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ABSTRACT

This summary of the federal government's review of the official languages policy is based almost entirely on textual excerpts from the original document. The purpose of the paper is to review some of the roots of the Canadian experience responsible for the origins of the official languages policy, and to review the Canadian experience with this policy to date. Canadian culture is distinguished by its emphasis on diversification and its rejection of countrywide uniformity. Canada's existence as a unified country depends on a willingness to live in a country of differences. In order to achieve the acceptance and recognition of the English and French languages as the official languages of Canada, the federal government has developed a number of principles which, taken together, constitute a statement of the official languages policy of Canada. These include: the right of every citizen to privately speak any language; the official and equal status of French and English; the right of citizens to choose the language of instruction of their children; and the desirability of knowledge of both languages by all Canadians. It is not the intention of the federal government to "bilingualize" the country, but to ensure equal treatment for both language groups in every part of Canada. (AM)

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S U M M A R Y

A NATIONAL UNDERSTANDING

--The Official Languages of Canada

The following is a summary of the federal government's review of the official languages policy based entirely, with the exception of a few bridging phrases, on textual excerpts from the original document. The Paper was tabled in the House of Commons Tuesday, June 21, 1977.

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## SUMMARY

### A NATIONAL UNDERSTANDING

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#### Preface

The English and French languages have been in everyday use in some parts of what is now Canada for almost 400 years.

Long before Confederation in 1867, English and French speaking Canadians wrestled with the problems of their different identities and perceptions of life. Through the years, Parliament approved various measures that recognized the importance of English and French as the languages of Canada. In 1969 Parliament passed the Official Languages Act declaring that English and French are the official languages of Canada for all purposes of the Government of Canada and that they possess and enjoy equality of status. A parliamentary resolution in June 1973 approved principles for the implementation of the Act. Both the Act and the resolution received all-party support.

The official languages policy has its origins in the deepest roots of the Canadian experience. The purpose of this paper is to review some of those roots and our experience with this policy to date.

The official languages policy is not and never was intended to be a cure-all for all the problems of national unity. There are many problems in this country that, on a day-to-day basis, require our immediate concern and attention.

The feeling of alienation in Western Canada, our economic problems, such as those relating to regional disparities, unemployment and the standard of living, as well as the need to develop energy supplies--all of these and many other problems must be the object of vigorous and determined initiatives.

So, too, must constitutional matters which remain important in relation to all of our problems.

And yet, underlying these problems and breaking in upon them are our continuing problems of language. They are among the most acute of the issues facing us, as events in the province of Quebec have demonstrated.

The French language minorities in various provinces and the English language minority in the province of Quebec are concerned to be able to remain themselves, and to play a full social, economic and political role in their province and in Canada. Native people of the Indian and Inuit cultures have a similar concern. Canadians whose cultural origins are other than British or French are anxious to participate fully in the life of Canada, whether they have chosen English or French as their official language, but they are deeply attached to their cultural origins and want to preserve them in their lives.

In dealing with language rights, it becomes apparent that these rights are at least as strongly affected by provincial legislation and policies as they are by federal legislation and policies, and that responsibility for dealing with them rests on all levels of government. This fact was recognized in the Canadian Constitutional Charter discussed at the Victoria Conference in 1971.

In drawing attention to the role of the provinces, the government is conscious that this involves matters of provincial jurisdiction and that, moreover, practical situations vary from province to province. However, the Government of Canada would be shirking its political and moral responsibilities if it did not, at this time, express its views as to what should be the basic language rights of all Canadians.

Partly as a result of recommendations by many Canadians, including Members of Parliament and the Commissioner of Official Languages, the government announced in the Speech from the Throne of October 1976 that it would shift the emphasis in its policy from the federal public service to the Canadian public and to young Canadians in particular.

The government does not, however, intend in this paper to deal with the changes it is contemplating in the administration of its language policy and programs in the federal public servants. After these consultations have taken place, the government will announce in the near future changes it intends to make.

In the meantime, the government wishes to stress that it has every intention of pursuing the language goals established by Parliament concerning the federal public service. The modifications to be proposed by the government result from its many years of experience in implementing the provisions of the Official Languages Act in the public service of Canada and will reflect the criticisms and recommendations that have been made.

The proposals will apply not only to federal departments but to federal Crown corporations and agencies as well. They will include measures to strengthen the role of the Commissioner of Official Languages.

Canadians should think of the presence of our two official languages in Canada, not as a problem, but as an asset and an opportunity. They represent two of the richest and most admired cultures in the world.

