The problem of bilingualism in the canadian public service

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The object of this article is to discuss briefly the problem of bilingualism in the Canadian public service, the essence of which may be described as the difficulty of creating a milieu in which two languages can co-exist and of adapting an administrative apparatus, staffed for the greater part with officials who have the knowledge of only one language, for the purpose of administering a bilingual country.

The importance of the question of language in public administration can hardly be overemphasized. To facilitate employee participation and optimum performance in government departments and agencies, it is essential that administration must be conducted in the language in which the employees have the maximum facility. Also, in the dealings of the government with the general public the necessity of performing public administration in the language of the people is very obvious. First of all, for effective communication with the public, which is imperative for good administration, the absence of linguistic barriers is an important prerequisite. Secondly, elimination of language handicaps enables people to increase their influence and control over their administration and to avail themselves of the employment opportunities present in the public service on an equal footing. And thirdly, from the point of view of promoting national unity and bureaucratic responsibility as well as responsiveness toward the demands and ethos of society, and of making national administrative institutions representative (1) and reflec-

(1) For a very able exposition of the representativeness concept, see : Donald C. ROWAT, « On John Porter's Bureaucratic Elité in Canada », *The Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science*, XXV (1959), 204-207. Also see : VAN RIPER, *History of the United States Civil Service* (Illinois, 1958) ; WARNER *et al.*, *The American Federal Executive* (Yale, 1963) ; and J. Donald KINGSLEY, *Representative Bureaucracy* (Yellowsprings, 1944).

tive of the linguistic groupings within the country, the principle of adopting the language of the people as the language of administration is extremely laudable.

However, having said that public administration, to be truly effective, responsive, and representative, has to be performed in the language of the people, one must hasten to add that irrespective of the praiseworthiness of this principle, governments of countries where there are several « languages of the people » will seldom find it possible to put this into practice without inviting difficult administrative problems of many kinds. Canada is an excellent example.

The problem of bilingualism in Canada has a long history. Following the discovery of North America by Columbus in 1492, the French and the English began exploration of the Canadian mainland. Their explorations eventually led to the establishment of colonies in Canada. Historically, it was the French who succeeded first, but the British did not lag far behind. By 1760 they succeeded in seizing the French possessions and ending their rule which had begun in the early 1600's. Although the French Canadians were a minority, the British recognized them as a distinctive community with its own civil and religious institutions and showed considerable respect towards their language. The bulk of the French Canadians lived in the Province of Quebec, which was then known as Lower Canada, and it was there that they received British recognition.

In 1867 when the Canadian Confederation was formed, the French-speaking minority was co-founder of it. And Section 133 of the British North America Act which set the contractual basis for Confederation provided that either the English or the French language may be used in the debates of the Houses of the Parliament of Canada and of the Houses of Legislature of Quebec and in court proceedings under the federal or Quebec legislatures. It also stipulated that both English and French shall be used in the records and journals of the Houses of the Parliament of Canada and of the Houses of Legislature of Quebec and that the debates of the national Parliament and of the Quebec Legislature shall be printed and published in both languages. However, what happened in actual practice was that because the British North America Act did not require the obligatory use of both languages in the field of public administration, French, while recognized as an official language for general legislative purposes, its status remained infinitely inferior to that of English in the field of federal public administration. Indeed, for all practical purposes, English was the only working language within federal government departments and agencies, the army,

navy and air force. In sum, the dealings of the government with the general public were conducted in English ; French was used only when the use of English was totally impractical. It was not only a question of inferior status of French in public administration, but also a question of inadequate representation and insufficient opportunity for the French Canadians to participate in the administrative process, especially at the higher levels which constitute the key decision-making centres in the public service.

In 1946, for example, the percentage of French Canadians at the senior levels of the civil service was only 8.72. There was then not a single French Canadian deputy minister (2). In 1963 the percentage was 14.7 (3). At that time French Canadians formed roughly one-third of the Canadian population. Insufficient French-Canadian representation was all the more conspicuous in the financial, industrial and commercial departments and boards of the federal government. There were very few of them in such departments as Finance or Trade and Commerce, or the crown corporations including the Canadian National Railways, the Air Transport Board, the Bank of Canada, Canadian Arsenals, the Industrial Development Bank, or Atomic Energy of Canada (4). Outside the public service the picture was even worse. In 1957, of the 760 persons selected as the business élite in Canada by professor John Porter for his monumental study, *The Vertical Mosaic,* only 51 (6.7 %) were French Canadians (5). According to a sample survey conducted by the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, the overall distribution of employees within federal departments by mother tongue in 1965 was as shown in table I.

