

**Visit of Belgian Prime Minister**

Prime Minister Léo Tindemans of Belgium, visited Canada from April 27 to May 3, accompanied by Mrs. Tindemans and by the Belgian Minister of Foreign Affairs and Development Aid, Renaat Van Elslande, and Mrs. Van Elslande.

The visit, which was in response to an invitation by Prime Minister Trudeau during his stay in Belgium in October 1974, affirms the desire of both governments to strengthen the relations between Belgium and Canada.

During their stay, Mr. Tindemans and Mr. Van Elslande also visited the Northwest Territories, Quebec and Alberta. They were received by Premiers Bourassa and Lougheed, both of whom made official visits to Belgium in 1974 and 1975, respectively.

**Cost of bilingualism cheap price to keep Canada united**

In a speech to the Sudbury Chamber of Commerce recently, the President of the Treasury Board, Jean Chrétien, reaffirmed his position that the cost of the Federal Government's bilingualism program "is a cheap price to pay for keeping Canada united".

Mr. Chrétien emphasized that despite certain difficulties, "the Official Languages Program has been a great success. More than ever before, the Federal Government is perceived as the government of all Canadians".

He attributed the success of the program to "the active co-operation of Canada's public servants. I can only praise the dedication, honesty and hard work of these men and women without whom it would be impossible to govern Canada. The adjustment to functionally bilingual operations is obviously a difficult one, causing some inconvenience to many officials. Yet most of them are making this adjustment with a minimum of fuss. They realize that we intend to implement the Official Languages Act in a pragmatic and realistic way".

Mr. Chrétien referred to the recent report of Official Languages Commissioner Keith Spicer. He agrees with Mr. Spicer on the need to provide bilingual training in the provincial school

**Academics study development of Canada's North**

Fourteen Canadian universities have agreed to form a new organization that aims to play a significant role in meeting Canada's northern scientific needs and in the long-term development of the North.

Dr. John K. Stager, chairman of the University of British Columbia's committee on Arctic and alpine research, has been named to a five-member working group that has been formed to discuss the role of the proposed organization and to make recommendations for its establishment.

Dr. Stager, who is also associate dean of UBC's Faculty of Arts, says the planned organization will be something new for Canada and will be designed to serve the increasing scientific needs of the North.

He said it would be bilingual and would meet the needs of member universities for collaboration in carrying out northern research and training and provide liaison with governments, industry and northern residents.

The decision to form the new organization was made in late February

when representatives of the 14 Canadian universities met at Rankin Inlet in the Northwest Territories.

Dr. Stager said the demand by governments, private industry and native organizations for scientific information, skills and advice on northern matters is growing daily. "Canada needs to utilize the scientific resources within its universities more effectively and the new organization is intended to facilitate this," explained Dr. Stager.

The working group's report will be considered in December when representatives of Canadian universities active in northern research meet at the University of Alberta's Boreal Institute at Fort McMurray, Alberta.

Professor Trevor Lloyd of McGill University is chairing the working group. Other members of the working group, in addition to Dr. Stager, are Dean Robert Bergeron, University of Quebec at Chicoutimi, Professor Robert Bone of the University of Saskatchewan, and Professor Jack Hildes of the University of Manitoba.

systems. "Indeed, this year the Secretary of State is providing \$134 million to the provinces to assist in second-language education. But the Government cannot wait 15 years for the results to be apparent in the Public Service. We must continue the language

training program for public servants."

Mr. Chrétien told his audience that in 1974, he appointed a task force chaired by Professor Gilles Bibeau of the University of Montreal to report to him on the problems of language training in the Public Service.

**Fifth report on bilingualism**

On March 31, the Commissioner on Official Languages, Keith Spicer, released the fifth annual report on the Official Languages Act. While reaffirming the necessity of a bilingual Public Service, he questioned the cost and the effectiveness of some of the current programs which provide French and English language training to a broad spectrum of public servants. He suggested alternatives, such as carefully redefining which federal jobs need bilingual employees, giving cash bonuses to public servants who learn French or English on their own and spending the money thus saved to help finance provincial second language-training programs in

elementary, secondary and post-secondary schools.

**Press comment**

The *Winnipeg Free Press* (April 2) supported cutting spending on the language program. The *Montreal Gazette* (April 2) agreed with Mr. Spicer's suggested reforms. The *Vancouver Sun* (April 2) cited cost as a factor in the criticism of the bilingual program. The *Toronto Globe and Mail* (April 2) agreed with Mr. Spicer's comments on language training in public education systems. The *Montreal Star* (April 2) called Mr. Spicer's faith in language training in the schools "overly optimistic".