

# A National Understanding

Preface

Language, Culture and Government

Language and Perspectives on Canadian History

Language and Canadian Unity

Principles of the Official Languages Policy

Official Languages and Individual Canadians

Official Languages and the Government's Programs

Official Languages and the Provinces

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# A National Understanding

Statement of the Government of Canada  
on the official languages policy



**The  
Official  
Languages  
of Canada**



*A sense of unity is the opposite of a sense of uniformity. Uniformity, where everyone "belongs," uses the same clichés, thinks alike and behaves alike, produces a society which seems comfortable at first but is totally lacking in human dignity. Real unity tolerates dissent and rejoices in variety of outlook and tradition, recognizes that it is man's destiny to unite and not divide . . . Unity, so understood, is the extra dimension that raises the sense of belonging into genuine human life.*

NORTHROP FRYE

*L'âge d'une civilisation se doit mesurer par le nombre des contradictions qu'elle accumule, par le nombre des coutumes et des croyances incompatibles qui s'y rencontrent et s'y tempèrent l'une l'autre; par la pluralité des philosophies et des esthétiques qui coexistent et cohabitent si souvent la même tête.*

PAUL VALÉRY



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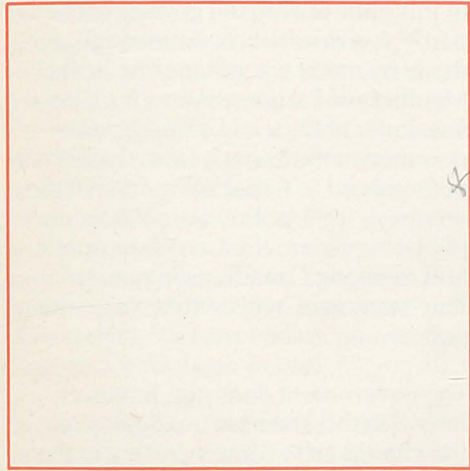
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# Preface





The English and French languages have been in everyday use in some part of what is now Canada for almost 400 years. In the evolution of the country from colonial status to independent nationhood, both languages, and the people who speak them, have shaped and marked the distinctive character of Canada and Canadians.

Long before Confederation in 1867, English and French speaking Canadians wrestled with the problems of their different identities and perceptions of life. Confederation was the work of men who had learned to value and respect their differences, and who wished to create a new nation based upon common interests and the virtues of tolerance, compassion and justice.

The constitution of Canada, the British North America Act, states that the English and French languages have equal status in the Parliament and courts of Canada and in the legislature and courts of the province of Quebec. Through the years, Parliament approved various measures that recognized the importance of English and French as the languages of Canada. Finally, in 1969, Parliament passed the Official Languages Act. This Act declared that the English and French languages 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 in the federal public service. 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 statement is to review some of those roots and our experience with this policy to date so that Canadians will better understand it and its significance for the life of the country.

In issuing this statement at this time, the government wishes to emphasize that 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. People are unemployed, people are poor, people are old and neglected,

people are young and bewildered, and the economy that can be a means to help them is buffeted by forces from within and without. The world is on the threshold of problems our best minds can understand but dimly and, even then, only in fragmentary form. All of these problems crowd in upon us, they cry out for calm reasoned and compassionate approaches. They demand stability within us and security in the society around us if they are to be dealt with in realistic terms.

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.

To pretend that our language problems are likely to disappear if we manage to solve our other problems is to ignore glaring facts of the recent and past history of Canada. Indeed, the history of the world shows abundantly that failure to pay proper attention to concerns that deeply involve the cultural values and emotional responses of people has led to tragedy as often as has the neglect of material interests.

This is not to underestimate the need to deal with other problems that have a profound importance for the life of the country. 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.

Canadians are concerned about their relations as a people and as communities of different languages and cultures. 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 role in the social, economic and political life of 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.

It is often said that the emphasis put on language oversimplifies a very complex issue. The issue is indeed more complex than language. The issue is people, people of different languages and cultures. The question is whether these people of different languages, cultures and institutions have the will and determination to live together in mutual respect and in a sharing of social, economic and political interests.

This statement deals with language rights. But in the process, it becomes apparent that these rights have a profound effect on all aspects of the lives of Canadians: freedom of expression, the education of the young and of adults, public administration, courts of justice, parliamentary debates, the media, business relationships, communication at work, social services, cultural activities.

It is also 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. It contained language provisions, some of which seven of the ten provinces agreed to accept as binding on them.

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. I believe, however, that 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.

In this connection, the government has, partly as a result of recommendations made by many Canadians, including Members of Parliament and the Commissioner of Official Languages, 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. This statement will reflect this orientation.

The government does not, however, intend in this statement to deal with the changes it is contemplating in the administration of its language policy and programs in the federal public service. Proposals to this effect are being prepared and will shortly be discussed with the unions representing federal public servants. After these consultations have taken place, the government will announce the changes it intends to make. It is my hope that such an announcement will be made in the near future.

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 and that it will continue its efforts to achieve those goals. 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.

I would also like to stress that the proposals to be made by the government will apply, not only to federal government departments, but to federal Crown corporations and agencies as well. Finally, the government's proposals will also include measures designed to strengthen the role of the Commissioner of Official Languages.

I would like to call upon all Canadians to 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. They are also two of the most useful instruments of communication in a world that is characterized by an increasingly interrelated and complex web of communications. Other countries make considerable efforts to spread among their citizens a knowledge of the very languages that are a part of the heritage of all Canadians.

English speaking Canadians are interested, as are French speaking Canadians, not only in preserving their language, about which they generally feel secure, but also in safeguarding, strengthening and developing their own cultural values. It is these values, like those of French speaking Canadians, that help to maintain this country as an independent political entity and an effective partner among the nations of the world.

Nor are the rights provided by the official languages policy of benefit to Canadians of British or French origin alone; this is too little appreciated by many Canadians. The acceptance and enjoyment of diversity that is encouraged by the policy is gradually spreading to more and more Canadians. The perception of the advantages of having two official languages is growing in our nation. This 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. It provides a widened tolerance of individuality and cultural differences for every Canadian to enjoy, whatever their linguistic origins.

The government is, therefore, determined that the equal status of the English and French languages and of the two linguistic communities in Canada will be strengthened and enhanced. The government believes that the great majority of Canadians share this goal. They are proud of their country's distinctive heritage, reflecting its British and French origins, and they do not wish to see Canada disrupted or weakened by linguistic and cultural divisions.

During the past years, many Canadians from all parts of the country, from the Atlantic region to the Pacific coast, have understood the basic importance of the official languages policy for the country, and its value as a means to enhance their own lives and those of their children. They have responded generously and enthusiastically to its challenge and, in doing so, they have added to that understanding and respect among Canadians which are the ground of our unity. The perception and the contribution of these Canadians has been, and will continue to be, of the utmost importance.



Pierre Elliott Trudeau  
Prime Minister of Canada



# Chapter 1

Language,  
Culture  
and Government



us. Without a language able to be understood by those with whom we live, there is truly no possibility of a human existence. Man is, without the means of communication, alone in the world.

In the best of worlds, everyone would be able to speak to and to understand everyone else so that there would be no need to deal with language as a matter of public policy and concern. But a vast host of languages and tongues is spoken in the world. Book I of the report of 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". Some would argue that the figure of 2,500 is low. But the point remains: the world is a huge storehouse of languages.

As a consequence, people who can speak more than one language may be found in virtually every country. The phenomenon of many languages is one that Canada shares with most of the countries of the world. Even in France, Great Britain and the United States, countries that are thought of as being unilingual, different languages are spoken.

In many countries, centuries of day-to-day life have established that, whatever language is spoken in the home or in purely personal pursuits, only one language is in general use in all the various facets of public life. In other countries, more than one language is given public recognition and status, and the lan-

guages so established are, to a greater or lesser extent, used in public life.

Canada, 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 population, 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.\*

In these circumstances, French speaking Canadians, faced with a sea of English speaking North Americans, have sought to protect and preserve, in all facets of their life, the language they brought to North America when they began to settle here in the early days of the seventeenth century. English speaking Canadians, whatever their cultural origin, speak a language whose continued use in North America is not in danger. Many of them have difficulty in understanding the sentiments of a minority who believe they are faced with a very real threat to the continued use of their language.

\*All statistics used in this statement are based on the 1971 Census of Canada.

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss briefly the nature of language and culture, particularly as they relate to the Canadian experience, and to describe the legitimate scope of governmental policy concerning them. The approach of the government to the problems of language and culture in Canada is motivated by the conviction that, although language and culture are profoundly related, a clear distinction must be made between them.

Language is related to man's life in society as breathing is related to life itself. Language is the means by which each of us comprehends the world around us and is enabled to participate in it with our fellow men. The language we learn within the first context of our existence is the vehicle by which we learn to know ourselves and then to make ourselves known to those around

There is a very real difference between the experience of English speaking Canadians and that of French speaking Canadians. The difference is one primarily of history and circumstance, but it is also a difference of intention. Most of those who came to Canada and who now speak English as their working language came to Canada expecting and intending to speak English. Many Canadians of non-British origin made a decision, or their forbears did, to adopt the English language when they came to Canada. This was in a very real sense a voluntary choice, even if attributable to their new circumstances, and it was one that, in a North American context, made eminently good sense. From the standpoint of language, it made a whole continent available to them. But the French, quite simply, had no such intention and made no such choice. And while French speaking Canadians have learned to speak English, two-thirds of them still speak the French language only.

If someone were to say to those 3.9 million unilingual French speaking Canadians, or to the 1.9 million who also speak English, "Look here, this is an English country, this Canada, and from now on, except in your home, you have to speak English", they would be likely to reply that the Canada they know is not English but French, and has been that way since the French first settled here nearly 400 years ago. They would be likely to go on to say that if that's the way Canada is to be, an English country where everyone has to

speak English, then they want out of it and they will take Quebec, since that has always been their home, and they prefer to live there, separated from the rest of Canada, in spite of the difficulties this would entail, rather than accept such injustice in a country they explored, settled and helped to found.

And what other Canadians must ask themselves is how they would feel and what they would say if they were one of those French speaking Canadians.

In the past, the reaction of many English speaking Canadians to the concerns and aspirations of French speaking Canadians has often been one of indifference. In parts of the country where French speaking minorities are small, many English speaking Canadians of non-British origin have been unaware of the deep roots of the French speaking community in Canada, and they 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 who are able to use it, in the areas of economic and federal governmental power in Canada. Increasingly, the use of the French language was relegated to domestic and social life and to provincial and local affairs within the province of Quebec. The ability of French speaking Canadians to participate fully, freely and on a basis of equality in the life of Canada was dangerously eroded.

