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THE LANGUAGES OF CANADIAN DIPLOMACY

A Statement by the Honourable Mitchell Sharp,
Secretary of State for External Affairs, to
Officers of the Department of External Affairs,
Ottawa, August 26, 1968.

It gives me great pleasure to meet you today, particularly at this seminar on the languages of Canadian diplomacy. I attach particular importance to this first contact with you. This meeting serves two objectives:

- (1) While enabling me to welcome to our Department the new 1968 class of young officers, it also gives me the opportunity to meet last year's group.
- (2) It enables me to explain my views and my position, as Minister of External Affairs, on the important subject of bilingualism within our Department....

You will no doubt be familiar with the statement made by Mr. Pearson in the House of Commons in April 1966 on bilingualism in the Public Service of Canada. Let me say at the outset that the guide-lines set forth in that statement remain an important part of the Government's policy on bilingualism in Canada and that I, for my part, will do my best to see that they are implemented in our Department.

I do not intend to review Mr. Pearson's statement in detail today.... Nevertheless, some of the main points are worthy of special attention because of their implications for all members of the Department, and particularly for officers starting out on a career in the government service. In describing the Government's goals in this field, Mr. Pearson noted that within a reasonable period of time it was the Government's objective to realize four basic and very significant steps in the public service:

- (1) That as a matter of practice all internal communications whether oral or written should take place in either English or French, depending on the language of the person concerned;
- (2) that all communications with the public should normally be in either language as appropriate;