TREASURY BOARD President Tony Clement vows to quit Twitter if language police try to ‘overlord’ him

An investigation by the official languages commissioner into Foreign Minister John Baird’s use of Twitter has some politicians chirping with frustration, including tweeting machine minister Tony Clement, who vows to quit Twitter if he’s ever strong-armed by the commissioner.

The investigation into a public complaint that Baird, in his role as Foreign Affairs minister, tweets far more in English on government business than he does in French, has raised questions about the line between government communication and personal use of the Twittersphere.

Official Languages Commissioner Graham Fraser is trying to determine whether cabinet ministers, on their personal Twitter accounts, have responsibilities under Canada’s language laws when tweeting on government business or posting information for their departments. The outcome of the investigation could put a chill on federal ministers’ use of social media and erode the spontaneity of communicating directly, in real time, with the public.

“I think it’s a ridiculous waste of time,” Clement, the president of the federal Treasury Board, told Postmedia News Friday in a direct message on Twitter.

Jonathan Kay: Investigating bilingualism on Twitter — your tax dollars at work

How do you undermine Canadian bilingualism in 140 characters or fewer?

For Treasury Board President Tony Clement, it goes like this: “I’ve had like 5 different people stop me and ask me for directions today in Québec. I must seem like a local!”

For Health Minister Leona Aglukkaq, it was “Happy Father’s