It has been the purpose of the official languages policy to provide the conditions within which French speaking Canadians could emerge from this situation and participate more fully in the mainstream of Canadian life, and particularly in the exercise of governmental and economic power in the country. It is a policy that recognizes that linguistic duality is essential if Canada is to be a country where both English and French speaking communities can live lives of creativity and fulfillment. It is a policy that originates in the very nature of Canada and is essential to its continued existence as a country.

Culture, like language, is intimately related to man's existence both as an individual and as a member of society. The cultural milieu in which one is reared forms a context of patterns of thought and action. These provide the individual with a means to attain that understanding of himself and that relatedness to his fellow man which are the grounds of a secure and satisfying existence. While language is the prime vehicle for the acquisition and transmission of culture, it is by no means the only one. Culture is not only, or perhaps even primarily, a verbal phenomenon. It is a complex web of attitudes and thoughts, of feelings and emotions, of actions and reactions. It is learned by the heart and by the senses as much as by the spoken word.

There is a tension in a culture that arises from the need to provide the stability within which people can feel secure and, at the same time, the flexibility within which they can feel free. Most human beings live within a culture all their lives without wishing to alter it or to add to it. It provides them with an accepted, comfortable way of life within which they can feel at home and at peace. A threat to this way of life is, therefore, profoundly disturbing, whether it arises from an overt challenge or from a situation that they believe constrains their ability to live as they wish.

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 broader the base of a culture, and the more open and adaptable it is to new perceptions and understandings of life, the freer are those who live within it. The more closely a culture becomes centred on one person or group or set of ideas, the more it can become a cage, imprisoning those within, excluding those without. 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.

Most well-developed cultures, however strong may be their forming core, are multi-faceted in their expression. They contain many shades of perception and understanding. Such cultures are fluid and diverse within themselves, enabling those who live within them to move freely between the poles of acceptance and experimentation. This is the characteristic of the cultures of Western civilization and of the broadly based creativity that has been their greatest gift to man.

Personal freedom is essential within a culture, not only to enable those who live within it to live fully and freely, but also to allow those who are creative to express and to fulfill themselves. The summit of a creative life is achieved in the creation of new perceptions, portrayals and understandings of existence. These enter into the heritage of the culture in which they first emerge, broadening and enriching it. Those creations that carry a universal message spread it beyond that culture into those of other men speaking other tongues. Music and painting are prime examples of cultural expressions that transcend the milieu of their creation. But literature, the works of Shakespeare and Molière, of Goethe and Dostoyevsky, of Kafka and Camus, for example, have had a profound impact on cultures beyond their own.

In this way, cultures interact and interpenetrate each other, teaching men to understand and treasure their different experiences of life and to respect and cherish their common humanity.

Language and culture are intimately related. Language is a means by which culture is expressed and transmitted and, at the same time, it is one of the strong factors influencing culture. Governments cannot, however, treat them as identical in their characteristics or in their roles in society.

Languages form rather stable systems, evolving relatively slowly. While a language may be more or less open to influences from other languages, all languages tend to have an internal logic and structure that provide an intrinsic screening process against outside influences. Moreover, language is a system of communication that is indispensable for government, politics, administration, law, education, business and so on. It is thus utilized in societies as a tool to enable those in the society to participate fully in it. A country where there is more than one language of significant use can give those languages public or official status as a means to facilitate the participation of all citizens in the life of the country. Thus, in Canada, official status has been given by Parliament to two languages, English and French.

Culture can hardly be described as a closed structure or system. It can much better be compared to a living organism that is constantly evolving, almost from day to day. 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 con-

ceptions concerning fundamental aspects of life. These differences spring from family influences, ethnic background, religious orientation, academic training, political traditions and other such influences. 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. Such attempts 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.

However, let us be realistic. All countries, even those that most stress their freedom, intervene in various ways in the content of culture. Most countries, either at the national or the regional level, establish school curricula and thus determine not only what language or languages will be taught, but also which authors in literature or philosophy will be studied. School curricula also determine how subjects such as history, social sciences, economics or geography will be taught. Countries adopt particular laws and legal systems. They establish national holidays, including those celebrating historical events and heroes. They erect monuments, preserve heritage buildings and maintain archives and museums where historical and esthetic treasures of national significance are preserved.

They develop and maintain constitutions and institutions reflecting certain political traditions as opposed to others.

Countries adopt such policies because, even though cultures are living organisms that must remain open to outside influences and welcome all currents of thought, they also need roots in order to stay alive. The geographical location, historical origin and cultural sources of people cannot be ignored: they form their roots. They are the realities on which people build their lives.

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. Most of the cultures represented in Canada flow from the civilization of Western Europe, but the cultural heritage of the countries of Asia and Africa are also represented here. However, Canada for many decades remained predominantly both French and British in cultural orientation. Thus, however culturally diverse Canada may be today, the institutions of the country reflect its origins in the meeting and interaction of these two European cultures.

Because of the extraordinary development of the means of communication in the world that has occurred in recent decades, virtually every culture is subject to transforming pressures that are

profound and pervasive. This phenomenon is complicated by the fact that cultural expression, which used to be almost entirely the result of personal effort, is now to a very great extent the "output" of large financial enterprises and industrial processes. This industrial "output" has the potential to turn millions of people in the world into masses of consumers of cultural "products". Not all of the product of this cultural industry is bad. Far from it. It is a difficult task, however, in such global circumstances, to preserve the possibility for original expression — as opposed to mass consumption — by individuals or particular cultural communities.

Thus, most countries have adopted policies designed, not to cut themselves off from outside cultural influences, but to preserve the means of cultural expression and dissemination for those who lack access to large industrial and financial systems of cultural processing. Such efforts have been concerned, not only with national expression as compared to international industrial forces, but also with local expression as compared to metropolitan currents.

Canada early grew sensitive to the need to counter the transforming forces of mass communications. Canadians live beside a country whose cultural output has for years been in a position to overtake completely their capacity to express their independent existence, particularly in the English language. To protect and encourage cultural expression, Canada developed institutions

such as the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, the Canada Council, the National Film Board and the Canadian Film Development Corporation. Similar enterprises have been set up by provincial governments as well.

Particularly since the Second World War, the ubiquitous influence of the United States has been strongly felt in all facets of Canadian life. More and more, Canada's institutions have been subjected to the influences of the larger North American civilization of which Canada forms a part. This phenomenon has been more apparent in English speaking Canada, but it is no less pervasive a reality in French speaking Canada. 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 anxiety of the French speaking community 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 that 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 field, 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 it has received from many of the same institutions and programs, has been impressive.

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

this basic precept springs the view that within the English speaking and French speaking communities of Canada 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. It is in our interest as Canadians that those who have come to this country from other countries maintain their cultures. A continuing knowledge of their mother tongue is an important factor in this respect.

The federal government's official languages policy responds to the reality that Canada is a country of two predominant linguistic groups. The English and French languages are given official status because they are the means to enable the vast majority of Canadians to participate in the life of the country.

These languages have official status in Canada as a means of communication, as languages that in each case are commonly used by a significant segment of the population, and also, of course, as the languages of cultural

expression of the group from which each derives. However, insofar as a language has official status, it ceases to be the exclusive property of the cultural group from which it emanates. It becomes a public language, the property, for purposes of the society, of all those who speak it, whatever their origin. The French and English languages are, in this sense, the public languages of Canada.

The cultural policies of the government are based on the conviction that cultural expression cannot be rigidly and officially defined in a country without eroding and, finally, eradicating personal freedom. A society that seeks to define and use a single cultural orientation as the basis of its sense of identity must increasingly impose limits on the self-expression of those who compose it. Where emanations of governmental power are oriented on the basis of an officially identified culture, they end in creating an institutional integration that extends finally into every aspect of the life of society: linguistic, cultural, religious, social, economic, political, territorial. And personal freedom suffocates. No collective objective is worth that price.

Freedom in society exists for all or, finally, it does not exist for any. The extent to which freedom exists in a country may above all be seen in the way in which that country treats those groups within it that are in the minority. 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.

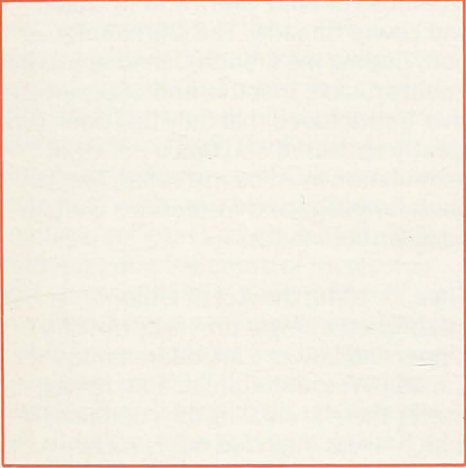
This conception of society is the wellspring of the Canadian experience. Canadians are a people whose understanding of civilization comprehends a duality of language expression in a plurality of cultural expression. Such a country must necessarily reject the integration of its institutions and its people into a monolithic unity. It must reject linguistic uniformity and cultural conformity. There is a deep tension in such a situation. It demands that we live beyond our need for self-expression. It demands an affirmation of diversity that depends upon a maturity of understanding which is rare among men. It calls upon sources of vitality and purpose beyond the purely material. 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.

Canada was built and it has been nurtured by such a vision. Canadians will continue to live in a country formed by that vision to the extent they are willing and determined to remain true to the commitment to personal freedom and dignity which is its foundation.

## Chapter 2

**Language  
and Perspectives  
on Canadian History**





The European settlement of what is now Canada began in the sixteenth century with the fishing stations established on the Newfoundland and Cape Breton Island coasts by the French and British. 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. From the settlement at Quebec, French fur traders and explorers moved out across the continent as far west as the Saskatchewan River, north to Hudson Bay and south to the Gulf of Mexico.

There was always a tension in the life of the colony of New France, established in the St. Lawrence River valley after the founding of Quebec, between the need to consolidate and enlarge the population of the settlements along the river, on the one hand, and the lure of the fur trade, which beckoned the adventurous from a life of domesticity, on the other. The population of New France never kept pace with the growth of the British colonies that were settled in much larger numbers to the south. The result was that, 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 that enabled the British to consolidate their earlier victory at Quebec and to go on to take Montreal. In the negotiations that followed, the French government preferred to cede the colony of New France, rather than Guadeloupe, to the British.