Nor are the rights provided by the official languages policy of benefit to Canadians of British or French origin alone. The acceptance and enjoyment of diversity that is encouraged by the policy is gradually spreading to more and more Canadians. The growing perception of the advantages of having two official languages is also steadily improving the climate of understanding in which Canadians of other backgrounds can enjoy their own cultural heritage. The expansion of the dimension of diversity that gives Canadian culture its uniqueness is an indivisible benefit for all Canadians.

## 1. Language, Culture and Government

Language is related to man's life in society as breathing is related to life itself.

The Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism said there were "some 2,500 languages in the world, but less than 150 states to house them."

The phenomenon of many languages is one that Canada shares with most of the countries of the world. Canada, as the product of the meeting and interaction of the British and French cultures and of many other cultures as well, has inherited a complex language situation. The mother tongue, the language first learned in the home, of 13 million Canadians who constitute 60% of the population, is English. The mother tongue of 5,8 million Canadians, 27% of the popu-

lation, is French. Of those French speaking Canadians, 3.9 million, or nearly one-fifth of the population, speak no other language than French. The mother tongue of another 2.7 million Canadians, 13% of the population, is one of more than 20 other languages.

There is a very real difference between the experience of English speaking Canadians and that of French speaking Canadians. Most who now speak English as their working language, including many, if not all, Canadians of non-British origin, or their forebears, made a deliberate decision to speak English when they came to Canada. It made a whole continent available to them. But the French had no such intention and made no such choice. And while many of them have learned to speak English, two-thirds speak the French language only.

The Canada they know is not English but French, and has been that way since the French first settled here nearly 400 years ago. If they were told that from now on in Canada, they would have to speak English, they would be likely to say they want out and will take Quebec, since that has always been their home, and that they prefer to live there separated from the rest of Canada, in spite of the difficulties it entails, rather than accept such injustice in a country they explored, settled and helped to found.

In the past the reaction of many English speaking Canadians to the concerns and aspiration of French speaking Canadians has often been one of indifference. In parts of the country where French speaking minorities are small, English speaking Canadians of non-British origins have been unaware of the deep roots of the French speaking community and have wondered why, if they learned English, the French should not do so too.

These attitudes led, until the early 1960s, to the virtual domination of the English language, and those able to use it, in the areas of economic and federal governmental power in Canada. It has been the purpose of the official languages policy to provide the conditions within which French speaking Canadians could participate more fully in the mainstream of Canadian life, and particularly in the exercise of governmental and economic power in the country.

Culture, like language, is intimately related to man's existence. Because a culture provides most men and women with the "home" within which they live their lives, it is intimately related to their sense of personal freedom. The more constricted a culture, the less freedom there is for those who live within it. The more a culture is identified

with the broadest expression of man's experience on earth, the more liberating it becomes for those within it and those without.

Even within a group who share the same language and who, therefore, in a general way, belong to the same culture, there are profound cultural differences and divergent conceptions concerning fundamental aspects of life. Attempts to mold people who speak the same language or belong to the same political entity into a homogeneous cultural pattern or conception endanger their very freedom, and must be studiously avoided by the state, and fiercely resisted by citizens. For this reason, countries and peoples who value freedom and know how fragile it is usually exercise great care in intervening in matters of culture even when they cannot avoid intervening in matters of language.

Canadian culture is distinguished by its emphasis on diversification and its rejection of any countrywide uniformity. The people of Canada participate in a broad diversity of cultures that trace their origins not only to the earliest inhabitants of North America but also to virtually every part of the earth.

Many Canadians in both the English and French speaking cultural communities have expressed concerns, but of different kinds, about the challenge they perceive in the vast quantity of English language culture emanating from the United States.

French speaking Canadians feel particularly vulnerable by reason of their position as a small minority in the midst of a vast North American English speaking mass. The French speaking community's anxiety is that the pervasiveness of English as a North American language will overwhelm the language that is the very base of its cultural life. While the anxiety is real, the response in the form of cultural expression in the French language has been triumphant in the years since the transformation of the province of Quebec began in the early 1960s. And in that effort, the institutions established by the federal government as well as the programs of the Department of the Secretary of State, have, together with the contributions of provincial institutions, played roles of major importance.

In the English speaking community the concern centres largely on culture, since the continued existence of the English language is not, in the North American context, in doubt. The cultural life of English speaking Canada is of necessity much more obviously in competition with that of the United States for the very reason that their language of

expression is shared. And there is no doubt of the vigour of the United States in the cultural fields, as in all other fields. Moreover, the cultural life of English speaking Canada is diverse and far flung across the country. It is not, therefore, surprising that English speaking Canadians feel themselves much more directly challenged by the culture of the United States. Yet, even here, the response of English speaking Canadians in recent years, building on the encouragement received from many of the same institutions and programs, has been impressive.