The percentage of French Canadians among those who were earning $ 15,000 or more annually at that time was only 10.4 (6). A sample survey in 1969 of employees in the $ 17,000 or more income group covering a few departments and agencies showed the distribution given in table II of French-Canadian and bilingual employees. At present, 81.8 % of the top civil servants are English-speaking, 18.2 French-speaking, whereas 28 % of the country is French-speaking (7).

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(2) See : Le Conseil de la vie française, *Nothing More : Nothing Less* (Toronto : Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1967), p. 37.

(3) *Ibid.*

(4) *Ibid.*

(5) John PORTER, *The Vertical Mosaic* (Toronto,1965), p. 286.

(6) Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, *Report,* Book III (Ottawa, 1969), p. 212.

(7) John J. CARSON (Chairman, Public Service Commission of Canada), Address to the Federal Institute of Management, Ottawa, January 25, 1972.

Given the fact that the inferior status of the French language and the poor share of employment opportunities for the French Canadians have been long-standing problems in Canadian public administration, for an explanation of the current concentrated efforts of the government

TABLE I

Percentage distribution of federal public servants within departments, by mother Tongue, Canada, 1965

	Number Total	Mother Tongue				
		Sample	French	English	Other	Total
Agriculture	6,255	751	12.7	70.6	16.7	100
Citizenship and Immigration	2,618	202	19.5	62.0	18.5	100
Civil Service Commission	713	104	22.9	76.4	0.7	100
Defence Production	2,121	329	18.2	81.1	0.7	100
Dominion Bureau of Staistics	2,093	195	32.2	59.9	7.9	100
External Affairs	1,680	248	24.0	71.2	4.8	100
Finance	4,954	354	25.1	67.1	7.8	100
Fisheries	1,263	97	15.5	82.4	2.1	100
Forestry	971	103	19.9	70.9	9.2	100
Industry	297	175	20.0	76.0	4.0	100
Justice	269	42	41.2	58.6	0.2	100
Labour	644	79	32.7	56.0	11.3	100
Mines and Technical Surveys	2,512	458	11.5	78.0	10.5	100
National Defence	25,025	1,301	21.0	72.4	6.6	100
National Health and Welfare	3,144	452	18.9	63.2	17.9	100
National Revenue	14,702	779	23.9	70.2	5.9	100
Northern Affairs and National Resources	1,662	146	6.8	74.6	18.6	100
Post Office	24,717	1,026	28.8	61.1	10.1	100
Public Works	5,706	305	27.5	62.5	10.0	100
RCMP (Civilian Staff)	1,251	54	19.9	68.1	12.0	100
Secretary of State	877	84	49.6	39.1	11.3	100
Trade and Commerce	1,324	186	18.5	74.8	6.7	100
Transport	10,504	756	17.2	73.5	9.3	100
Unemployment Insurance Commission	9,016	205	6.1	88.5	5.4	100
Veterans Affairs	10,733	600	26.0	71.2	2.8	100
Other Departments	2,241	127	42.8	43.4	13.8	100
All Departments	137,292	9,159	21.5	69.4	9.1	100

Source : Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, **Report**, Book III (Ottawa, 1969), p. 210.

to make the public service more bilingual and to encourage more French-Canadian participation in the administrative process, one has to look back to the late 1950's or so, when French Canada began to articulate loudly and forcefully its demands for a vindication of the concept of equal partnership of the English and the French in the Canadian Confederation. It was also then that the growing signs of a « quiet » social and political revolution began to electrify French Canada. This,

coupled with the successive sparks of separatism that flew across Quebec in the early 1960's, left little room for optimism in Ottawa. The response of the federal government was the adoption of a gradual but definite shift in its attitude towards French-Canadian aspirations.