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 have followed, it is safe to say, it has given enduring problems. We can however perhaps begin to see that our view of the "Conquest" can imprison us, for its sweet, sad music has all too often lulled us into losing our present and our future in our past.

In the hundred years that followed, the British attempts to deal with the problems of government in Quebec alternated between two approaches. One was based on a policy of generosity and tolerance toward the 65,000 French who had settled in the St. Lawrence valley. The other was a policy designed to assimilate them.

English and French speaking Canadians have often had differing perspectives of the events of Canada's history. The purpose of this chapter is to set out some of these perspectives concerning events which have had a substantial influence on language issues in Canada and the relationship of the two linguistic communities. This chapter is not, therefore, in any sense intended to be a history of Canada. It is designed to enable Canadians to be aware that there are different outlooks and emotional attitudes concerning the history of the country that have an impact on our ability to deal with the issues of language and our two linguistic communities.

The 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.

The 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 in 1840, which reunited Upper and Lower Canada in an attempt, similar to that envisaged by the Proclamation, to assimilate the French population in a larger British mass. It was a policy that 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.

This attitude to the French prevailed over the protests of the British commercial community that moved into Quebec and Montreal following the "Conquest". They wished to see British

institutions fully installed in the newly acquired country. They felt, quite naturally, more at ease with such institutions and they also considered it to be their right and to be in their best interest to have them. They found it entirely unacceptable, in this now-British country, that matters of property and civil rights should be determined by French law and that land should be held under the French seigneurial system. They wished to have the English common law and the English system of freehold land tenure established throughout the country.

This point of view was strongly reinforced by the United Empire Loyalists who arrived in Quebec from the United States at the time of the American Revolution. They added their voices to the demands for British institutions. This culminated, in 1791, in the division of Quebec into Upper and Lower Canada, which enabled the British common law and land tenure system to be introduced into what is now Ontario while Quebec retained its civil law and seigneurial land system. This constitutional arrangement embedded in the institutional structures of Canada that essential duality of the country which has remained its strongest characteristic.

The British business community in Montreal, which had become after the "Conquest" the dominant economic power in the country, continued to believe that the French must be assimilated. Their views heavily influenced the report of Lord Durham following the

rebellions of 1837 and 1838 in Upper and Lower Canada. The Durham Report, finding the French Canadians to be "uninstructed, inactive and unprogressive", concluded that they had been too greatly appeased and that a policy of assimilation must be instituted. English laws, language and institutions were to be given sole status.

Thus, in 1840, the Act of Union established a single province out of Upper and Lower Canada (renamed Canada West and Canada East respectively), thereby creating the conditions in which it was intended the French speaking minority would be absorbed by the English speaking majority.

The French vigorously resisted the purpose of the Act. They remained firmly attached to their civil law and to their faith. Furthermore, in the new legislature, they were soon able, with the cooperation of their parliamentary allies in Canada West, to nullify the measures repressing the French language and institutions contained in the Act of Union. 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.

These events effectively ended the direct involvement of the British government in questions of policy regarding the future of the French in Canada. With the achievement of responsible government in 1849, the British and French in the Province of Canada were left to deal with their own problems of language, religion and education. These problems were the cause of increasing difficulties within the government of the Province. It became virtually impossible to obtain decisions on any matter because of regional differences aggravated by British-French disagreements. This situation came to a head in the early 1860s.

Efforts to find a new, more workable constitutional structure constantly foundered on the fact that Canada East and Canada West had equal representation in the Legislature of the Province of Canada. For many British Canadians, Canada was a British country and it was not only unacceptable, but incomprehensible, that the French minority should be in a position to distort or to frustrate the interests and aspirations of the majority. Many of these British Canadians favoured a unitary system of government based on "representation by population" that would be decisive in a whole range of matters, particularly though not exclusively economic, in which they were primarily interested. They were unwilling to continue to be "dominated" by a minority.

The French were concerned that such a system would engulf them and lead to assimilation. They wanted a system that would enable decisions concerning their religion, education and civil institutions to be made by a government in which they would have a majority. They would thereby have the means to maintain and safeguard their own identity.

Confederation did not result from this situation alone. Other factors, the desire for economic growth and expansion across the continent, transportation needs, the growth of population, the outbreak of the American Civil War and the subsequent threats of invasion, all played their part. But the resolution of the political deadlock in the Province of Canada was the key to any possibility of dealing with these factors on any solid basis.

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. It was believed that this would safeguard strongly felt local and regional needs and aspirations, particularly those of the French, as well as those of the Maritime colonies, while yet enabling a coherent central government to come to grips with important matters of defence, transportation and the development of the vast land area between the Province of Canada and the young colony of

British Columbia on the Pacific coast. The British North America Act embodied this solution and contained, for the first time, explicit constitutional guarantees for the English and French languages in the Parliament and federal courts of Canada and in the Province of Quebec where the educational rights of the Protestant minority were also guaranteed.

It was a solution designed to deal with conflicting realities. It was based on good will and good faith especially between the French and British of the Province of Canada who united together to bring it about. It was inspired by an unwillingness to permit the will of the majority to be imposed on the French Canadian minority. The long series of events that occurred during the period 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 determined, not only the conditions in which the French could exist and grow as a fully functioning community, but 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. When the province was created, all the rest of what had previously been the property of the Hudson's Bay Company, as well as all of the northwestern territory of Canada not included in the province, was given the name "North-West Territories". The population of these territories was almost evenly divided between English and French speaking people and here, too, equal status of the two languages was recognized by statute and provision made for denominational schools.

Nowhere has this concept of the equality of status of the French and British in Confederation been better stated than by Canada's first Prime Minister, Sir John A. Macdonald, in a speech in 1890:

*I have no accord with the desire expressed in some quarters that by any mode whatever there should be an attempt made to oppress the one language or to render it inferior to the other: I believe that would be impossible if it were tried, and it would be foolish and wicked if it were possible. The statement that has been made so often that this is a conquered country is à propos de rien. Whether it was conquered or ceded, we have a constitution now under which all British subjects are in a position of absolute equality, having equal rights of every kind of language, of religion, of property and of*

*person. There is no paramount race in this country; there is no conquered race in this country; we are all British subjects and those who are not English are none the less British subjects on that account.*

Confederation freed the new Canadians from political uncertainty and confusion, and their attention turned to economic issues, especially transportation and the opening of the West. 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.

The first sign of this occurred when the province of New Brunswick passed legislation in 1877 limiting denominational educational rights. But a more dramatic series of events was taking shape in the Northwest Territories. Here the insecurity of the French speaking Métis, faced with an influx of settlers who were mainly English speaking, led to the Northwest Rebellion of 1885 and the hanging of Louis Riel. These events deeply shocked and angered French speaking Canadians and contributed to a renewal of the kinds of conflict that Confederation had promised to settle.

The renewed conflict centred on the question of the rights of the French and Catholic minorities in Manitoba and the Northwest Territories. Led by D'Alton McCarthy of the province of Ontario, who believed that a Canadian nation could not survive on the basis of two languages and cultures, a movement sprang up for the abolition of the French language outside the province of Quebec. The province of Manitoba was the first to respond to these sentiments. Immigration into the province had been heavily English speaking since the province was established and, in 1890, fed by McCarthy's rhetoric, the Manitoba legislature struck down all guarantees for the French language and state-supported denominational education.

McCarthy's campaign also led to legislation that set the stage for the elimination of the legal status of French in the Northwest Territories. Thus, within twenty-five years after Confederation, the use of French was virtually excluded in the West. French speaking Canadians, having entered into Confederation on the basis of the equality of which Macdonald had spoken so eloquently, were embittered and dismayed by events they could only understand as a betrayal. 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.

The Boer War, coming at the end of these profoundly disturbing events for French Canadians', manifested a new sentiment for Empire in Great Britain to which British Canadians responded with fervour. French Canadians, who quite naturally did not share this fervour, were concerned and dismayed at the prospect of becoming involved in wars they viewed as being in British rather than Canadian interests. The imperialist sentiment continued virtually unabated in Britain and its Empire into the early years of the twentieth century. In 1914, the First World War began and Britain and her overseas colonies were soon drawn into it.

French speaking Canadians' concern and impatience with what seemed to them to be remote, European-inspired wars, and Canada's participation in them, exploded in the bitterness of the conscription crisis of 1917, a crisis that was aggravated by the complete elimination of bilingual schools in the province of Manitoba in 1916 and the sharply restricted use of French in the public school system of the province of Ontario in virtue of Regulation 17. French speaking Canadians questioned why they should fight in a war whose supporters were prepared to deny them equal rights in their own country.

As a result of all these events, French speaking Canada increasingly sought refuge within its own self-contained community. The bleakness of the Depression years only seemed to add to its isolation in a country where deprivation

and want laid waste the lives and hopes of a generation of English and French speaking Canadians alike. The Depression was closely followed by the Second World War and another conscription crisis that opened the sore of 1917 all over again.

The Second World War also brought the emergence of Canada as one of the significant industrial nations of the world. There followed a continuing development of the resources of the country, relying to a large degree on direct investment by American corporations, which has given them substantial control of major areas of Canadian economic life. This development has led to an affluence, with some continuing areas of poverty, which has enabled Canadians in general to enjoy one of the highest standards of living in the world.

All of these forces tended to emphasize the role of English speaking Canadians and led progressively to a situation where the underlying duality of Canada was almost entirely lost to view. 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. English speaking Canadians, vigorously involved in the economic development of the country and concerned with Canada's role in the world, were motivated increasingly by the shaping influences in the Western World.

This chronicle of the relations between the equal partners of Confederation contains little to have inspired a people, threatened with assimilation by overwhelming forces of numbers and geography, with confidence that they could expect to be dealt with on a basis of concern and equality. The feeling of betrayal and a deepening sense of insecurity led increasingly to irritation and impatience among French speaking Canadians.

There was present at the same time among English speaking Canadians another factor of incalculable importance: their almost total lack of knowledge of, or simple indifference to, French speaking Canada, whose communities appeared to them to be rigid, closed and unwilling or unable to participate in the continuing development of the country. English speaking Canadians, perceiving this unwillingness or inability, grew accustomed to a virtually unchallenged domination of the economic life of the country, and believed that French speaking Canadians did not aspire either to take part in or to contribute to that life. For them, the French community in Canada was rural-oriented and church-dominated and wished to remain so.