The efforts of government to advance the cultural life of the English speaking and French speaking Canadians promote the cultures of Canada's people, not the cultures of the state. Canada is a country with two official languages, but no official cultures.

From the basic precept that Canada has two official languages but no official cultures springs the view that within the English speaking and French speaking communities there is room for numerous other cultural groups. These groups contribute very significantly to the vitality and productivity of Canada, and their cultures represent some of the richest elements of the world's cultural heritage. Recognition of their contributions, far from representing a threat to the older cultural communities in Canada, is a means to ensure the greatest possible enrichment of Canada and all Canadians.

In this context, ethnic groups within the two linguistic communities should be encouraged to retain a knowledge of their mother tongue because it is in our interest as Canadians if those who came to this country from other countries maintain their cultures.

The official languages policy and the cultural policies of the government of Canada are designed to ensure the greatest degree of freedom within a society that cares profoundly for the protection and strengthening of the distinctive minority groups that determine the richly varied character of the country.

This conception of society is the wellspring of the Canadian experience. It demands an affirmation of diversity that depends upon a maturity of understanding which is rare among men. Only a society deeply committed to the value of human life and the right of the individuals who compose that society to live their lives fully, freely and authentically can sustain such a vision of civilization.



## 2. Language and Perspectives on Canadian History

English and French speaking Canadians have often had differing perspectives on the events of Canada's history affecting our ability to deal with the issues of languages and our two linguistic communities.

The European settlement of what is now Canada began in the sixteenth century. The first permanent British settlement was made at Cupids, Newfoundland, in 1610, two years after the French under Samuel de Champlain founded the first permanent settlement at Quebec. At the time of the Seven Years War from 1755 to 1762, which brought to an end the rule of France in North America, there were in all of North America, no more than 80,000 Frenchmen, settled mainly in the St. Lawrence River valley, while the population of the British colonies numbered roughly two million.

In September of 1759, the French were defeated by the British at the battle of the Plains of Abraham. In the spring of the next year, the French attacked the British force left for the winter at Quebec and beat them at the battle of Ste. Foy. Both sides then awaited the arrival of the first ship from Europe. It was British, bringing with it the reinforcements which enabled the British to consolidate their earlier victory.

The "Conquest" is a force in Canadian life that is perhaps less important as an historical fact than in the way it has subsequently been understood. It neither gave to the British a sense of total victory nor meant annihilation to the French. To the generations that followed, the Conquest has given enduring problems; its sweet, sad music has all too often lulled us into losing our present and our future in our past.

A British policy of tolerance was evidenced by the Quebec Act of 1774, which guaranteed to the French their religious rights and their civil institutions. It was also evidenced by the Constitutional Act of 1791, which created Upper and Lower Canada and, in establishing the legislative assembly of Lower Canada, gave to the French a forum for the expression of their aspirations.

A British policy of assimilation was evidenced by the Royal Proclamation of 1763, which sought to impose on Quebec the religious practices and civil institutions of the British and, later, by the Act of Union of 1840, which reunited Upper and Lower Canada in an attempt to assimilate the French population in a larger British mass. The policy had been foreshadowed by the treatment of the French speaking Acadians who were expelled from Nova Scotia in 1755.

The policy of tolerance, representing the best British instincts for justice and fair play, was decisive. The attempt to return to a more repressive policy in 1840 could not be sustained. The British had managed to deal with the French in terms of a generosity of spirit remarkable in that era of the history of the world.

Thus, when the legislature was opened in 1849, the Speech from the Throne was read by Lord Elgin in the English and French languages, symbolizing the essential duality of the Province of Canada and its institutions. With the achievement of responsible government in 1849, direct British government involvement ended; the British and French in the Province of Canada were left to deal with their own problems of language, religion and education.

The pragmatic solution that finally emerged was a federal arrangement in which local matters, including particularly education, would be left to provincial governments while matters of common concern would be dealt with by a central government. The long series of events from the Quebec Act in 1774 through to Confederation in 1867, together with the forms of government, based on British parliamentary institutions, which were evolved by the interaction of French and British during that time, established beyond doubt that the French would not disappear or be assimilated. Confederation also established the framework for a growing equality of status between them and the British.

This concept of equality was exemplified in the Manitoba Act of 1870 which guaranteed the use of English and French in the legislature and courts of the new province. It also guaranteed denominational schools, a guarantee then seen as the means to protect French educational rights.

In all of the "North-West Territories" not included in the new province of Manitoba, equal status of the two languages was also recognized by statute and provision made for denominational schools.

However, it soon became apparent that, whatever the forming intent of those who worked for Confederation, a new mood of intolerance was abroad in Canada. New Brunswick passed legislation in 1877 limiting denominational educational rights. In the Northwest Territories, the insecurity of the French speaking Metis, faced with an influx of settlers who were mainly English speaking, led to the Northwest Rebellion of 1885 and the hanging of Louis Riel.