In 1960 the Canadian government had appointed a Royal Commission on Government Organization with extensive powers to « inquire into and report upon the organization and methods of operation of the departments and agencies of the Government of Canada and to

TABLE II

French Canadian and bilingual employees in the Federal Public Service

Departments/Agencies	Number of Employees in the $ 17,000 and up Income Group	Those with French as Mother Tongue	Bilingual
Fisheries Dept. (including the Fisheries Research Board and the Forestry Branch)	105	3	8
Atomic Energy of Canada Ltd.	120	Nil	N.A.
Finance	32	1	8
Eldorado Nuclear Ltd.	9	Nil	N.A.
Comptroller of the Treasury	33	4	5
Trade and Commerce	106	9	29
The Bank of Canada	30	3	N.A.
Polymer Corporation	Not Available	2.5 %	25 %
Cenral Mortgage & Housing Corporation	60	9	N.A.
C.N.R.	N.A.	N.A.	24 %
Canadian Transport Commission	39	9	22
N.R.C.	229	7	52
Air Canada	N.A.	N.A.	24 %
Treasury Board	63	7	12

Source : Information tabled in the House of Commons on February 17, 1969 by the President of the Privy Council. See : **The Globe and Mail** (Toronto), February 18, 1969, p. 4.

recommend changes therein which they consider would best promote efficiency, economy, and improved service in the despatch of public business » (8).

Although the terms of reference of the Commission did not specifically cover the problem of language in federal administration, the first volume of the Commission's report, published in 1962, emphasized the fact that Canada's bicultural and bilingual character was not accorded sufficient recognition in federal public administration, and therefore, the French Canadians were prevented from participating in it on an

(8) Royal Commission on Government Organization, ***Management of the Public Service*** (Ottawa, 1962), p. 67.

equal footing with the English Canadians, using their own language and applying their own cultural values. Putting the problem in its administrative perspective, one of the Royal Commissioners wrote :

The position of bilingualism in the federal administration has remained hazy ; the problem has never really been faced ; in the past, friendly gestures in the form of occasional half-measures have had to suffice ; events have been in control, not under control. More and more it is recognized that Canada's bicultural and bilingual character is a heritage and a very precious asset, to be developed and preserved not only by French Canada but by Canada as a whole. The federal administration is ideally suited to make a vital contribution to this development.

French Canada is one of the two components of our country which existed as a political and legal entity long before Confederation. Confederation is a pact which recognizes, confirms, and guarantees the rights of this component, and it is necessary to honour the spirit of the text, avoiding any limited interpretation and admitting freely the right to coexistence of the French language and culture in Canada (9).

The Commission also advocated the adoption of active measures to develop bilingual capacity amongst governmental employees and to attract into the public service highly qualified French Canadians capable of advancement to senior ranks (10).

Within a year after the Royal Commission on Government Organization submitted its first report, the government appointed another Commission called the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism to inquire into and to report upon the state of bilingualism and biculturalism in Canada and to recommend steps to develop the Canadian Confederation on the basis of an equal partnership between the two founding races (11). The Commission was also required to report upon the situation and practice of bilingualism within all branches and agencies of the federal administration and to make recommendations designed to ensure the bilingual and bicultural character of the federal administration (12). After nearly one and one-half years of study and a number of public hearings, the Commission submitted its preliminary report early in 1965 in which it jolted the nation with its ominous finding that Canada, without being fully conscious of the fact, was passing

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(9) *Ibid.*, pp. 70-71.

(10) *Ibid.*, p. 267.

(11) Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, *A Preliminary Report* (Ottawa, 1965), p. 151.

(12) *Ibid.*

through the greatest crisis in its history (13). It also appealed for greater accommodation by the « English majority » of the aspirations of the French « minority » (14). Responding to this appeal promptly, the Prime Minister at the time M. Lester Pearson, in April 1966, announced in the House of Commons what he described as « a positive policy on bilingualism in the public service », particularly in relation to selection and promotion of its employees and the language of administration. Outlining the new policy of bilingualism, the Prime Minister said that the government hopes that within a reasonable period of time, a state of affairs in the public service will be reached whereby :

a) it will be normal practice for oral or written communication within the service to be made in either official language at the option of the person making them in the knowledge that they will be understood by those directly concerned ;

b) communications with the public will normally be in either official language having regard to the person being served ;

c) the linguistic and cultural values of both English speaking and French speaking Canadians will be reflected through civil service recruitment and training ;

d) a climate will be created in which the servants from both language groups will work together toward common goals, using their own language and applying their respective cultural values, but each fully understanding and appreciating those of the other (15).

The Prime Minister also pointed out that the government had already formulated a few principles that would guide its efforts to assist those who where already in the public service to acquire a reasonable proficiency in both official languages and to encourage the recruitment of civil servants with knowledge of both languages. These were :

a) The achievement of bilingualism is in itself a desirable objective for all Canadians and where the need of bilingualism exists in practice,

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(13) *Ibid.*, p. 13.