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 the province of Quebec. These changes were particularly significant in the field of education, which was secularized almost overnight, and in an almost universal abandonment of the institutional Church as the major focal point of the way of life of French speaking Canadians.

It became increasingly apparent that the responsible leaders of the French speaking majority of the province would insist on changes hitherto the subject mainly of election slogans. These leaders rejected the myth of French Canada as an agrarian, church-oriented society. They manifested a new sense of confidence in the ability of French speaking Canadians to participate fully in all aspects of the rapidly emerging technological world, and they helped to provide the conditions in which the French speaking community in Quebec would blossom into a dynamic new reality. At the same time, they became more and more critical of the concentration of economic power and influence in the hands of English speaking Canadians, particularly in the province of Quebec.

All of these changes in the province of Quebec were taking place at a time when a less dramatic but no less important transformation was becoming apparent within English speaking Canada. The "English" with whom the French had to deal down to as late as the Second World War were dominated by an outlook and lifestyle that looked predominantly to Britain for their inspiration. Canada was a part of the British Empire and the fortunes of the Empire and the "Mother Country" were of great significance to many English Canadians.

Ever since the beginning of the twentieth century, however, growing numbers of people of diverse cultural origins, from European countries as well as the Far East, had settled in Canada, particularly in the West. This settlement was significantly reinforced in the 1950s when increasing numbers of New Canadians made their homes in the large metropolitan areas of the country. Although such immigrants became English speaking and loyal to the Crown and to Canada, they remained culturally distinct. Their attitudes and lifestyles reflected the richness of their cultural diversity rather than the attitudes and outlook of the French or British communities in Canada.

The result of this transformation is that Canada has moved, in the short span of years since Confederation, from a country that was essentially dual in its nature to one that is increasingly diverse in outlook and lifestyle. Canadians from Western Canada particularly, have

grown up in a tradition that views Canada as an English speaking country composed of many cultural groups. The diversity of Canada is more readily apparent to them than the duality that stems from the earliest beginnings of Canada's history, and is basic to the ongoing life of the country as a whole.

Since the Second World War, there have been significant developments, particularly in the cultural field, that have had the effect of strengthening and preserving the French speaking community of Canada. The advent of television in the late 1950s broadened the role of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, which had been established by the federal government in 1936. The French language radio and television networks, which now extend across Canada, have played a role of the first importance in the remarkable development of the French speaking community, particularly in the province of Quebec, into the dynamic and flourishing reality of today.

The Royal Commission on Arts, Letters and Sciences in Canada, created in 1949, gave an important place to the development of the culture of the French speaking community in Canada. The Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism was established in 1963 with the particular aim of inquiring into the existing state of the French and English languages and the two linguistic communities in Canada and recommending steps to enable them to develop, within the cultural diversity of Canada, on a basis of equality. The Official Languages Act of 1969 and the official languages programs in the federal institutions of government carried into effect many of the recommendations of this Commission. This has resulted in the transformation of the federal public service, in less than ten years, from a predominantly English language organization into one that reflects more and more the French speaking community of the country, as well as one that is able to serve all Canadians in the official language of their choice.

Other federal organizations, the National Film Board, the Canadian Film Development Corporation, the Canada Council and the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission, have also contributed significantly to the new sense of confident identity of the French speaking community in Canada. They testify to a willingness by all Canadians, represented by Members of Parliament from every part of the country, to take initiatives and to make adjustments in order to enable French speaking Canadians to participate fully in the country they played a leading role in founding. They are also a testimonial to the flexibility and adaptability of the political processes of Canada and its governmental institutions.

Canada is the result of the labours and aspirations of a long line of men and women who, ever since 1759, have sought to find a way to live together in spite of cultural, linguistic and religious differences as profound and divisive as any in the history of man. They sought for accommodations that would enable two people, thrown together by the meeting of ancient forces of discord and battle, to live in peace, security and mutual respect. The legacy of their work is the common heritage of all Canadians: a level of personal freedom which is second to none in the world.

The large measure of personal freedom that exists in Canada is in no small part attributable to the shared or common institutions that have been evolved by English and French speaking Canadians. Those institutions have been modelled on other institutions but they are Canadian institutions. They are the result of the common work of Canadians and they belong to all Canadians.

Beyond all the tumultuous disagreements and forces of division that are inherent in any country where two significant linguistic groups and many cultural groups must learn to live together, these institutions have been built on the goodwill and tolerance of English and French speaking Canadians. These Canadians have believed that, by working together in mutual respect and good faith, they could create a country stronger than any of its individual parts because it would overcome the forces of division in a freedom that transcends cultural, religious and linguistic enmity.

Diversity has been the touchstone of the Canadian experience. It is inherent in the vast geography of the country. It has been part of man's experience of living in the country since earliest times, for the Native peoples who first roamed it were diverse in tribe and tongue and in their modes of life and thought. The expression of this reality reaches back to the words of Sir Georges-Étienne Cartier in the Confederation debates:

*In our own Federation we shall have Catholic and Protestant, English, French, Irish, and Scotch, and each by his efforts and his success will increase the prosperity and glory of the new confederacy. I view the diversity of races in British North America in this way: we are of different races, not for the purpose of warring upon each other but in order to compete and emulate for the general welfare. We cannot do away with the distinctions of race. We cannot legislate for the disappearance of the French Canadians from American soil, but British and French Canadians alike can appreciate and understand their position relative to each other . . . It is a benefit rather than otherwise that we have a diversity of races.*

That reality still speaks to us in the words of Paul-Emile, Cardinal Léger, who said in 1967 at a University of Alberta Convocation:

*The diversity of Canadians has forced them to make concessions and history has forced them to be tolerant of others' views. It is a lesson which many of us have at times been unwilling to learn. We have learned it, for we are still developing and the mere fact of our continued existence is proof that we have practiced this virtue better than we know. Let us look forward to the future with confidence and zest, not with apathy and bitterness. We have it in our hands to build, not to destroy. Please God we all, and especially the young, will have the courage and the foresight to build this Canada into a land where poverty and unjust social and racial divisions may end, and in which men of every race will recognize each other as brothers.*

There are many Canadians in all parts of Canada who, like those English and French speaking Canadians who have built the common institutions of this country, cherish the two linguistic communities of the country and rejoice in the diversity that is the characteristic of each. Those 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.

# Chapter 3

**Language  
and Canadian Unity**



flecting the distances between people in terms of space, of expression and of outlook on life. It is therefore, especially again in a country the size of Canada, a fragile and tenuous sense.

One of the factors that tend to aggravate the tenuous and fragile nature of our unity is our failure to perceive the complexity of this country and its problems. We tend to define the country in terms of our own often limited experience and perspective. We lose sight of the vast variety of the country and the rich diversity of viewpoint and perception that other Canadians present.

There is an impatience with complexity that Canadians share 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 forgo so simple an approach. The truth is that for many of our problems there are no simple answers, only continuing and varying shades of meaning. Not only do we live in a complex country. We live in a world growing almost daily more complex as it becomes increasingly more interrelated. And the need for tolerance, understanding, accommodation and respect have never been greater.

The inability of Canadians to express a single sense of their common identity does not stem from an inferior capacity to express those ideas and emotions

which bind men together. We need only look to the literature and painting of Canadian artists to ascertain that this is so. Canadian identity steadfastly refuses to be expressed in monolithic terms. Canadians reject efforts to paper over their differences with glowing phrases of homogeneity. They cherish their differences and they refuse to give them up. It is not, therefore, a failure of thought or imagination that inhibits the expression of a sense of uniform identity in Canada. It is a deliberate act of the mind and heart.

It is for this reason that national unity in Canada cannot exist without a deep and abiding affirmation of personal, cultural and regional differences. It is our differences that we treasure most about our country, about ourselves, about existence itself. We treasure difference because it is the expression of individuality and personal freedom. We treasure difference in those we love and those who are our friends, because, without it, we leave ourselves open to a self-love that is, finally, self-destructive. The expression and the acceptance of difference is the the preeminent mark of civilized man. It enables him to live in the world among his fellow men without fear and to express himself creatively for the benefit of all.

The official languages policy is intimately related to the continuing existence of Canada as a single, united country. The acceptance and implementation of the policy will not alone ensure the continuing unity of Canada. But national unity cannot exist unless the reality to which the policy responds is recognized and dealt with.

The purpose of this chapter is to talk about national unity in Canada and to identify some of the elements, past and present, that constitute the essential foundation of the country.

Canada's existence as a single country is the reflection and the result of the willingness and determination of people to live together in a shared community of belonging. In a country the size of Canada especially, the shared sense of community is constantly shifting, re-

It is the acceptance and affirmation of personal differences that enables Canadians to live creatively in a country whose very existence is dependent upon a rejection of linguistic uniformity and cultural conformity. If Canadians sometimes seem to have difficulty in expressing the special nature of their country, it is because the rejection of uniformity and conformity requires, not an exaggerated sense of nationalism, but a reasoned sense of balance and proportion. And it is that reasoned sense of balance and proportion in life that Canadians most respect and treasure.

Our differences can, of course, be themselves the cause of disunity. If on the one hand we must accept the differences in others, we must at the same time be willing to restrain ourselves from insisting that what makes us different is the only thing that is of importance and that it must be given unusual or special recognition.

These attitudes toward personal, cultural and regional differences are at the base of any possibility of living together in the country. Where there is a significant group speaking a different language, living, as in Canada, predominantly in one region of the country, achieving acceptance of that particular difference throughout the country is difficult. It is, however, crucial.

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. But we have to be able to see beyond ourselves in order to identify such goals.

Confederation in 1867 was the product of factors such as these. At the base there was an accommodation of the differences between French and English in the Province of Canada, differences that, as we have seen, had virtually brought government to a standstill. This accommodation was the essential foundation on which the other, very practical goals of Confederation could be attained: economic growth, the development of railway systems competitive with those of the United States, the opening of the West and the establishing of a vast country from the Atlantic to the Pacific, the absorption of population growth, and the unity that would be particularly essential in the event of aggression, which the United States was then threatening.

These goals, achieved with the participation of Canadians from the original founding provinces of Confederation and, subsequently, from the provinces and territories added to them, were the common work of Canadians and they belong to all Canadians. This country was not conceived in blood or born in

high rhetoric but it was achieved through patience, courage and tough, hard work. In spite of the images we have of each other today in this country, we should remember that the forbears of the great majority of us from coast to coast worked long and hard to open, settle and develop this country.