French speaking Canadians were deeply shocked and angered. The renewed conflict centred on the rights of French

and Catholic minorities in Manitoba, where in 1890 the legislature struck down all guarantees for the French language and state-supported denominational education. The legal status of French was also eliminated in the Northwest Territories. Within twenty-five years after Confederation, the use of French was virtually excluded in the West.

The direct legacy of these events was to create the conditions in the provinces of Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta in which the French heritage in Canada and the contribution made by the French to the opening and settlement of those very lands were all but eliminated.

French speaking Canada's concern and impatience with what seemed remote, European-inspired wars, and Canada's participation in them, exploded in the bitterness of the conscription crisis on 1917, a crisis that was aggravated by the complete elimination of bilingual schools in Manitoba in 1916 and sharply restricted use of French in Ontario schools by Regulation 17.

As the rôle of English speaking Canadians was emphasized in Canada's industrial growth following the Second World War, French speaking Canadians, living in a society dominated by political and religious institutions formulated with a view to survival rather than participation in a world changing with astonishing rapidity, were cut off from the mainstream of Canadian life.

In the early 1960s, the irritation and impatience of French speaking Canadians and the lack of knowledge or indifference of English speaking Canadians coincided with fundamental changes in Quebec. Education was secularized almost overnight and there was almost universal abandonment of the institutional Church as the major focal point of life of French speaking Canadians.

A less dramatic but no less important transformation was becoming apparent within English speaking Canada. Growing numbers of people of diverse cultural origins, from European countries as well as the Far East, settled in Canada, particularly in the West. Their lifestyles reflected the richness of their cultural diversity rather than attitudes of French or British communities. Canadians from Western Canada have grown up in a tradition that views Canada as an English speaking country composed of many cultural groups.

Many Canadians are unwilling to believe that the rare and challenging experiment in living together on the earth that Canada provides should be shattered finally by the forces of division. But they know, too, that the history of

Canada contains no sure guarantee that those forces will not prevail. Canada can exist only if the virtues of tolerance, compassion and justice prevail. And those virtues, like freedom itself, must be sought and found each day.

### 3. Language and Canadian Unity

Canada's existence as a single country is the result of the willingness and determination of people to live together in a shared community of belonging. One of the factors that tends to aggravate the tenuous and fragile nature of our unity is our failure to perceive the complexity of this country and its problems.

Canadians share an impatience with complexity with many other people in the world. People want answers. But if we in Canada are to begin to come to terms with our country's dilemmas, not least those relating to language, we will have to forego so simple an approach. For many of our problems, there are no simple answers, only continuing and varying shades of meaning.

National unity in Canada cannot exist without a deep and abiding affirmation of personal, cultural and regional differences. We treasure difference because it is the expression of individuality and personal freedom. The expression and the acceptance of difference is the preeminent mark of civilized man.

Our differences can, of course, be themselves the cause of disunity. National unity cannot exist without common objectives and a shared desire to attain them. The provision of economic and physical security for all Canadians, the development of our resources, the sharing of our plenty with the poor of the world--all these are goals which can unite us if we believe them to be important to attain.

The factors which motivated Confederation are still in evidence today. We continue to need economic growth in all areas of the country. We need improved means of transportation at the most economical rates. The West has been opened but our North, with its special problems, presents a challenge for all Canadians. For some, the dominance of the United States in the economic sphere poses a problem for the independence of Canadians. Finally, we have political uncertainty and confusion exacerbated by the proposal of the present Quebec government to separate from Canada and form an independent country.

We are confronted by other factors than those motivating Confederation: the need to alleviate regional disparities, to reduce unemployment, to maintain the standard of living and to develop energy supplies. There are still other factors not only in Canada but the world: pollution and its impact on our environment; competition for energy supplies; food production and distribution; problems of the distribution of wealth among the rich and poor nations; development of the seas.

All these factors, and the list is by no means complete, provide every bit as much an incentive to remain a unified country as the factors which motivated the original union of Confederation. Furthermore, the federal form of government adopted at Confederation is one of the most flexible and adaptable in man's experience. We are not constrained by our form of government; we are constrained by our willingness to use it constructively and creatively. Our constitution is not immutable, but even our attempts to bring it at last to this country where we can deal with it ourselves meet with obstacles.

Our difficulty in coalescing into a unified country is by no means the result alone of English-French differences. We are divided by differing perceptions of the roles the central and provincial governments should play, by economic disparities and the means to overcome them, by deeply felt regional differences and the means to accommodate them. But we are hindered in these problems by an underlying dilemma: our differences about language and culture.