(14) *Ibid.*, p. 138. Since then, the Commission has issued a series of reports and recommandations in four separate volumes : Book I : General Introduction : The Official Languages ; Book II : Education ; Book III : The Work World : A. Socio-economic Status, B. The Federal Administration, C. The Private Sector, and D. Conclusions ; Book IV : The Cultural Contributions of the Other Ethnic Groups. These volumes total nearly 2,000 pages.

(15) Statement of the Prime Minister in the House of Commons on April 6, 1966. Canada, *House of Commons Debates* (April 6, 1966), pp. 3915-3917.

it should be recognized as an element of merit in selection of civil servants.

b) In conformity with the merit system, which must remain undisturbed, the requirement for bilingualism should relate to positions and not only to individuals.

c) Bilingualism must be conceived as a long-term programme and should be introduced gradually in a manner which will not inflict injustice to anybody, particularly those who have devoted many years of their lives to the service of the state (16).

The two broader objectives proposed for the federal public service subsequently by the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism as well as its specific recommendations (17) were, by and large, in keeping with this policy statement. These two objectives were :

1° The French language should increasingly become a language of work in the public service.

2° The atmosphere of the public service should represent the linguistic and cultural quality of Canadian society and Canadians whose mother tongue is French should be adequately represented in the public service — both in terms of numbers and in levels of responsability. Among the many specific recommendations for the federal administration, the most significant ones seem to be the following :

1. The federal government adopt the French-language unit as a basic organizational and management principle, and that it therefore provide for the creation and development, in all federal departments, Crown corporations, and other agencies, of organizational units in which French would be the language of work ; these units would be established in a variety of locations and would be of different sizes and functions.

2. *a)* In each federal department, Crown corporation, and other agency, there be established French-language units (regional, headquarters, and/or cluster types) which correspond to existing units in their functions and organizational arrangements ; *b)* service units be reorganized into English- and French-language sections or in other appropriate ways to provide the normal range of services in both English and French ; *c)* within the larger regional French-language units, provision be made

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(16) *Ibid.*

(17) Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, *op. cit.*, Book III, pp. 265-287.

where necessary for the establishment of English-language units organized on the same pattern as the French-language units.

3. The appointments to the posts of deputy minister, associate deputy minister, assistant deputy minister, and equivalent positions in Crown corporations and other federal agencies be administered so as to ensure effectively balanced participation of Anglophones and Francophones at these levels.

4. All positions throughout the federal departments, Crown corporations, and other agencies be classified as to language requirements, and that these requirements be specifically taken into account in the determination of remuneration.

5. *a)* The Public Service Commission's Language Training Directorate establish, as a matter of priority, courses to improve the French used by the federal administration ; *b)* that these courses be made available primarily to those Francophones and fully bilingual Anglophones who have assumed or intend to assume positions within a French-language unit, or positions which require regular communications with Francophones.

6. *a)* The process of testing and selecting candidates for federal departments, Crown corporations, and other agencies take into account the differing linguistic and cultural attributes of Francophone and Anglophone applicants ; *b)* that interviews and examinations related to recruiting, evaluation, and promotion of Francophones be conducted in French by public servants fluent in French, unless the candidate or employee opts for English.

7. The establishment of the office of a Commissioner of Official Languages as a means of safeguarding the linguistic rights of the public as well as the public servants (18).

Following the recommendations of the Royal Commission, in July 1969, the federal Parliament unanimously approved an « Official Language Act » for Canada. This Act which incorporated most of the major recommendations of the Commission undoubtedly marked the most memorable landmark in the history of bilingualism in the Canadian public service. First of all, it made the English and French languages the official languages of Canada and as far as federal institutions are concerned, they are assured equality of status and equal rights and

(18) *Ibid.*

privileges as to their use (19). Secondly, it provided that each department, Crown corporation, and other agency must adopt measures to ensure that « the public can obtain available services from and can communicate with it in official languages » (20). Thirdly, it stipulated that areas where the official linguistic minority forms at least 10 % of the total population must be designated as federal bilingual districts for purposes of bilingual services. Fourthly, it made provision for the appointment of a Commissioner of Official Languages, who is responsible for overseeing the application of the Act and for protecting the linguistic rights of the people.