The factors that 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. Its cultural vigour has particular impact on English speaking Canada, but the language and culture of French speaking Canada are heavily influenced by it, too. Finally, we have similar conditions of political uncertainty and confusion, exacerbated by the proposal of the present government of the province of Quebec to separate from Canada and form an independent country.

In addition to factors similar to those motivating Confederation, we are confronted by other factors in Canada, such as 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 which have an effect, not only in Canada, but in the world: pollution, and its impact on our environment; competition for energy supplies, accompanied by the long-term need to find an easily used, economic replacement for oil; problems of food production and distribution; problems of the distribution of wealth among the rich and poor nations; the 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 that motivated the original union in 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.

Canada has been an independent country for many decades now. Because of the vast distances in Canada, its sparse population, and profound local and regional attachments, the sense of independence is more nearly related to personal and local or regional realities than to the country as a whole. And that is a great danger, for we have not tested, and we do not have the means to test, except by speculation, the degree to which our unity as one country provides the conditions of our extraordinarily large degree of personal freedom and local and regional independence.

Our difficulty in coalescing into a unified country is by no means the result alone of English-French differences. We are divided, for instance, by our differing perceptions of the relative roles that the central and the provincial governments should play. We are divided by economic disparities and the means to overcome them. We are divided by deeply felt regional differences and the means to heal and to accommodate them. But our energies and our attention cannot be given fully to the resolution of these problems because we are hindered 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 that will enable them to live satisfying and fulfilling lives within a country dedicated to common purposes?

One way of putting this fundamental question is to ask whether the division of Canada into two or more political entities is an acceptable way of resolving our language issues. If it is, then there is not much point in a continuing debate about language. There are other such questions. Would the fragmentation of Canada give Canadians more personal freedom, or less? Would it give them more economic security, or less? Would it give them more cultural security, or less? Would it give Canadians of the future a better structural basis for their lives, or a poorer one? Would it put Canadians in a better or worse position to deal with, and to contribute to a solution of, the world's problems?

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, accepting, even rejoicing, in those differences. It means that Canadians must accept and, whenever they can, create the conditions in which those differences are welcomed and can flourish, even if it means sacrificing some of their own convenience or accommodating their own point of view to that of others. Only individuals, not governments, can make these kinds of choices.

In meeting the challenge that now confronts them, Canadians are not without values from their past and from their present on which to draw. Canada does not exist in a spiritual vacuum. Canada exists today as a unified federal country because its people have cherished and continue to cherish the human values of compassion, tolerance and justice.

We live in an era of history where the liberation of men from the constricting forces of oppressive societies has often been achieved by revolution. These revolutions have often stirred the hearts and souls of men by setting forth principles and values of existence which have a universal appeal. In such a climate of courageous words and daring deeds, Canada has sometimes seemed lost in immobility and speechlessness.

But Canada has evolved into a country in which Canadians participate in a state of personal freedom and of national, provincial, regional and local independence unrivalled anywhere in the world. It has done so in conditions of relative internal stability and tranquillity that are so unusual and so remarkable in the world that we look upon that achievement as if it were a common, everyday occurrence. In a world where these advances have often come at the point of the sword, some look upon Canada as a country without a soul.

But the advances of man achieved through peace and stability, through hard work and tough negotiations, through ingenuity and imagination, through accommodation and tolerance, through generosity and sensitivity are every bit as heroic, are indeed, in the perspective of human civilization, more heroic than those achieved through force of arms. They are heroic because they draw upon the human spirit rather than human force, upon human compassion and decency, upon a view of the world that is every bit as cohesive and ennobling as any conceived in armed conflict. They are heroic because they speak to mankind of the fundamental values of human existence.

To some, the means by which Canada has achieved and maintained its unity as a country may appear prosaic. To others they may seem idealistic. But, in either case, we should recognize the very practical value of these means which have contributed to a social climate

whose importance for the economic prosperity of Canada cannot be underestimated.

Canada is both a part of us all and apart from us all. We can choose to do away with Canada for, as individuals and as groups and regions, we can no doubt learn to live without her. But Canada can teach us, one generation in a long stream of human history, what our forbears and, indeed the world around us, so clearly have perceived: that Canadians, all Canadians, in spite of some very real economic and other difficulties, are among the most fortunate of the peoples of the earth, that what Canadians share of the human spirit and of the human experience far outweighs in value whatever we believe divides us, and that Canada is an example to the world of a country grounded in common sense and in peace and brotherhood and good will among men.

## Chapter 4

**Principles  
of the Official  
Languages Policy  
of Canada**



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 the province of 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)

It is the conviction of the federal government that Canada cannot continue to exist as a single country unless the English and French languages are accepted and recognized 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.

	POPULATION	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 TERRITORY	18,385	450	2.4
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES	34,810	1,160	3.3

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

It is hardly to be doubted that 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. To accept a Canada divided on linguistic and cultural lines would be to deny the efforts and aspirations of those Canadians who have, throughout our history, valued a new kind of country based on respect for the differences of others.

Such concepts are unacceptable because they would effectively deny to Canadians the heritage of one country. They would deny to the population of the province of Quebec a country to which they have as much claim as any other Canadian, at the same time as they would deny to those other Canadians a part of the country to which they have an equal claim. The government believes that such a situation, whether created by separation or by dividing the country on linguistic lines, should be rejected by all Canadians wherever they may live.

Finally, such concepts are unacceptable to the federal government because of its responsibility for the preservation and

strengthening of the French language and the culture of French speaking Canadians — a responsibility that it is unwilling to forgo. The federal government has for many years contributed significantly to the encouragement and the protection of the French language and culture in Canada through its governmental and cultural organizations. Federal political organizations have also made an important contribution. These organizations are among the major bulwarks for the continuing development of the language and culture of French speaking Canadians and it would be irresponsible to discard them. They provide, within the context of the federal form of government in which the province of Quebec participates, a major source of protection and encouragement for the French language and culture, not only in Canada, but in North America and the rest of the world.

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 that, 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.

Because language is such an important aspect of the life of any country, the adoption and implementation of a language policy requires the acceptance of its citizens and the effective participation of all governments. This is all the more the case in a federal country such as Canada where the authority to make laws relating to language matters is divided between different levels of government. Consequently, the principles of the official languages policy affect not only individual Canadians but the provincial governments of the country as well as the federal government itself.

It is the purpose of these principles to give concrete expression to the equality of status of English and French as the official languages of Canada. 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.

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**These principles are:**

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

6  
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.

A discussion of these principles will be the subject of the following chapters. Those relating to individual Canadians will be discussed in chapter 5, those relating to the role of the provinces will be discussed in chapter 7 and those concerning the federal institutions of government will be discussed in chapter 6.

The remainder of this chapter will discuss the meaning of the concept of equality of status of the English and French languages as the official languages of Canada.

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 the 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 for two special groups. It is a policy that takes into account the basic linguistic reality of the country.

Equality of status of the French and English languages does not mean that they are equal only up to a certain point. Nor, on the other hand, does it mean that they are equal in their practical, everyday application everywhere, all the time, regardless of actual needs and conditions. When the government speaks of "equality of status" it means an equality that takes into account these apparently contradictory statements.

Equality of status has to be related to the concrete realities of the country. It is a fact that certain parts of the country are predominantly English speaking and contain only small French speaking minorities, while other parts of the country are predominantly French speaking and contain only small English speaking minorities. In some parts of Canada, the minority groups, whether English speaking or French speaking, are larger: for instance, in the National Capital Region, the province of New Brunswick, the City of Montreal, and Northern Ontario.

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 in the sense that the French and English languages would be spread evenly across every part of Canada.

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. It came into common use as a means to describe the same realities of two languages that are the subject of this paper. But gradually, through misuse and overuse, it became associated with a perception that all Canadians, federal public servants first, were to become bilingual everywhere in the country.

To state the situation in these terms is to demonstrate that it is ridiculous. Equality of status does not mean that every Canadian, or even most Canadians, should or will become bilingual. It is of course desirable that, as stated in the fifth principle and as will be discussed further in chapter 5, many Canadians choose to learn both languages. But the concept of equality of status does not mean that the French language will be imposed in Corner Brook or Annapolis or Brandon or Grande Prairie or Prince Rupert or in any other town or village or city in Canada. It does not mean that the English language will be imposed in St. Hyacinthe or Roberval or Sturgeon Falls or in any other town or village or city in Canada.

It is to be expected that the provinces of Alberta and British Columbia, 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, and will be seen to reflect, the heritage and culture of its French speaking community as well as the heritage and culture of the English speaking community. Obviously this will not be achieved by means of a mathematical calculation, though an equivalence must be attained. Nor will it be achieved by a mixture of English and French speaking Canadians into an unrecognizable linguistic mass. Nor, finally, will equality of status be secured by the application of systems, although a systematic approach to the opportunities and problems this duality presents will be needed.

The status of equality of the English and French languages 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. English is the language of common use of 67% of Canadians. French is the language of common use of 26% of the population. French is the only language spoken by 18% of the population, more than the combined populations of the provinces of Alberta, Manitoba and Saskatchewan, while 13% of the population speak both English and French.

These figures do not express the same reality in the West as they do in the East since the majority of the French speaking population is concentrated in the East. Whatever the historical reasons for these figures, and some of those reasons have been set out earlier in this statement, they speak eloquently, even conclusively, of the need for equality of status of the two languages if a Canada which includes the French speaking population is to continue to exist.

Equality of status does not mean, either, that only the English and French languages 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. It is neither the purpose nor the intention of the official languages policy to interfere with or in any way prevent their continued use.

The federal government has, on many occasions, expressed its views on the importance of the cultural — not to mention the social, political and economic — contribution to the country of Canadians of origins other than British or French. It has done so again in chapter 1. The government has developed policies and programs to give practical effect to these views which are not, of course, the subject of this statement. Nevertheless, the government believes it important to make reference to them here because of their obvious relationship to the matters under discussion.

Nothing in this statement should be taken to imply a change in the policies and programs of the federal government concerning these Canadians or its view that the cultural diversity of Canada has played a significant role in its past and will continue to do so in the future. The freedom of all Canadians is linked to this reality. If the culture and identity of English speaking Canadians are sometimes the object of concern, the cause of this concern is certainly not the existence in Canada of groups springing from cultures that are not British in origin.