Thus we are again at the point of origin of all Canadian experience since 1759: how do we achieve an accommodation between English and French speaking Canadians which will enable them to live satisfying and fulfilling lives within a country dedicated to common purposes?

If Canadians believe that a unified country is more likely to achieve a better life for Canadians today and tomorrow, then Canadians must be prepared to make the accommodations and adopt the attitudes that will enable Canada to be a reconciled and thriving country.

This means, above all, that Canadians must be willing to live together in a country of differences.

4. Principles of the Official Languages Policy of Canada

Canada cannot continue to exist as a single country unless English and French are recognized and accepted as the official languages of the country.

The federal government rejects the concepts of a Canada divided into two mutually exclusive unilingual separate countries or two mutually exclusive unilingual regions within one country. While these two options have a superficial appearance of dissimilarity, they amount in practice to the same thing, a province or state of Quebec that is unilingual French speaking and the rest of Canada, or a truncated Canada, that is unilingual English speaking.

The government rejects these concepts above all because they entail a denial of the existence of the official language minority groups of Canada. Of a total of 21.5 million Canadians, 1.7 million, or 8% of the population of Canada, live in provinces where, insofar as the official languages are concerned, they are in a minority. There is an official language minority group in every province and territory in the country. Thus, there are 789,185 Canadians whose mother tongue is English living in Quebec, constituting 13% of its population. There are 926,400 Canadians whose mother tongue is French living in provinces other than Quebec.

The following table shows the distribution of official language minority groups in Canada:

OFFICIAL LANGUAGE MINORITY GROUPS  
(POPULATION BY MOTHER TONGUE)

	POPULATION	OFFICIAL LANGUAGE MINORITY	%
Canada	21,568,310	1,715,585	8.0
Newfoundland	522,105	3,640	0.7
Prince Edward Island	111,640	7,365	6.6
Nova Scotia	788,960	39,335	5.0
New Brunswick	634,560	215,725	34.0
Quebec	6,027,760	789,185*	13.1
Ontario	7,703,105	482,040	6.3
Manitoba	988,245	60,545	6.1
Saskatchewan	926,245	31,605	3.4
Alberta	1,627,875	46,500	2.9
British Columbia	2,184,620	38,035	1.7
Yukon Territories	18,385	450	2.4
Northwest Territories	34,810	1,160	3.3

\*English speaking. The other figures  
are for French speaking minorities.

Those who see a Canada divided on linguistic lines, or separated on a similar basis, envisage the gradual absorption of the minorities in the country as the solution to Canada's language problems.

The federal government rejects these concepts because they would, in either case, tend to move Canada, or the separated parts of Canada, in the direction of a uniformity and conformity against which the linguistic duality and cultural diversity of the country have been a continuing safeguard.

Such concepts are unacceptable because they would effectively deny to Canadians the heritage of one country, and because the federal government is unwilling to forego its responsibility for the preservation and strengthening of the French language and the culture of French speaking Canadians.

In order to achieve the acceptance and recognition of the English and French languages as the official languages of Canada, the federal government has developed a number of principles, which, taken together, constitute a statement of the official languages policy of Canada. Some recognize realities that have been an unstated part of the life of Canada for many years. Some have received recognition in the recent past. Others are new. The government believes it is essential in the present circumstances in the country to state these principles clearly and unequivocally. The principles affect not only individual Canadians but the provincial governments as well as the federal government. It is the hope of the federal government that these principles will be accepted by all Canadians and by the provincial governments as the statement safeguarding the fundamental linguistic duality of Canada within the framework of its cultural diversity.

These principles are:

Every citizen in his or her private capacity has the right to speak any language.

The English and French languages are the official languages of Canada and have equality of status.

The English and French languages are a fundamental expression of the Canadian heritage, and public policies, federal and provincial, should provide assurance that this linguistic heritage will be preserved and developed so that, in particular, where official language minority groups exist in



Canada, they will be assisted and encouraged by public authorities to retain and preserve their language.

Subject to circumstances which may make a deferment of application necessary, Canadians have a right to have their children educated in the official language of their choice, and the necessary facilities should be provided wherever numbers warrant.

Knowledge of the two official languages of Canada, by those Canadians who may choose to learn them, is desirable as a personal and national asset so that members of the two official language groups may be able to communicate with each other, understand and cherish each other's diverse ways of life, and serve as a natural link between the two linguistic communities.

Canadians should be able to communicate with, and to obtain service from, the federal institutions of government in the official language of their choice and arrangements should be made to this effect wherever there is sufficient demand for it.

Subject to the previous principle, Canadians of the two official language groups should have equitable opportunities for employment and a career in the federal institutions of government and to carry out their work in the official language of their choice.