At present there are three important governmental bodies which are playing an increasingly influential role in achieving the above-mentioned linguistic objectives for the Canadian public service. These are the Treasury Board, the Department of the Secretary of State, and the Public Service Commission. The Treasury Board, which is the central financial management agency for the federal public service, has the ultimate responsibility of co-ordinating governmental programmes and policies designed to promote bilingualism in the public service. The Department of the Secretary of State has the responsibility of applying measures relating to the linguistic aspects of the government's relations with the public. And the Public Service Commission, as the staffing agency for the public service, is charged with the responsibility of administering such important areas as language training, bicultural programmes and staffing policies.

As the staffing agency, the Commission can utilize principally three means to help achieve the bilingual goals set for the public service : first, by transferring employees with appropriate language skills between positions ; second, by recruiting from outside the public service candidates who already possess the required language skills ; and third, by providing language training facilities for employees within the public service. However, it is in the area of language training that the Commission has been concentrating heavily in recent times.

In this area the Commission has been engaged in a comprehensive programme of language courses in both English and French for public servants at different levels. These courses are of different duration and levels of proficiency. In this way, for staffing purposes, it can :

a) define the language skill required for any position ;

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(19) Statutes of Canada, 1969, 17 & 18 Eliz. 2, ch. 54 (sec. 2).

(20) *Ibid.*, sec. 9 (1).

b) classify proficiency levels of any employee or any person applying for employment ;

c) describe the proficiency objectives of the different levels of language courses offered by the Commission (21).

Since the launching of the language training programme, nearly 30,000 employees of departments and agencies have participated in it. This year, the enrolment is approximately 9,000, and next year it is expected to exceed 10,000 (22).

Besides language training programmes, the Commission has also been organizing certain bicultural programmes which are intended to give senior executives who contribute to the development of public policy sufficient fluency in the second language to enable them to work in either language as well as to provide them with an understanding and appreciation of English and French culture (23). As part of one such programme, every year twenty English-speaking senior public servants with their families are sent to a university in French Canada to spend a year to study the other language and cultivate understanding and appreciation of the cultural values of the people with whom they live. In the same way, ten French-speaking officers with their families are sent to a university in English Canada.

In the area of staffing, the Commission has fixed the following percentages of bilingual employees for each of the six occupational categories of the public service within federal bilingual districts :

Executive Category	60 %
Administrative and Foreign Service . . .	50 %
Administrative Support	35 %
Scientific and Professional.	15 %
Technical	15 %
Operational	15 % (24)

As can be seen from the above, the programme is being concentrated in executive and administrative categories. These target percentages are to be met by 1975.

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(21) The Public Service Commission, *Annual Report* (Ottawa, 1967), p. 20.
(22) John J. CARSON, *op. cit.*
(23) The Public Service Commission, *Annual Report* (Ottawa, 1967), p. 22.
(24) See the Public Service Commission's announcement of October 9, 1969 concerning the procedure for the identification and application of language requirements in the appointment process. Under this procedure a bilingual employee will generally be one who has a knowledge of both official languages equivalent to that acquired through completion of the Commission's language course third level. Also see : The Public Service Commission, *Annual Report* (Ottawa, 1969), p. 31.

Ideally, the reforms that have been introduced so far should have been sufficient to cure the public service of its long-standing linguistic ailments. But in reality, despite the thorough diagnosis and the application of many costly remedies, the malady continues unabated. In principle, the goal of a unified public service which would provide equal opportunities to all and prohibit special privileges to any particular segment of the population seems agreeable to almost everyone across the country. So also is the principle of merit in public administration. But the crux of the issue is that in actual practice these principles are seldom compatible with the concept of equal opportunity for the English-speaking and French-speaking Canadians in the public service, both in terms of numbers and in levels of responsibility. And this gives rise to a plethora of practical problems and a profusion of protests from various quarters.