There does exist among some Canadians a sense of insecurity about the future of the language and culture of French speaking Canadians. But the federal government believes that the vigorous participation of other cultural groups in the life of the French speaking community of Canada will serve to enrich and strengthen that community.

Finally, the government is also of the view that initiatives designed to assist people from diverse ethnic origins to retain their mother tongue are entirely consistent with the official languages policy and, indeed, can make an important contribution to its success.



## Chapter 5

**Official  
Languages and  
Individual Canadians**



**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 first two of the principles of the official languages policy relating particularly to individual Canadians are:

The first of these principles affirms the basic right of each Canadian to live the lifestyle of his or her choice within his or her personal world. In consequence, every Canadian can use his or her own language or any language or, for that matter, no language at all in his or her own personal life and pursuits. The official languages policy does not interfere with such matters. What govern here are entirely personal and inter-personal factors. If you meet an attractive member of the other sex who doesn't speak your language, you may want to learn that person's language but it won't be because of the official languages policy.

The second of the principles states the status of the English and French languages as the official languages of Canada. It has been the objective of the earlier chapters of this statement to explain the reasons these languages are given equality of status in Canada.

Furthermore, chapter 4 explained the meaning of the term "equality of status". No further explanation of this principle will therefore be undertaken here.

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. For others who cannot be so directly involved, there is still a very important way to respond.

The policy can briefly be said to embrace both a concept and a commitment to work towards the attainment of that concept. The policy embodies 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 and affirm these actions by the federal government. They can 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.

Above all, individual Canadians can contribute to the attainment of the policy by accepting their fellow Canadians who speak the other official language with open minds and open hearts.

The third principle adopted by the government that relates particularly to individual Canadians is:

**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.**

It is the purpose of this principle to underline the importance of creating the 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. The justification for such a principle arises from the facts of the situation. In any country in which the circumstances call for an official languages policy, it would be irresponsible not to encourage individuals of either language group to learn the language of the other. Language is not the only means, but it remains, if mastered, the best means, to understand those who speak it, to enter into their perception of existence and to share

their world. It is a means to enable us to understand and to respect our fellow human beings.

Language is not, of course, the only means to understand another worldview. Learning another language with the degree of ease which enables a person to move freely in the world of that language is not always possible. This results from a variety of causes, some personal in nature, others arising from circumstances. If a choice must be made between lessons in a language that will produce a minimal acquaintance with that language, and a knowledge of the world of that language that can be gained through translations of works which depict that world, it would seem preferable to choose the latter course. By the same token, lessons in a language which give to a person the capacity to understand what is said or written will often be entirely sufficient to enable that person to work effectively in everyday life with individuals who speak and write the other language.

It is within the context of this perception of the role of language that this principle is stated. The government believes that it is its obligation, in stating the official languages policy, to enunciate such a principle and to work for its implementation. If Canadians from the two linguistic communities are to live together in increasing mutual respect and understanding, in a country increasingly based on these values which are the mark of all civilized societies, they must be encouraged in their voluntary decisions to learn at first hand about each other through the knowledge of each other's language.

There are significant personal advantages to be gained from a knowledge of the two official languages of Canada. They are two of the richest and most widely used languages in the Western world. An acquaintance with them opens to the individual an understanding of man that reaches back through the Latin language to man's earliest efforts at self-understanding and self-expression. They embody some of the most profound attempts to state the nature of man and his relation to his fellow men. The individual at home in these two languages has an incomparable heritage on which to draw.

Such an individual has at the same time greater opportunities available to him 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.

People with a knowledge of the world represented by the other official language have a particularly important role to play in the common institutions of Canada. A sensitive awareness of the two official language communities and their needs and aspirations must be a continuing goal of the federal institutions of government. It is therefore important to emphasize the need for a group of Canadians who will voluntarily become the means by which the two communities can express themselves completely and harmoniously within those institutions. It must consequently be an objective of government policy relating to official languages to encourage as many Canadians as possible who wish to do so to acquire a knowledge of the other official language.

Personal bilingualism is much more prevalent in the French speaking community in Canada than it is in the English speaking community. This is apparent in the federal public service, but it is likewise the situation in the country as a whole. 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.

The result of this is two fold. In the first place it 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, gradually relegating it to a secondary and diminishing role. Perhaps no other single factor so threatens the French language in North America. A language which is not used in the everyday affairs of a country, particularly in the centres of power in the country, is not a language which can long survive outside its use in purely personal affairs. The incentive to use and retain it, even among those whose mother tongue it is, ceases to exist. If French is not a language of common use, if it is not, in particular, a language of power, used in Canada by English speaking as well as French speaking Canadians, its future is seriously threatened in North America.

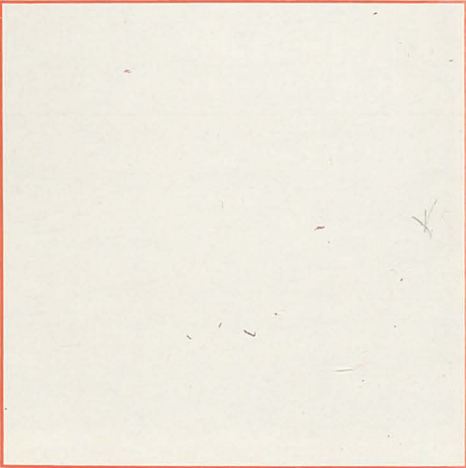
It is this reasoning which has led many French speaking Canadians to the conclusion that bilingualism in Canada is a Trojan horse. They feel that, because French Canadians bear the burden of bilingualism, they thus reinforce the use of the English language in Canada and contribute to the ultimate demise 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. However pessimistic this approach may appear to be to some Canadians, the real nature of the dilemma which leads to this approach should not be underestimated.

It will be seen that the need to balance the burden of personal bilingualism in Canada is an urgent one in the context of the issues which now confront the country. The government therefore believes it important to renew its efforts to encourage voluntary efforts, by English speaking Canadians particularly, to acquire a working knowledge of the other official language. The government believes that a goal of significant proportions of Canadians of both linguistic groups who are able to speak both official languages is realistic and reasonable. It will work towards this goal in cooperation with all Canadians who will respond to its challenge and with the provincial governments throughout the country.

## Chapter 6

**Official  
Languages and  
the Programs  
of the Federal  
Government**





have equality of status in the federal institutions of Canada, and that those who speak those languages would have the opportunity to participate on an equitable basis in the common or federal institutions of the country. Beginning with the statement made by Prime Minister Pearson in the House of Commons in 1966, the government concerned itself with the goal of achieving a federal public service that would reflect the character and heritage of the French speaking population of Canada as well as the character and heritage of the English speaking population of the country.

In 1969, the Official Languages Act was passed by Parliament with the support of all parties. Its purpose was to ensure that Parliament and the federal institutions of government would reflect the dual nature of Canada. This purpose was clearly set out in Section 2 of the Act, which declared:

**The English and French languages are the official languages of Canada for all purposes of the Parliament and Government of Canada, and possess and enjoy equality of status and equal rights and privileges as to their use in all the institutions of the Parliament and Government of Canada.**

The Act continued by specifying in detail the practical implications of this declaration of intention. 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. To this end, the Act required that:

- **all documents intended for the public that originate from any federal institution (that is, Parliament or any federal department or agency of government as well as any Crown corporation, court, quasi-judicial or administrative body established by an Act of Parliament) be published in both official languages;**
- **every federal institution provide available services to, and communicate with, the public in both languages in the National Capital Region, at its head office and in its principal offices in federal bilingual districts as well as in other locations where it is feasible and there is a demand;**
- **every federal institution provide services to the travelling public in both languages except where there is no, or irregular, demand for it;**
- **federal courts and quasi-judicial bodies ensure that witnesses be heard in the official language of their choice.**

Many decisions taken over the years by various Canadian governments have recognized the importance of the English and French languages and the English and French speaking communities in Canada. However, following publication of the findings of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, the federal government recognized the need to ensure in a concrete and systematic way that the English and French languages would

Provision was also made in the Act for the establishment of federal bilingual districts in order to determine, among other things, where available federal services were to be provided in both languages. In fact, the federal government is now providing services in both official languages in virtually all areas of the country that might be so designated.

Finally, the Act provided for a Commissioner of Official Languages whose duty was to ensure recognition of the status of the official languages and compliance with the spirit and intent of the Act. He was empowered to conduct investigations in private and to report, first, to the Clerk of the Privy Council and Deputy Minister concerned and, ultimately, to Parliament, if there was a failure to give recognition to the status of a language or to comply with the spirit and intent of the Act.

In June 1973, Parliament adopted, again with all-party support, a resolution that set out a series of principles designed to achieve the purposes of the Act in the federal institutions of government.

The government does not propose to deal in this statement with its programs for the implementation of these principles and the provisions of the Act in the federal public service. This statement deals with a language policy for all Canadians. The government wishes to stress, however, that it does not in any way intend to diminish its efforts to improve the ability of the federal public service to serve the people of Canada in

both official languages, to increase the use of French as a language of work and to provide for the equitable participation of both official language communities in the public service. In his most recent report, the Commissioner of Official Languages commented, with regard to the public service programs, that "the Government, as well as politicians in all parties who have steadfastly backed the Government's principles, should take pride in this country's accomplishment. And so should all Canadians."