The two official language groups should participate equitably in the federal institutions of government.

The official languages policy recognizes that there are many languages spoken in Canada, but that there are two predominant language groups to which every Canadian, except 1.5% of the population who speak neither English nor French, belongs regardless of ethnic origin or mother tongue. Every Canadian is included in the scope of the policy. It is not, therefore, a policy of two special groups. It is a policy that takes into account the basic linguistic reality of the country.

It is not the intention of the federal government now, nor has it been its intention in the past, to propose a policy that would "bilingualize" the country by spreading French and English evenly across the country. Nobody, least

of all the federal government, wants a mindless, universal bilingualism in Canada. Much damage has been done to the fabric of this country by the misuse and misunderstanding of that word.

The provinces of British Columbia and Alberta, for example, will remain predominantly English speaking, with the English language as the common language of use of those provinces notwithstanding the basic language rights of their relatively small French speaking minorities. Conversely, it is natural to expect that the province of Quebec should be and should remain a predominantly French speaking province, with the French language as the common language of use in that province notwithstanding the basic language rights of its English speaking minority.

Equality of status means that in its expression of itself as a country, in its national symbols and in its common institutions, Canada will reflect the heritage and culture of its French speaking community as well as the heritage and culture of its English speaking community.

The status of equality of English and French means that they are not just another two languages among many others in Canada. These two languages play a special role in the life of the country. English and French are the two languages spoken by most Canadians.

Equality of status does not mean, either, that only English and French will henceforth be spoken in Canada. It does not mean that the languages of the native peoples of Canada will no longer be spoken in Canada. It does not mean that Canadians will no longer be able to speak Italian in Toronto, or that Ukrainian cannot be spoken in Winnipeg, or Chinese in Vancouver, or Greek in Montreal, or German in Humboldt, or Finnish in Sudbury. While it is true that none of these languages has an official status, they will still be regularly used by those many Canadians who live in communities across Canada where they are in common use.

##### 5. Official Languages and Individual Canadians

Individual Canadians may ask how they can respond to the official languages policy. Some, particularly young Canadians, can do so very personally and directly by taking the opportunity, wherever the necessary facilities are available, to learn the other official language.

The policy is a concept of fair treatment for Canadians who use the English or French languages wherever they may live in Canada. It also implies a spirit of welcome for Canadians of both linguistic groups wherever they may travel in Canada, on business or for pleasure.

The federal government is committed to apply this concept wherever practicable to those activities that are within its jurisdiction. It is also committed to support the concept by the expenditure of federal funds, not only on activities within its own jurisdiction, but also to encourage initiatives by provincial governments in areas within their jurisdiction and, wherever appropriate, to encourage private groups and individuals in their efforts to attain it.

Individual Canadians can support these federal actions, and call upon their provincial governments to pursue vigorous policies in areas within their jurisdictions. They can ask that facilities be provided in order to give them fuller opportunities to participate in achieving the objectives of the policy. They can respond personally in those situations where, alone or as part of a group, they have an opportunity to act with kindness and fairness to Canadians of the other official language group. Where they are involved in the tourist industry in Canada, they can seek out means to ensure that Canadians from the other linguistic group are made to feel comfortable.

The purpose of the third principle of the policy is to underline the importance of creating conditions in Canada in which as many individual Canadians as possible will be able, if they wish, to acquire a knowledge of the other official language.

There are significant personal advantages to be gained from a knowledge of the two official languages. An acquaintance with them opens greater opportunities to participate in wider circles of activity not only in Canada but within the world at large. Careers in the cultural field, in government institutions, in politics, in international business, in the growing field of tourism--in all of these endeavours a knowledge of English and French is of practical, everyday value in a career based in Canada or the other countries of the world.

Unless significant efforts are made to encourage English speaking Canadians to learn the other official language, French speaking Canadians will continue to supply a significantly disproportionate part of the bilingual group so essential in a country of two official languages. This

creates the impression among French speaking Canadians that English speaking Canadians are not serious in practical terms in their desire for a country in which English and French share equally in the task of keeping the country one. Secondly, it erodes the use of the French language in Canada. Many French speaking Canadians feel that, because they bear the burden of bilingualism, they thus reinforce the use of the English language in Canada and contribute to the ultimate demise of French as a language of use in Canada. Many French speaking Canadians therefore reject bilingualism, and reject any use of the English language, as being a dagger aimed at their existence.

#### 6. Official Languages and the Programs of the Federal Government

The purpose of the Official Languages Act passed by Parliament in 1969 with support of all parties was to ensure that Parliament and the federal institutions of government would reflect the dual nature of Canada.

