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# Blenkarn learning to 'parlez'

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Don Blenkarn may soon be able to guffaw in both of Canada's official languages.

The veteran MP for Mississauga South, who is known by his trademark booming laugh, has been studying French in Quebec for the past three weeks.

In a telephone interview yesterday, Blenkarn said he is one of a group of MPs who are taking French immersion lessons at the Royal Military College just south of Montreal.

"Don't you think it's about time I learned some French?" the Port Credit lawyer said when asked about the motivation for his lessons. He added that he thought being able to speak French "would be helpful" in his duties in Ottawa. He is taking advantage of a lull in Parliamentary activities before the House is called back into session later this spring to brush up on Canada's second language.

Blenkarn's French lessons, which begin after he has served a dozen years as an MP, will undoubtedly fuel speculation that he is in line for a new appointment from the government. The Conservative hopes to be reappointed chairman of the Commons' finance committee but various media reports have suggested he may lose the post because of some colorful statements he has made, which government spokesmen have been careful to say do not reflect official policy.

Blenkarn says he has not studied French since he was in high school. Asked how the lessons are going, the MP replied "it's a disaster." He says he and Nelson Riis, a British Columbia MP for the New Democratic Party are in the same class. "We're both terrible," Blenkarn laughed.

Asked when he intends to debut his French skills in public, Blenkarn replied "maybe never."