First of all, the policy of assigning additional credit for bilingualism in public service recruitment and promotion is being vehemently opposed by many public servants from English Canada and the major associations of public servants. They are also critical of the current government policy of assigning an increasing number of top jobs in the public service to French-speaking Canadians on the ground that it will seriously undermine the merit system of recruitment and promotion and prejudice the careers of unilingual public servants already in the public service. They have expressed the fear that in view of the government's unbridled enthusiasm for bilingualism in the public service, French Canadians might be hired by the Public Service Commission merely because they are French Canadians and without due regard to the need for French in the positions involved or the real merit of the candidates. In their view, bilingualism is being forced upon the federal public service without sufficient regard to its possible consequences. According to the 130,000-member Public Service Alliance of Canada, the largest association of public employees in the country, the problem of bilingualism in the public service has a definite geographic dimension and, therefore, the government should attempt to tackle it on a geographic and selective basis and in such a way that the service careers of present employees in the public service will not be jeopardized (25). In the same way, the Professional Institute of the Public Service

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(25) See : « Statement by the Public Service Alliance Concerning Bilingualism in the Public Service » in its publication, *Argus* (July-August, 1970), p. 7. Also see : « Summary of the Submission of the Civil Service Federation to the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism », *Civil Service Review*, XXXVIII, no. 1 (March, 1965), 5-13.

of Canada, the second largest public employees' association, also has argued forcefully that the principle of a positive rating for a bilingual job applicant cannot be justified. They hold the view that bilinguality should not be looked upon as a formal qualification in the way that a university degree or diploma normally is. Instead, only if it becomes a prerequisite for a position should it be treated as one of the variables in determining the suitability of the candidates. In other words, it is a factor that should be related to the job and not to the man (26).

A second facet of the government's policy of bilingualism about which considerable opposition has been raised in the public service and the country at large is the creation of unilingual French-language units in some government departments and agencies where both French and English-speaking personnel will use French as the language of work. The creation of such units was strongly recommended by the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism in its third report on the ground that it would provide the basic instrument for institutional bilingualism in the public service (27). At present, these units are established on an experimental basis, with the possibility that they will spread throughout the federal administrative apparatus later.

The critics of this programme argue that the establishment of French-speaking units will put back the general cause of bilingualism, because if there are separate unilingual units, whether English or French, the truly bilingual persons will be pushed to the background and they may act merely as translators (28). Another criticism against unilingual units is that when promotions within them are decided, the merits of those outside such enclaves may be ignored (29). The creation of unilingual working units is also condemned on the ground that it will lead to costly duplication of work and increased inefficiency resulting from inevitable breakdowns in communications (30). Moreover, language ghettoes may develop, reinforcing the divisions that exist between the two language groups in the public service (31).

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(26) See : L.W.C.S. BARNES, « Bilingualism and the Public Servant », *Professional Public Service,* XLV, no. 4 (April, 1966), 36-39.

(27) Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, *op. cit.,* Book III, p. 271.

(28) For example, see : Dave McINTOSH, « Language Unit Program Sparks Wide Opposition », *Kitchener-Waterloo Record,* July 13, 1970, editorial page.

(29) See : Editorial, « Goodbye Bilingualism », *The Globe and Mail* (Toronto), July 2, 1970 ; and Murray GOLDBLATT, « Language Plan Endangers Merit, Largest Civil Service Union Warns », *The Globe and Mail* (Toronto), July 1, 1970, p. 8.

(30) See the *Globe and Mail* editorial, July 2, 1970, « Goodbye Bilingualism ».

(31) John BURNS, « Ottawa Plans to Require French in Some Positions », *The Globe and Mail* (Toronto), June 24, 1970, p. 1.

A third point of controversy is the feasibility of a bilingual public service for Canada at the moment. The critics of the government's initiatives argue that it is premature to provide for a bilingual public service because the French-Canadian educational system does not yet produce in sufficient numbers graduates of requisite training and qualifications (32). In their view, as long as the public service's intake of French-speaking graduates is largely confined to the output of French-language universities, and as long as their supply of potential recruits continues to be inadequate to meet the demand without diluting the principle of merit, it would be unwise to make French a language of federal administration and to press for French-Canadian representation in the public service — both in terms of numbers and levels of responsibility.

A fourth ground for opposition to the government's decision to go ahead with its policy of bilingualism in the public service is the question of justice to the numerous linguistic groups in the country, other than the English and French, who together form a significant proportion of the Canadian population (33). The spokesmen on behalf of these groups argue that in the final analysis the cause of Canadian unity will not be served on a permanent basis by programmes which will replace injustice to French Canadians with injustice to « other Canadians » (34).

Finally, bilingualism in the public service has also been condemned on the basis of economics. The argument is that in economic terms it is too expensive and that the enormous financial expenditures and the excessive delays that will become inevitable in administrative transactions as a result of bilingualism may be such that it will probably outweigh the possible advantages of such a policy.

