



# Bulletin

Vol. 25, No. 11

March 18, 1970

## NATIONAL UNITY – A NEW SENSE OF URGENCY

The following passages are from a speech at the "Symposium on National Unity" by Mr. Robert Stanbury, Minister without Portfolio responsible for Citizenship, at Sudbury, Ontario, on February 28:

...When one of your representatives in Parliament, asked me to speak to you, indicating that the theme of your seminar was "national unity", I did not hesitate. This is a topic, a key theme, a goal, that I have espoused since entering the federal political scene. I wish to be the advocate of this cause by attempting today to show you how my Government is trying in various ways to achieve unity. It is in this spirit that our Prime Minister... described our country on October 17, 1968: "Such a country will be able to make full use of the talents and energy of all its citizens. Such a country will be more interesting, more stimulating and, in many ways, richer than ever. Such a country will be in a better position to play a useful role in the world, today and tomorrow." The task is heavy, the difficulties many and the work arduous, but if Canadians believe in it

as you and I do, we cannot but achieve the goal we have set for ourselves. Some will forcefully retort that the establishment does not permit them to participate in decision-making, that such a goal is utopian and that pessimism sometimes seems to override optimism. The only valid reply to this challenge lies in the word *participation*. Participation by all of society in the decision-making process. Participation by cultural groups regardless of whether they are a minority or a majority. Lastly, participation in accordance with one's beliefs, aspirations, language and culture. Only under such conditions will we be able to have true participation.

Our Federal Government has several policies for encouraging participation. In fact, today I should like to explain to you the mechanisms which will enable French-Canadians in our province, and throughout the country, to play a decisive role in working towards national unity. We can distinguish four major mechanisms. First, the language in our educational system, secondly, socio-cultural action among all citizens, young and old alike; thirdly, information which is not only a necessity but the right of every individual in a democratic society such as ours; the fourth mechanism is the Official Languages Act, which contains legislation concerning the status of English and French as Canada's official languages. We will pay special attention at the present time to the first three of these mechanisms.

The Government recognizes the fact that a considerable number of the recommendations made in Book II of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism fall more under provincial than federal jurisdiction both from the constitutional and from the practical standpoint. However, we share the opinion expressed by the Commissioners that the problem is necessarily one of concern to the Federal Government....

The fact that we accept the recommendation

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