The principles of the official languages policy that are applicable to the federal institutions of government flow from the Official Languages Act and the parliamentary resolution of 1973. These principles, as set out in chapter 4, are:

**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.**

**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.**

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

The implementation of these principles has resulted in significant changes in the participation and role of French speaking Canadians in the federal public service. To quote again from the most recent annual report of the Commissioner of Official Languages:

*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 — not always flamboyant, newsworthy triumphs, yet undeniable, fundamental, foot-slogging gains for the dignity of both Canada's language communities.*

*A few examples might confirm last year's generally ignored diagnosis that the pace of reform, if slow, is at least "steady", indeed "reaching closer to the irreversible".*

*First, the bias of normalcy has tilted. In spite of too-numerous violations Canadians should never accept, 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. Eight years ago, it was usual to ignore this right. Now, even minor slips make headlines. Taking this core purpose alone, the Official Languages Act is working.*

*Second, again in spite of flagrant exceptions, including those recently condemned at Air Canada, official policy and growing practice are pressing federal institutions to allow tens of thousands more employees to work in the language of their choice. Nearly all the principles and practical steps proposed in these reports to strengthen French as an equal language of work in Ottawa, and as the normal language of work in Quebec regional offices, have been adopted or are being implemented — too slowly, but deliberately. In some cases, such as in the development of guidelines, terminology and techniques for extending French as a language of operations through consultative reform, the federal effort to promote French in Quebec has preceded the Quebec Government's own work by some years.*

*In a related area, the participation of French speakers in Canada's public service has advanced even more strikingly. In 1971, as reported last year, openings of 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. Likewise, French speakers in the public service have held, since 1975, nearly their "fair" share of federal jobs (with 27% of Canada's population) — about one in four — even though proportionately, they do not yet hold enough officer jobs. Yet even there, the progress is encouraging: in the Administrative and Foreign Service category, the French speakers' share of jobs has risen from 16% in 1971 to 22% in 1976 (a gain of 37%); in the Technical category they had moved from 7% in 1971 to 13% in 1976 (a gain of 86%); in the Scientific and*

*Professional category, they have risen from 11% in 1971 to 19% in 1976 (a gain of 73%); and in the Executive category, they have gone from 17% in 1973 to 20% in 1975-76 (a gain of 18%). Hardly a French takeover. But neither is it the perpetuation of an "English colonial" régime.*

In response to concerns such as those expressed by the Commissioner of official languages and others, the government has been reviewing its policies and programs as they relate to the federal public service. Moreover, in November 1974, the government commissioned an independent study of language training in the federal public service. A report prepared by Dr. Gilles Bibeau and his colleagues was made public on August 17, 1976, and the government indicated at that time that it shared, in the main, the preoccupations expressed in the report.

As a result of its review of its policies and programs, the government has reached a number of conclusions concerning possible changes. Shortly after publication of this statement, the government intends to meet with the unions representing public servants in order to discuss detailed proposals.

Employee representatives have been active and responsible participants in the development of official languages policies and programs through the Committee on Official Languages of the National Joint Council. It is the government's intention to carry out full and meaningful consultations with them as soon as possible in close association with the Public Service Commission. 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 government always intended the official languages policy to apply, not only to government departments, but to all Federal institutions, including Crown corporations. The government is now considering means to implement its intention in this regard more effectively.

The achievement of its objectives in the federal public service has required the federal government to concentrate its efforts within its own institutions. The result has been to create among many Canadians the impression that the official languages policy affects the federal public service only. This is not the case. The federal government has initiated a broad range of actions and programs in the country at large relating to the two official languages and those who speak them. All of these testify to the fact that the official languages policy is a policy for all Canada.

For instance, the Broadcasting Act, enacted by Parliament in 1968, establishes as one of the objectives of the Canadian broadcasting system that "all Canadians are entitled to broadcasting service in English and French as public funds become available". Furthermore, the national broadcasting service provided by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation is required to be in English and French.

Federal departments and agencies have worked to realize these objectives. The result is that Canada has a broadcasting system that, more and more, reflects the linguistic duality of the country and gives to the members of the two official language groups the opportunity to have broadcasting service across the country in their own language.

It should also be noted that Canada has several private multicultural broadcasting stations and that the responsibility of the CBC to interpret the various aspects of Canada includes its multicultural character.

In adopting the objectives of the Broadcasting Act, Parliament expressed a consensus on the principle of a broadcasting system that is both English and French which the government believes continues to be shared by the large majority of Canadians. Such a service is of particular importance for Canadians of the official language minority groups, and there are few, if any, Canadians who would begrudge them that service. The government will continue its efforts to achieve these objectives, taking into account the legitimate concerns that have sometimes been expressed regarding their implementation.

It is the intention of the government, following the publication of this statement, to consult with all federal cultural institutions to discuss ways to improve the implementation of the present policy.

We are accustomed to some consequences of the fact that the official languages policy has implications for all Canadians: the English and French languages on our money, on our stamps and on government cheques. To other consequences we are less accustomed: the English and French languages on labels on our groceries and drugs and other merchandise we purchase.

A policy of labelling in the two official languages is a natural consequence of having two official languages in the country. In such a country, it should be seen as normal that merchandise, particularly food and drugs, is available in packages describing their contents in both languages in order that citizens using either language will be able to understand what they are buying in all parts of Canada. This is particularly true of merchandise that may present a danger to health. To put the issue in its clearest terms, when we buy something we wish to know what it is, partly out of curiosity, partly out of a desire to be sure we are getting value for our money and, in the case of items such as drugs, partly to be sure that it will not be dangerous to our health or the health of our loved ones.

The need to understand labels is every bit as legitimate for a French speaking Canadian in an English language area of the country as it is for an English speaking Canadian in a French language area of the country. The government's labelling policy recognizes this in the most practical ways that could be devised. This is why labelling in both languages is applied to all larger quantities of merchandise across the country. This provides a convenience and service to all Canadian consumers while at the same time it brings the use of both languages to the attention of people in parts of Canada where, hitherto, the linguistic duality of the country was not evident except on money, stamps and federal government cheques. The gov-

ernment is confident that misunderstandings which have led to some adverse reactions to the policy are being overcome as the positive purposes of the policy are gradually becoming more widely known. The government is also confident that Canadians will accept a policy which is based on considerations that are not merely symbolic but are practical and humanitarian as well.

The criticisms of consumer groups, manufacturers and importers on the grounds of undue hardship in certain cases have been and will continue to be given attention by the government. As the result of representations from such groups, 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.

In October of last year, the government announced in the Speech from the Throne its intention to shift the emphasis in its programs to achieve a better balance "between money spent to introduce bilingualism in the public service and the money spent to enable more Canadians, particularly young people, to learn to communicate in both official languages".

This shift in the emphasis of the government's programs is prompted by the conviction that the government should now respond increasingly to the desire of many Canadian parents across the country to have the maximum opportunity for their children to learn to communicate in both official languages and to learn to know and to understand their compatriots of the other official language community.

This shift in emphasis, while gradual, will grow as opportunities and requirements develop both as the result of the responses of individual Canadians and as a consequence of the initiatives of the provincial governments. Some of the immediate consequences of this new direction will be referred to in this chapter.

The measures related to the official languages policy that the government has adopted to assist the provinces and individuals in the past include:

- payments to provinces to assist them in meeting the costs of second official language programs in elementary and secondary schools;
- payments to provinces for the establishment or improvement of language training centres offering training to students, teachers, provincial public servants and the public at large;
- payments to provinces on a short-term, cost-sharing basis for developmental, innovative and experimental projects for second language instruction;
- payment of half the operating costs, up to \$100,000 per year for each province, of provincial government second language training programs for provincial, territorial and municipal public servants;
- study fellowships enabling post-secondary students to pursue studies in their second official language;
- bursaries for second language teachers for courses to improve their skills and for refresher courses;
- a Summer Language Bursary Program providing bursaries paid through the Council of Ministers of Education to provincial departments of education to enable several thousand post-secondary students to participate in six-week total immersion courses during the summer in their respective second official language and to become familiar with the way of life of Canadians of the other official language community;
- a Second Language Monitor Program that supports several hundred students who act as second language monitors in a classroom, usually in another province, where they also pursue their studies at the university level;
- enabling provincial and municipal public servants to undertake second language training courses offered by the federal Public Service Commission;
- assistance to voluntary associations in formulating plans for the development of the use of both official languages in their operations, including the provision of technical services relating to terminology, translation and staff training, and initial grants to defray part of the costs of simultaneous translation at conferences and the translation of conference documents;
- information and technical assistance to private enterprise in connection with language training and translation matters; and
- the dissemination of information on language matters to interested organizations and individuals in Canada.

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 including:

- second language training programs, where concrete provincial proposals warrant;
- the Summer Language Bursary program, fellowships for post-secondary students to study their second official language as well as special provincial projects in second language training of an innovative or experimental nature; and
- interprovincial exchange programs.

In addition, there will be an increase in the programs to promote knowledge of their second official language among other Canadians. These programs include:

- support for provincial and local initiatives in providing second language training for adults;
- support, where concrete provincial proposals warrant, for second language training of provincial, territorial and local public servants, translation of provincial statutes and regulations and for the training of provincial translators; and
- support, where the proposals warrant, to voluntary associations and to private enterprise to assist them in their efforts to promote the use of the two official languages.

The federal government has also adopted many measures in the past intended to assist the official language minority groups in Canada, including:

- payments on a formula basis to provinces to encourage the provision of elementary and secondary schooling facilities to official language minority groups in their own language;
- payment of 10 percent of the operating grants made by the provinces to their minority official language post-secondary institutions and an allowance for capital expenditures;
- travel bursaries to enable students to pursue studies in their first official language where facilities are not available in the province, or within a reasonable commuting distance, of their residence;
- study fellowships enabling post-secondary students to pursue studies in their first official language;
- bursaries for minority official language teachers for courses to improve their skills and for refresher courses;
- assistance to provinces where there is a need to establish or support adequate minority official language teacher training colleges;

- payments to provinces on a cost-sharing basis for innovative, experimental projects for official language minority education;

- payment of half the cost of translating and publishing provincial laws and regulations, municipal regulations and various other publications for the knowledge and use of official language minority groups; and

- technical assistance and financial support for provincial minority official language associations, socio-cultural animation, cultural centres, cultural exchanges, youth activities and special and national projects designed to enable official language minority groups and communities to maintain a thriving culture and to live and work harmoniously in the surrounding community in the pursuit of national goals.

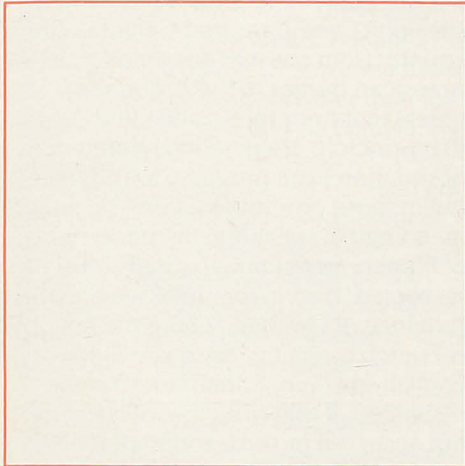
The federal government intends to maintain its support for all of these programs. It will also, in consultation with the provinces, seek ways to improve the programs in order to carry out the objectives of the official languages policy relating to official languages minority groups.



# Chapter 7

**Official  
Languages and  
the Provinces**





The following principles set out in chapter 4 involve the jurisdiction of the provinces, with policies and programs dependent on their decision and action:

**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.**

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.

For instance, 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 the 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 those languages to public servants. Since 1965, the federal government has maintained expensive language teaching schools, so that unilingual Canadians applying for bilingual positions in the federal public service could learn the other official language.