Before concluding this article, it may be pointed out that in the opinion of the present author, these criticisms, however sincere they might be, represent only one side of the case. Without minimizing the importance of the first criticism, it may be said in fairness to the French Canadians that the equality of employment opportunity for Canadian citizens enshrined in the Public Service Employment Act and the English-French linguistic equality proclaimed in the Official Languages

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(32) See : D. KWAVNICK, « French Canadians and the Civil Service of Canada », *Canadian Public Administration*, XI, No. 1 (Spring, 1968).

(33) According to the 1961 census, there were five million Canadian citizens in this category.

(34) See : Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, *A Preliminary Report* (Ottawa, 1965), pp. 50-55. Also see : Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, Book IV : *The Cultural Contribution of the Other Ethnic Groups* (Ottawa, 1969).

Act will not become a reality for them unless and until a positive policy of bilingualism of the present kind is implemented vigorously. The argument that if bilingualism is pushed too far injustice may result for those who are already within the public service and that many public servants may find themselves unable to adapt to the change has some validity. But it must be remembered that Prime Minister Trudeau and many other spokesmen for bilingualism have not been advocating that every public servant become bilingual, but rather that French be employed as well as English at the highest echelons of the public service. In this way, policy may be discussed and decisions taken in either language, and French may become one of the languages of administration rather than one of translation only. Though it would be necessary to speak both languages in order to qualify for certain positions, the vast majority of officials will probably continue to speak only one language. Thus, an absolute mastery of the second language may not be required of all public servants for that would be almost unattainable as well as unnecessary. However, it is equally important that if the fears of a large number of public servants in this regard are permitted to persist, much damage could be done to the morale and efficiency of the public service. It may even defeat the very purpose of developing a linguistically and culturally representative bureaucracy.

Concerning the creation of unilingual French-speaking units in the public service, one should not be overwhelmed by the criticisms of the opponents of the scheme. After a few years it might turn out that their misgivings were totally unjustified. We cannot predict what lies in the womb of time. But we should at least be prepared to give the champions of this policy a chance to prove that these units are viable. It is significant to note that in the estimation of the politically non-partisan Public Service Commission which assisted in the establishment of these units they will benefit the government in two ways :

1. They will enhance the recruitment of young unilingual Francophones to the national capital by offering them the possibility of initially working in their mother tongue (a privilege hitherto only available to young Anglophones).

2. They wil provide those thousands of Anglophone public servants who have devoted so many hours to learning the other language with a badly needed post-training facility to crystallise and solidify their newly acquired skills in an actual work situation (35).

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(35) See John J. CARSON (Chairman, Public Service Commission of Canada), Letter to the Editor, « Bilingualism », *The Globe and Mail (Toronto)*, July 8, 1970, editorial page.

On closer observation, the contention that the adoption of positive bilingualism in the public service is somewhat premature because the French-Canadien educational system does not yet produce in sufficient numbers graduates of requisite training and qualifications appears to be at least partially valid. It was only two years ago that the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism reported :

We found little indication that the relative lack of Francophones among the professionals and other qualified personnel in the Public

TABLE III

Percentage distribution of degrees and diplomas granted by Canadian universities from 1962 to 1965, by field of specialization within each university language group

University Language Group	Number	Specialization					
		Arts*	Social Sciences	Natural Sciences**	Commerce	Others	Total
All University Degrees and Diplomas							
English	76.910	42.2	7.9	35.6	5.8	1.5	100
French	37,886	61.7	4.6	26.2	5.9	1.6	100
Bilingual	4,323	58.0	14.8	17.0	9.5	0.7	100
All Language Groups	119,119	53.5	7.1	31.9	6.0	1.5	100

* This category includes degrees in letters, education, philosophy, etc., as well as degrees in arts.
** This category includes biological, physical, and engineering sciences and mathematics, etc.
Source : Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, **Report**, Book III (Ottawa, 1969), p. 185.

Service can be eased quickly. The demand is so great that chances of hiring qualified Francophones away from other employers are small. Immigration contributes significantly to the number of Anglophone public servants but has never supplied a like proportion of Francophones. There have been recent efforts to increase immigration of qualified people from France but, as far as we can foresee, the Public Service's intake of Francophone graduates will continue to be largely limited to the output of French-language universities in Canada (36).