The overriding implication was that, to the extent possible, individuals in Canada were to be served by the federal institutions of the country in the official language of their choice.

The government has been reviewing its policies and programs as they relate to the federal public service, but does not deal here with its conclusions concerning possible changes. This statement deals with a language policy for all Canadians. Shortly after publication of this statement, the government intends to meet with the unions representing public servants in order to discuss detailed proposals. Following these consultations, the government will be in a position to make public its proposed changes to the official languages policies and programs affecting the federal public service.

This announcement, which the government hopes to be able to make in the near future, will also include proposals that the government intends to table in Parliament to increase the powers of the Commissioner of Official Languages.

The implementation of the principles that flow from the act and Parliament's 1973 resolution has resulted in significant changes in the participation and role of French speaking Canadians in the federal public service. The most recent annual report of the Commissioner of Official Languages said:

"Were one to assess the Government's performance in carrying out Parliament's language law, one could argue fairly that about 20% of what it tried to do ended as mistake or mismanagement. Many of its setbacks cost dearly in money; all of them did in lost hope and goodwill. But easily 80% of Ottawa's initiatives have turned to a decent measure of success...

"The whole weight of official policy and practice backs each citizen's right to get served by federal institutions in his or her official language...Official policy and growing practice are pressing federal institutions to allow tens of thousands more employees to work in the language of their choice...The participation of French-speakers in Canada's public service has advanced even more strikingly. In 1971, openings for unilingual English-speakers were ten times more numerous than those for unilingual French-speakers; by 1975, the ratio had fallen to six to one. This is a gain of 67% in five years and should impress all but doctrinaire cynics."

The federal government's efforts within its own institutions has created the impression that the official languages policy affects the federal public service only. But a broad range of actions and programs have been initiated in the country at large.

One result is that Canada has a broadcasting system that, more and more, gives to the two official language groups broadcasting service across the country in their own language.

A policy of labelling in the two official languages should be seen as normal in a country having two official languages. The need to understand labels is every bit as legitimate for a French speaking Canadian in an English language area as for an English speaking Canadian in a French language area. The government's labelling policy recognizes this in the most practical ways that could be devised.

The government has proposed changes in the regulations relating to labelling that would have the effect of permitting importers and producers to sell a limited quantity of unilingually labelled imported and domestic products. These changes will be of particular benefit to small producers and importers. They will also benefit consumers who will have the opportunity to purchase products that might not otherwise be available.

The federal government intends to maintain its support of all the programs related to the official languages policy that it has adopted to assist the provinces and individuals in the past. In carrying out its intention to devote relatively greater resources to enabling young people in particular to learn their second official language, the government envisages expenditures that, in this current year, will go to increase the programs now in operation. In addition, there will be an increase in the programs to promote knowledge of their second official language among other Canadians. It will also, in consultation with the provinces, seek ways to improve the programs in order to carry out the objectives of the official languages policy relating to official languages minority groups.

## 7. Official Languages and the Provinces

In reviewing its experience with the official languages policy to date, it is evident to the federal government that it cannot by itself ensure that the policy succeeds. The policy must also have the active support of the provincial governments if it is to make its fullest impact on our country. To say this is not to attempt to tell the provincial governments what they should do. It is simply stating one of the major facts evident in the experience with the policy thus far.

In perhaps the most significant area of all, that of education, the provinces have exclusive jurisdiction under the Canadian constitution. In many other areas that have a very important impact on peoples' lives and on the language they speak, such as the courts, social and health services and culture, the provinces have as much and sometimes more authority and influence than the federal government. Moreover, the provinces have the authority to determine the language of public administration at the provincial and municipal levels and, except for the province of Quebec, in the debates of their provincial legislatures and their records and journals. Indeed, even in connection with the education of Canadians who may some day wish to enter the federal public service, action by the provinces is of prime importance.

Many people, including the Commissioner of Official Languages, have recommended that, as a country, we should emphasize the teaching of the official languages to Canadians in general, and to youth in particular, rather than maintaining a large federal establishment for teaching languages to public servants.

Implementing such measures would place greater emphasis on the role of the provinces and make more obvious that the federal government cannot alone be fully effective in regard to the educational, cultural and other rights of Canada's two official language groups. It has, over the years, established programs designed to encourage the provinces to take initiatives in these matters. However, strong independent initiatives by the provincial governments are crucial, particularly if these minority groups are to be given the means to preserve and strengthen their identities.

If commitment to the concept of a Canada united in linguistic duality and cultural diversity is shared by the provincial governments, the federal government believes they will also be willing, as a condition of the continuing existence of Canada as one country, to recognize the principle that the English and French languages are the official languages of Canada and have equality of status in the country.

