

*Supply—Secretary of State*

proficiency in English and in French, orally and written. I believe, Mr. Chairman, that the civil service commission has got to break new ground and establish for applicants for jobs that are rated as bilingual, the degree of proficiency in the two languages.

I listened with a great deal of interest to the hon. member for Joliette-L'Assomption-Montcalm when he claimed that a bilingual bonus should be applied to those who speak the two languages. I could not agree more, provided they really know the two languages. I once asked the hon. member in an earlier debate if he considered himself to be bilingual and he said he did. I am going to say to that hon. member that I do not think his English is any better than my French and I do not believe they could rate either of us as being completely bilingual, much as we would like to be. This illustrates again the problem the civil service commission faces. A mere acquaintanceship with the two languages is not good enough in relation to the jobs that have to be performed, and the civil service commission has not faced the problem with the objective of determining a measurement of language accomplishment.

I would be very interested, Mr. Chairman, in hearing the views of the minister as to how the civil service commission attempts to make a policy rule in terms of recruitment of bilingual candidates. When it advertises for bilingual candidates, how does it test the bilingual proficiency, what methods does it propose to undertake to make sure the applicants who are recruited for bilingual jobs are in fact bilingual according to the requirements of the position?

**Mr. Nielsen:** I just want to add one or two comments before the minister replies. My concern arises with bilingualism in the civil service but from an entirely different angle. In a recent civil service competition poster advertising for the position of northern service officer, there was included a statement in the qualifications subheading that applicants would be more favourably considered if they had a knowledge of both English and French languages. It seems to me that a knowledge of French among the Eskimos of Coppermine or a knowledge of English amongst the Indians at Old Crow, is just about as useless as horns on a boar. Rather than requiring that the applicant for a position in the department of northern affairs for service amongst the Indians and Eskimos be bilingual, perhaps additional credits might be given if the applicant were of Indian or Eskimo origin, or per-

[Mr. Francis.]

haps if an applicant of English or French origin had a knowledge of the Indian dialect or the Eskimo dialect in the area concerned.

It seems to me that a poster that holds forth additional credits for people who speak the French language in order to obtain preference in a job for northern service is rather ridiculous. Rather than adopting this course, the commission and the department should be adopting the course of attempting to recruit from amongst the native peoples themselves in order to fill these positions, whether or not these people speak the two languages. There is a lot of excellent material there.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Pigeon:** Just a few words, Mr. Chairman, to mention that when I talked about granting a bonus to bilingual employees, I was referring to those working in the federal service in Ottawa where all the requests from English and French are converging.

We must not go from one extreme to the other. I know that some colleagues from other parties in the house share my opinion that a bonus should be paid to a civil servant filling an important position or working in a department in Ottawa. That he should be given a bonus because he is bilingual, this is quite normal, but if some people are opposed to this, if English speaking citizens think that it is illogical. I wonder whether they find it more logical to demand that French Canadians working in Ottawa should speak English.

When a person who has the required qualifications is employed in the civil service, we cannot expect an English speaking Canadian to speak a second language, but on the other hand, we should not require that a French Canadian who wishes to obtain a position in Ottawa be able to speak English. Let us be fair. If we wish understanding and unity to prevail in this country, what is sauce for the goose should be sauce for the gander.

We should not require that a French Canadian civil servant speak English, nor that an English Canadian speak French.

Why should we compel most of the French Canadians who work in Ottawa to speak English, while we do not ask the English speaking candidates who wish to obtain a civil service position in Ottawa to speak French?

The blame should not be attached to either government in particular, because the same situation existed under all governments, but I wonder why French Canadians should be placed in a special category.