At that time the Commission also found that although the supply of potential recruits to the public service is augmented by university graduates already employed elsewhere and by the graduates of foreign universities, its largest proportion is made up of recent graduates of Canadian universities (37). Table III illustrates the percentage distri-

(36) Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, *op. cit.*, Book III, p. 183.
(37) *Ibid.*

bution of degrees and diplomas granted by Canadian universities from 1962 to 1965, by field of specialization within each university language group.

As can be seen from the table, in these years English-language institutions were stronger than their French-language counterparts in the natural sciences. It is well known that, historically, French-Canadian educational systems emphasized subjects such as law, classics and religion, at the expense of economics, commerce, natural sciences and related subjects. In view of the fact that in the public service the greatest demand is for scientists, qualified professionals, managers, technicians, and skilled workers (38), the relative lack of emphasis on the natural sciences in the French-language educational institutions would mean that the proportion of their graduates among the potential recruits for public service positions will be lower than the proportion of graduates from English universities. Besides this, there is also some empirical evidence to conclude that, as a whole, French-Canadian graduates have been less motivated than their counterparts in English Canada to join the federal public service (39). But whether these factors can be construed as viable arguments against the adoption of bilingualism in the public service is questionable. First of all, such arguments ignore the point that to the extent that federal public servants are not drawn from Quebec, the public service will fail to be reflective and representative of a very sizeible segment of its society and its dominant values. Secondly, extensive transformation of the educational scene in Quebec will take time, but for some time now the French-Canadian educational system has been passing through a period of modernization and it is to be expected that the relative lack of professionally qualified Francophones among the potential recruits to the federal public service will be progressively reduced in the years to come.

In answer to the claims of other ethnic groups for linguistic rights, it may be said that, first of all, they should not be compared with the English or the French-language group because historically their legal status has not been the same. Secondly, though numerically they form a significant proportion of the Canadian population, they do not represent a homogeneous language group. On the contrary, they are divided into numerous relatively small linguistic groups and are scattered throughout the country (40). Furthermore, it may be held that while

(38) *Ibid.*, p. 183.
(39) *Ibid.*, Chap. VIII.
(40) According to the 1961 census, these five million citizens are divided into thirty linguistic groups, ranging from a million German-speaking, half a million Ukrainians, Italians and Netherlanders each, to a few hundred for other language groups.

choosing to migrate to Canada, those with mother tongues other than French and English should be prepared to recognize the supremacy of the languages of the founding races of the country. But at the same time it is important to remember that if the recognition of French-Canadian rights is going to result in a total denial of all other ethnic facts in a culturally diversified country such as Canada, the goal of national unity will not be effectively served.

Finally, the view that the economic costs of making the public service bilingual will be enormous certainly has considerable validity. In the 1970-1971 school year, the federal government spent $ 50 million for its programme of supporting bilingualism in schools in the provinces ; the budgetary allocation for the current year is $ 75 million. The government is also committed to allocate over $ 300 million for the same purpose over the next three years (41). The federal Public Service Commission also spends substantial sums of money for promoting bilingualism in the public service. Its language training programmes alone cost $ 7 million during last year. This year its expenditures will be at least $ 8 million (42). Nevertheless, it may be argued that in view of the significance of the objective that is being pursued, namely, to make safe the very future of the country, these expenditures will still be worthwhile, however high they might be in financial terms.

To sum up, the two dominant ethnic groups, the French and the English, continue to battle within their public service. In very recent years, the problem has become more menacing than ever before because of the social and political turmoil that has beset Quebec. In 1969 the Canadian Parliament passed an epoch-making statute which conferred equal legal status on English and French. However, the bonds of unity within the country at large, and the public service in particular, are still fragile, and progress toward a united Canadian identity is slow. Events so far have clearly indicated that constitutional and statutory guarantees alone will not bring about « equal partnership ». What is needed now is a significant change of attitudes and outlook on both sides. Needless to say, this is not easy to achieve. But the alternative seems nothing short of disaster. Only the future can tell whether this approach will help overcome the difficulties that defied solution in the past and still create much concern for the development of a truly bilingual public service in Canada.

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(41) See : The announcement on September 9, 1970 by the Secretary of State, Mr. PELLETIER, reported in *The Globe and Mail* (Toronto), September 10, 1970, p. 1.

(42) See : *The Globe and Mail* (Toronto), June 24, 1970, p. 1 ; September 28, 1970, p. 5.

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