

### Supply

In 1977 in response to the problem of de facto discrimination against francophones, the royal commission on bilingualism and biculturalism recommended that the public service be reorganized into two parallel hierarchies of unilingual work units. French would become the language of about 25 per cent of those work units and English would be the language of the rest.

It is important to keep in mind that this would not be a quota system because anglophones could try to win jobs in the French language work unit and vice versa. However, in each case workers would be allowed and required to communicate with fellow employees in the language of the work unit.

The big picture within the public service as a whole would be that employees could choose whether or not they wanted to make the substantial financial investment required to learn the other official language. Either way there would be a place for them to work in the language of their choice. Not only would the choice have been left to the employee, but the enormous cost of government sponsored language training would have been saved.

This proposal has been tested in the private sector and has been very successful in bilingual companies. Most positions can be filled by unilingual speakers of one language or another and only a few bridge positions need to be filled with bilingual employees. Had this model been adopted when it was recommended 27 years ago full equality between the languages would have been achieved by now and there would be no meaningful discrimination against speakers of either official language.

However, Trudeau chose to adopt another model in which every individual position was designated as to the official language skills it required. Francophones and anglophones would be expected to work in close proximity throughout the public service which means that many posts, including all posts beyond the most junior level would involve regular communication between speakers of two languages.

In this situation two unfortunate results were inevitable. First, the traditionally dominant language, English, would continue to dominate. This is why virtually all public service meetings continue to this day to be held in English. Second, there would be a huge need for bilingual people to occupy all supervisory positions since the rules now proclaimed that each person must be supervised in the language of his or her choice.

It is in the wildfire spread of bilingually designated posts that the real tragedy has occurred. On the one hand the system helped to boost the number of francophones employed by Ottawa. This is because two-thirds of the designated bilingual posts in the public service are occupied by francophones. On the other hand between 60 and 70 per cent of francophones in Canada do not speak English. For this majority the chances of finding employ-

ment in the public service have been reduced by the system of designating individual posts as bilingual.

In fact between 1974 when the policy was introduced and 1992, the number of positions in the federal civil service open to persons capable of speaking only French dropped from 34,000 to 25,000. This is a drop of 26 per cent. Even more staggering is the impact in Quebec itself where over half of all the jobs in the federal public service are open only to persons who speak English as well as French.

If the majority of francophones face discrimination the situation among anglophones is even worse. Nearly 90 per cent of Canadian English speakers are incapable of speaking fluent French. This means that most English Canadians are ineligible to rise above the junior public service or above the rank of major in the armed forces. The result of this situation is dramatic.

In a 1990 survey by the Professional Institute of the Public Service of Canada over one-third of anglophone respondents stated that the policy of designating individual posts had negatively affected their advancement opportunities in the past. Over half of the respondents stated they believed the policy would hurt their promotion opportunities in the future. Nearly 42 per cent stated that on at least one occasion in the past they had not even bothered to apply for a post solely because of the restrictive language requirements.

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In other words, because they structured their reform so poorly, the federal government managed to actually increase the level of discrimination faced by the average francophone and simultaneously introduced discrimination against the average anglophone. Canada is probably unique in having managed to systematically discriminate against both its major language groups at the same time by means of the same policy.

The way out of this mess is to toss aside the present system and to finally adopt the system of French and English language units proposed by the B and B commission 27 years ago. New Brunswick has recently adopted elements of this model for its provincial language service. It seems to be a success. That would be our territorial bilingualism policy within the public service. We believe it is time for Ottawa to follow this example.

**Mr. John Harvard (Winnipeg St. James):** Mr. Speaker, I have been listening to the debate all afternoon. I would like to say most respectfully that the members of the Reform Party have been intellectually dishonest in this debate.

The member from Calgary said, or implied at least, just a few moments ago that because very few Canadians are bilingual that represents failure of the bilingualism policy of this country. Nothing could be farther from the truth because there was never any intention of the Official Languages Act of 1969 to cause all Canadians to become bilingual.