It is not possible to propose to French-speaking Canadians that Canada is their country from coast to coast and from the American border to the Arctic seas unless that principle is accepted. Within that principle, there will be differences of situation from province to province, but in those provinces where the majority is English speaking, the basic rights of French speaking Canadians must be respected. And in the same way, in the province of Quebec, where the majority is French speaking, the basic rights of English speaking Canadians must be respected. If that principle of equality is not accepted in spirit and in practice across the country, there can be no enduring community of our two peoples. There will be rather two separatisms that must lead ultimately to the political reflection of that fact.

The federal government is already providing assistance to the provinces to give Canadians the right to have their children educated in the official language of their choice. It is prepared to discuss with each of the provinces ways in which it can assist in the full realization of this objective, particularly with regard to marginal situations where there is a question as to whether the actual numbers warrant the provision of necessary facilities for the exercise of this right.

It may be that arrangements for federal participation in such circumstances could be crystallized through experience into new constitutional provisions designed to

enable the federal government to assume a direct constitutional responsibility if that seems to be desirable.

The federal government is very much aware of the fact that, outside the province of Quebec, actual freedom of choice is possible only in certain parts of the country. This de facto situation has, in addition to other factors, created among French speaking Canadians a considerable feeling of insecurity concerning the future of the French language in the province of Quebec as well as in Canada generally.

The federal government, as a matter of principle, strongly favours a policy that gives to English speaking Canadians the choice, wherever in Canada it is reasonably feasible, to send their children either to an English language school or to a French language school. Similarly, French speaking Canadians should have the choice, wherever in Canada it is reasonably feasible, to send their children to a French language school or to an English language school.

It is unacceptable in Canada that Canadian citizens should be deprived, either by the failure to provide facilities, or by force of law, of the right to send their children to the public or separate school of their choice, or at least to a school of the official language group to which they belong. Measures in Quebec designed to force parents of French language background to send their children to French language schools only would have the paradoxical effect of permitting less choice to French speaking parents than to English speaking parents in the province.

It is incompatible with the unity of Canada that Canadian citizens should not be able, when they move from province to province, to send their children to schools where they are taught in their own language. The government believes that necessary facilities should be provided, wherever they do not now exist, for people moving from the province of Quebec to other provinces, and that they should continue to be provided for people moving from other provinces to the province of Quebec. In both cases, there will be particular situations where this will not be feasible. But the principle remains.

If the province of Quebec is to remain a predominantly French language province, as the federal government believes it should, it is only natural to expect that people from other countries who immigrate to that part of Canada should participate in the French language community. However, it is by far preferable that immigrants should be attracted to the French language education system for reasons that do



not include coercion. By the same token, it would also be preferable if immigrants to the English speaking provinces enjoyed a similar choice.

While these difficult matters are being discussed, and while Canadians are genuinely attempting to create or improve the institutions, educational and otherwise, that will ensure equal rights and dignity for the English and French language communities in the country, the federal government accepts that circumstances may make necessary a deferment of the application of this important principle.

In this connection, it should be recognized that the educational rights of the English speaking minority in Quebec have been, and still are, better respected and served than the rights of French speaking minorities of comparable importance in the other provinces of Canada.

However, New Brunswick, through the adoption of an Official Languages Act that will come fully into force this year, has established the equality of the two official languages in the legislature and the courts, in the provincial public service and in its educational system. The province also offers an extensive range of programs to develop and maintain minority language education and to promote a knowledge of the two official languages in the public service and in the schools. Ontario and Manitoba, while choosing not to establish the equality of the two official languages through legislation, have nevertheless also made progress in the provision of educational facilities for their French language minority groups.

Acceptance of the principle that knowledge of English and French by Canadians who choose to learn them is desirable entails that the provinces be willing to assume the obligation to offer the teaching of the second official language at pre-college or university levels of schooling so that, by the time each Canadian student has completed such schooling, he or she will have had the opportunity to obtain a basic knowledge of the second official language.

The cultural agencies of the country, public and private, including particularly the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, could play a more significant role in providing young Canadians across the country with additional opportunities for learning their second official language.

## Conclusion

In an era of diminishing space and a tendency to narrowing perspective, Canada remains one of the most challenging countries of the world, a land of opportunity both physical and spiritual.

There is a widespread tendency to fragmentation and division in the world today that can, if we permit it to determine our future, turn us in upon ourselves in bitter discord and sterile confusion. What is required of Canadians is a vision of life as large as the land itself.

We are the inheritors of a tradition that has provided us with a society as open, as free of inhibitions and restraints, as any in the world.

Our challenges and the problems they entail are at the same time our opportunities. Our linguistic duality and cultural diversity are both the condition and the safeguard of our continuing freedom and our unity as a country.

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