The implementation of such recommendations would place greater emphasis on the role of the provinces and make more actions, 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. The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the role of the provinces concerning the official languages of Canada with particular emphasis on the official language minority groups.

The federal government is committed to the concept of a Canada that is united in the acceptance of linguistic duality and cultural diversity. If this commitment is shared by the provincial governments, the federal government believes that 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. In using the word official in this context, the federal government is more concerned with the principle involved and the reality to which it relates than with semantic concerns or preoccupations.

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 rather be two separatisms that must lead ultimately to the political reflection of that fact.

In practical terms, the federal government believes that the recognition of this principle by the provinces of Canada entails differing realities in each of the provinces. It is important perhaps above all to stress again that it does not mean that every Canadian will be expected to become bilingual. On the contrary, the principle recognizes that virtually all Canadians use either the English or the French language to express themselves. It is indeed the recognition of this very fact by all governments at the federal and provincial levels in the country that is the purpose of this principle.

Fundamentally, therefore, the recognition of this principle would not alter the fact that the language of common use in the provinces of Canada other than the province of Quebec will be English. By the same token, the language of common use in the province of Quebec will be French. The federal government is firmly of the view that the French language should as generally be the language of work in the province of Quebec as the English language is in the province of Ontario, for instance.

There will, of course, be exceptions to this rule insofar as the headquarters of federal institutions, including Crown corporations, are concerned, as well as federal institutions in the National Capital Region and federal government offices in certain regions of the country where there is a sufficient demand.

In order to give concrete expression to this basic principle, the federal government believes that the adoption by all provinces of Canada of the second of the principles set out at the beginning of this chapter is indispensable:

**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.**

The federal government is already providing assistance to the provinces in this regard. 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 such facilities. 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 principle, as enunciated, is designed to take into account the special nature of the present situation with regard to official language minority education in Canada. 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. Although there are differences of opinion concerning the extent of the threat to the French language, the feeling of insecurity is widespread.

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 either to a French language school or to an English language school.

The federal government believes that 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. In this connection, the federal government points out that measures in the province of 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.

In any event, the federal government asserts that 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, the federal government recognizes that there will be particular situations where this will not be feasible. But the principle remains.

The concern to have immigrants to the province of Quebec attend French language schools is recognized. If the province is to be and 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, the federal government is of the opinion that it is by far preferable that immigrants should be attracted to the French language educational 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 the province of 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, it is only fair to point out that some provinces have made commendable efforts in this regard in recent years. The province of 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. In addition, 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 schools. The provinces of 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.

The third principle set out at the beginning of this chapter deals with the knowledge of the other official language:

**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.**

The acceptance of this principle entails, in the opinion of the federal government, 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 federal government has many programs designed to assist the provinces to achieve the objective of this principle. The details of these programs are set out in chapter 6. The government intends to discuss with the provinces means to achieve more rapid progress in regard to these matters.

The government believes that 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. In doing so, these agencies should concern themselves, not only with language as such, but also with portraying more effectively the diverse realities of the two linguistic communities of the country to each other. The government intends to discuss means to achieve these objectives with these cultural agencies.

Finally in this regard, the government believes it is its responsibility to assert, on behalf of the French speaking population of the province of Quebec, and of immigrants to that province, the continuing need for the French speaking population of the province to have available to them the means to acquire, if they wish it, a working knowledge of the English language. Many French speaking Canadians in the province of Quebec do not use the English language. Presumably there will remain a significant proportion of the population

who will not do so. On the other hand, the proportion of French speaking Canadians who can speak English is already relatively high. It would, however, be unrealistic to pretend that the English language is, in North America, simply another language among many others. A generation brought up to live their lives on the basis of such an illusion could not fail, in the long run, to feel betrayed.

Beyond the acceptance and implementation of these generally applicable principles, the federal government believes that the provincial governments will wish to consider carefully the role they can play in helping to implement the broader implications of the first of the principles set out above:

**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.**

The federal government considers that it should be the responsibility of each provincial government to determine the further measures it will take concerning the official language minority groups within its jurisdiction. It is obvious that the situation of the provinces of Ontario and New Brunswick which, with the province of Quebec, contain 97.8% of the French-speaking population of Canada, is different from that of the

other English speaking provinces. The situation of the province of Quebec, where the large English language minority group has traditionally held a strong position, particularly in the economic life of the province, is also unique.

It would not, therefore, seem reasonable or desirable, to propose hard and fast rules. What should govern above all else is a sense of respect and civility toward the minority official language and the minority official language groups in each province. Measures should be adopted, consistent with the particular circumstances of each province, that would enable those groups to participate to the fullest extent possible in the life of the province and Canada in their own language.

During the constitutional discussions with the provinces from 1968 to 1971, the federal government pressed strongly for the adoption, and the incorporation in our constitution, of provisions that would establish basic rights for the two official language communities. The objective was to have these rights recognized and established in all provinces. At the Victoria Conference in 1971, agreement to accept some language obligations binding on them was indicated by seven of the ten provinces. All agreed to a provision under which, when a province declared that the provisions applied to it, they would thereafter be "entrenched", in the sense that the rights so accorded could be removed or reduced only by going through the procedure then agreed upon for

amendment of our constitution as a whole. The rights agreed upon at Victoria included:

- *the right of persons to use the English and French languages in the debates of a provincial legislature;*
- *the printing and publication of the statutes of a province in both languages;*
- *the right of persons to give evidence in a court in either language, either directly, where circumstances permit, or through the services of an interpreter;*
- *the right of persons to have summonses and court documents issued in both languages;*
- *the right of persons to use the official language of their choice in communications between them and the head or central office of every department or agency of government.*

It was hoped that these would be simply the basic rights to be observed, initially in the agreeing provinces and ultimately throughout Canada. It was hoped too that provinces would, over time, add to the rights that the two official languages would enjoy within their respective territories. The Victoria Charter included a provision making clear the powers of the legislatures, as well as of the Parliament of Canada, "within their respective legislative jurisdictions, (to) provide for more extensive use of English and French".

The federal government is of the view that the basic rights proposed in the Victoria Charter were a sound beginning and still constitute a basis on which to build for the future. To the extent that the provinces are prepared to provide a secure constitutional basis for the essential language rights of the official language minorities within their boundaries, they will afford justice and security to the people involved and to their descendants. They will also add strength to the Canadian federation through the sense that it is founded on, and ensures for the future, the fair recognition of the rights of our two linguistic communities.


The government hopes that this paper has succeeded in explaining why the two official languages are important in Canada, as important for Canada as language is for any other country. Language is one of the means by which society is structured and its existence is organized. It helps to structure and organize legislation, administration, education, business relations, transportation, entertainment and all other facets of society where there is communication among people. It is also the most important means for the expression of people's culture, traditions, feelings and thoughts.

It is a structure and an environment, like the air we breathe. When it is healthy we don't notice it. When it deteriorates, we are all affected by it.



# Conclusion





contained in the small part of it we have learned to know. How lacking in perspective and responsibility we are if we choose to limit the inheritance of our children to some portion of this land. Canada is, as a storehouse of resources, as a source of the basic physical needs of human beings, one of the most favoured countries of the world. We have only begun to learn of its potential. The challenge, because of our climate and the size and complexity of our country, is beyond the brave efforts of the few to master. It will require the combined, determined efforts of us all if we are to organize, plan and carry out the tasks that our opportunities present to us.

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.

The challenge in physical terms is as great as the huge, and, except to the Native peoples of this country, still largely unknown land we call our country. To be able to call our land truly our own, we must come to know it. How impoverished we are if we conceive of Canada as though it were

The challenge in spiritual terms is no less broad and demanding. 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. Our challenges do not cease with the physical opportunities our country present to us. They extend into the search for those continuing means to live together in peace, security and mutual respect which are the essential conditions of a society of free men and women.

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. It is a society that tolerates dissent and difference to such a degree that we are in danger of discarding the conditions in which the expression of that very dissent has been possible. We have done so in the pursuit of one of the cardinal virtues of the Canadian experience: the affirmation of difference. There are many of us in this land who have felt our identity, both individually and as groups, to be challenged, even in danger of being lost, in our continued existence as one country.

But we should recognize that the search for identity, and the sense of insecurity that goes with it, is one we share with all the peoples of the earth in an environment that is changing so rapidly that virtually the only remaining constant of human existence is change itself. And we should also recognize that our experience in this country is one that fits us uniquely well to deal with this phenomenon. We are no strangers to the search for identity.

The Canadian response to the search for identity has been to reject every tendency towards a uniform definition of ourselves and our country. This has led some of us to believe that Canada therefore has no sense of identity, that Canadians share no common values, do not even share a sense of belonging to the same country and to each other. We have heard much of this perspective in

recent years. It has almost obscured a much more important perspective from view.

It is precisely the rejection of uniformity, the refusal to accept a homogeneous view of themselves and their country, that constitutes the most authentic and widely shared experience of Canadians. The affirmation and preservation of differences, personal, social, local, regional, cultural, linguistic, has consumed the minds and hearts of Canadians all through their history. It is the Canadian response to the question of identity. Our unity — and it is a real and profound unity if we will only bring ourselves to see it — arises from our determination to preserve the identity of each of us. And this is the root of the freedom, the very remarkable degree of freedom, that exists in this country.

Our two languages and our diversity of cultures in Canada are the expression of our spiritual values even as our vast country is the reflection of our physical strength and variety. They go together, for the physical features of Canada have had a determining effect on how we have lived and thought and felt in this country. The country has formed us even as we have learned to live in it and to search out its riches.

Our challenges, and the problems they entail, are at the same time our opportunities. Canada is a country spanning a continent and stretching to the Arctic because people of vision and determination responded to the opportunities

they saw beyond the four small colonies that formed the origin of their endeavours. Canada is a highly developed country because people of enterprise have sought out its potential and harnessed its resources. Canada is a bountiful country because people of the land and sea have toiled long and hard to harvest its plenty.

Above all, however, Canada is a free country because its people have learned to accept and to cherish their differences. Our linguistic duality and cultural diversity are both the condition and the safeguard of our continuing freedom and our unity as a country.

Our two official languages are something more. They are an opportunity. They are two of the richest of our assets and resources. Let us move together into the future in the conviction, not that our two official languages are a problem or a burden, but that they are a means and an opportunity to live broader, fuller lives as individuals and as a country. Let us not permit our country to be divided by what can so enrich us.

