Bill Jarvis (Minister of State for Federal-Provincial Relations):** Mr. Speaker, first I should like to say that I, for one, have not yet read the decision of the Supreme Court of Canada, but half an hour ago I spoke with officials in my department who did read it. I am not sure what consequences this decision may have.

[English]

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. I think we should delay the proceedings until the technical problem is solved.

*After a delay of 30 seconds:*

[Translation]

**Mr. Jarvis (Perth):** Second, Mr. Speaker, I should like to say that a meeting of the standing committee on the constitution will be held on January 23 or 24 next, I believe. This topic will be on the agenda, as a priority, with four or five other matters. I told the House some two or three weeks ago that this question is a priority with this government.

[English]

**Mr. Johnston:** Mr. Speaker, would the minister agree that of all the benefits of our federal system, none is more evident than the one we see in the judgments rendered today, namely, the capacity of federalism to protect fundamental rights from the jurisdiction of any one legislative authority? In view of that self-evident proposition, could the minister assure the

### Oral Questions

House that he and his government share that fundamental philosophy?

● (1420)

**Mr. Jarvis (Perth):** Mr. Speaker, I have no hesitation in saying, as a member of the government, that I share that philosophy: I doubt that there is a person in this chamber who does not share it. I might ask the hon. member to agree with me on one point related to the judgments. On my first briefing I did not perceive a direct implication on federal laws arising from these judgments. I would ask the hon. member to be a little patient, because there may be implications that on first reading one does not see.

I have instructed my officials to analyse the decisions. I emphasize that the decision was a very strong one—a unanimous decision of a nine-person court—and, as a lawyer, I appreciate its significance. I would ask the hon. member to be patient until I am advised of the implications that might flow, not necessarily on policy but in terms of federal legislation, from the decision.

[Translation]

#### SUPREME COURT DECISION—DISCUSSION WITH PREMIERS OF MANITOBA AND QUEBEC

**Mr. Robert Bockstael (St. Boniface):** Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Prime Minister, my question is directed to the House leader.

In view of the historic decision brought down today by the Supreme Court of Canada, which recognizes the rights of the Francophone citizens of Manitoba—

[English]

—will the Conservative cabinet urge the Prime Minister to contact the Premier of Manitoba to discuss ways and means of implementing the decision of the Supreme Court as it affects the citizens of that province?

**Hon. Bill Jarvis (Minister of State for Federal-Provincial Relations):** Mr. Speaker, I certainly accept the hon. member's question as a representation. I would not be hesitant, if I were to ask the Prime Minister to contact the Premier of Manitoba, to ask him also to contact the Premier of Quebec.

[Translation]

#### REQUEST THAT CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS BE GUARANTEED

**Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa-Vanier):** Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Prime Minister, my question is directed to the Minister of State for Federal-Provincial Relations or to the Acting Prime Minister.

In view, once again, of the historic decision brought down today by the Supreme Court of Canada on the constitutional respect for linguistic rights, is the government willing to recognize that the present laissez-faire policy toward the provinces in linguistic matters has been called into question now by