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Federal policy for assistance to the official language minorities

Secretary of State John Roberts made public recently the second phase of the federal policy for assistance to francophone and anglophone minorities, which will give increased emphasis to the implementation of the principles of linguistic equality announced by the Federal Government in 1969.

The Government will strengthen its policy for assistance to minorities by setting up shortly a permanent mécanisme d'accueil, by putting more emphasis on consultations with the organizations concerned with the well-being of minorities and by providing increased grants for the social and cultural development of minorities.

Mr. Roberts pointed out that the Government was urging citizens to feel free to lead their lives and pursue their development in the official language of their choice.

He has indicated that both governments and individuals should strive to ensure an equal status for French and English in the legislatures, in the courts, in the educational systems, in the public services, and in the state-owned radio and television stations.

Excerpts from Mr. Roberts' statement follow:

* * * *

Last year, in the document entitled *A National Understanding*, the Federal Government urged that the principles within its own structure be gradually adopted by all Canadians and their respective governments.

In response to those basic principles, the federal and provincial governments must, directly or indirectly, move to ensure the maintenance and development of the linguistic and cultural heritage of both official language communities, a heritage which is enriched by the cultural diversity of communities of other backgrounds.

The action that the Federal Government undertook in 1969 to help the development of official language minority groups in the educational, social and cultural fields, is in keeping with the underlying principles, which have a twofold objective: to help them enhance their own identity by safeguarding their language and their culture and to encourage the majority groups to understand the aspirations of the minorities.

Measures taken

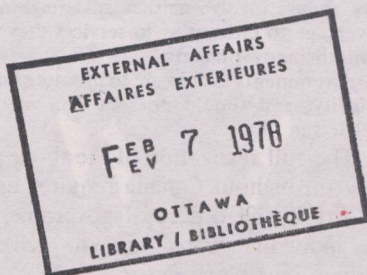
...In the past year I have doubled the financial resources available to the offi-

cial language minority groups, and I have undertaken a new round of negotiations with the provincial governments, with a view to obtaining a more efficient use of the funds transferred to the provinces for assistance in second language and minority language education.

In addition, in spite of budgetary restraints, we have increased the estimates for the Official Language Minority Group program from \$30 to \$75 million for the next five years.

Since 1969, the Federal Government's efforts have been increased to enable the minorities to express their own identity more adequately. The evidence of this is that not only the provincial associations, the national associations and the Fédération des Francophones hors Québec, but also the Members of Parliament have often raised important issues about the future of the minority language communities. The over-all picture indicates that there is a waking up among communities and individuals within the official language minorities.

We, in the Federal Government, have listened to those concerns with a sympathetic ear and we have set ourselves the task of reviewing our policies affecting minorities. But it would not be true to



Louis S. St. Laurent, Canada's Prime Minister from 1948 to 1957, was born on this date in 1882. Under his leadership, Canada became increasingly important in international affairs. Mr. St. Laurent, one of the chief architects of NATO, died in 1973.

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