

**Hon. Joseph-Philippe Guay** moved that the report be adopted.

He said: Honourable senators, last December the Special Joint Committee on Official Languages presented its Second Report to Parliament with two main recommendations, namely, a request to be reconstituted in the new session of Parliament and a request to be empowered to travel both within Canada and abroad. Before addressing these two recommendations specifically, I should like to say a few words about the excellent work done by this committee since it was created in the spring of 1980.

In order to monitor implementation of the government's bilingualism policy in federal services dealing with the public, the Parliament of Canada decided, at the end of May 1980, to create a Special Joint Committee on Official Languages. The concept of a committee that would deal specifically with matters related to linguistic reform was first suggested by the Commissioner of Official Languages in his annual report to Parliament. Similarly, twice during 1979, a motion to establish a committee was put on the Order Paper of the House of Commons, without, however, being submitted for consideration by the House, owing to the fact that a general election was called.

The committee's job is to consider the last three annual reports of the Commissioner of Official Languages and to report on its findings to the two houses of Parliament. In fact, this assignment is extremely wide-ranging, because the reports on implementation of the Official Languages Act deal not only with the government's policy on bilingualism within the public service but also with aspects of constitutional reform relating to official languages, and even with second-language teaching in the provinces.

Within its terms of reference, the committee has defined three main objectives: First, to study the manner in which government departments and agencies implement the Official Languages Act, in terms of the three main components of the official languages program in the federal public service, namely, language of service to the public, language of work and equitable participation of both language communities. The second objective is to review the cogency of the act itself as the resources and methods used by the organizations which are responsible for its application. The committee will thus review various provisions of the Official Languages Act to ensure the effectiveness of this legislation as the foundation and the legal basis for the language reform. Finally, the third objective is to make members of Parliament, public servants and the general public aware of both the progress achieved and the problems encountered with respect to the language reform initiated when the Official Languages Act was passed in 1969, and to explain the objectives and background of the legislation.

The joint committee started holding its public hearings in October 1980, but had to suspend its activities to let the Special Joint Committee on the Constitution proceed with its work. During its first four meetings before its work was interrupted, the committee heard testimony from the Commissioner of Official Languages and from the Deputy Secretary of

the Official Languages Branch of the Treasury Board Secretariat.

After resuming its regular meetings in February 1981, the committee heard testimony from senior officials from central bodies responsible for the implementation of the official languages policy. It heard further testimony from the Commissioner of Official Languages, the President of Treasury Board, the Chairman of the Public Service Commission and the Under Secretary of State. Having thus gained an overview of the roles, responsibilities, policies and programs of these central bodies the Committee decided to devote its immediate attention to issues relating to the provision of federal services in both official languages to members of the public. In this context, it has heard testimony from the Fédération des francophones hors Québec, the Council of Quebec Minorities, the Speaker of the Senate, senior officials of the House of Commons and deputy heads and other senior officials of over fifteen federal departments, agencies and crown corporations.

Based on the testimony presented since October 1980 the Committee tabled its first report in the Senate and the House of Commons on July 9, 1981, which addresses exclusively issues associated with the provision of federal services to the public in both official languages. This report contains six recommendations which can be summarized as follows: The formulation of guidelines and appropriate time frames by the Senate and the House of Commons; the removal of all references in the Official Languages Act to federal bilingual districts; the inclusion in this act of the concept of "where numbers warrant" and the concept of "active offer of service"; the establishment of regulations under the Official Languages Act on the locations "where numbers warrant" and "where there is significant demand"; the examination before March 31, 1982, of the identification of all positions providing service to the public in each department and government agency; confirmation of the deadline of December 31, 1983 by parliamentary resolution, after which there should be no conditional appointments.

Since last fall, the committee has been reviewing issues related to the working language and equitable representation within the government departments, agencies and crown corporations. In addition to the Commissioner of Official Languages and the President of Treasury Board, as well as representatives from the two major employee unions of the Public Service, the Public Service Alliance and the Professional Institute of the Public Service, up to now the committee has heard testimony from 14 federal departments, agencies and crown corporations about the issues related to the working language and the equitable participation of both linguistic groups. In addition, the committee decided to hear again the Departments of Fisheries and Oceans, Energy, Mines and Resources and Environment Canada on the issue of service to the public, in order to assess their progress, because these three departments had been considered at fault when they first appeared.

In a few weeks, the committee will be submitting to Parliament its third report on the working language and fair partici-