

APPENDIX "B"

(See p. 1175)

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

THIRD REPORT OF STANDING JOINT COMMITTEE

TUESDAY, June 9, 1987

The Standing Joint Committee on Official Languages has the honour to present its

THIRD REPORT

INTRODUCTION

1. In compliance with its Order of Reference from the Senate dated April 15, 1986, and its Order of Reference from the House of Commons dated April 15, 1986, both of which dealt with the 1985 Annual Report by the Commissioner of Official Languages, your Committee discussed with the Commissioner amendments to the *Official Languages Act*, and considered the situation of Canada's official-language minorities, concentrating in particular on education in the language of official-language minorities.
2. In response to a recommendation by the Special Joint Committee on Official Languages in its Fifth Report, tabled in April 1983, the government changed the Committee's status to that of a Standing Committee. In February 1986, following adoption of the new Standing Orders of the House of Commons, the Committee was re-named the Standing Joint Committee on Official Languages.
3. The Committee held 18 public hearings between October 1985 and June 1986, at which many witnesses were heard. On the subject of amendments to the *Official Languages Act*, it heard the Commissioner of Official Languages and the Secretary of State. On the subject of education in the language of official-language minorities, the Committee heard the following witnesses: representatives of associations such as the *Fédération des francophones hors Québec*, *Alliance Québec*, the *Société nationale des Acadiens*, the *Association canadienne d'éducation de langue française*, the Canadian Teachers' Federation, Canadian Parents for

French and the *Commission nationale des parents francophones*. Lastly, a number of expert witnesses spoke with the Committee: Messrs. Bastarache, Lachapelle, Caldwell, Castonguay, Cartwright, Foucher, Scott, Goldenberg and Churchill. (Appendix I contains a list of the witnesses heard and the meetings held during the First and Second Sessions of the Thirty-Third Parliament.)

4. This Report therefore deals with the two areas mentioned above (the bill to amend the *Official Languages Act* and education in the language of official-language minorities) and contains three related recommendations.

Amendments to the *Official Languages Act*

5. The *Official Languages Act* was passed in 1969 with the support of all parties, and has never been amended. Since its creation in 1980, the Committee on Official Languages of the Senate and the House of Commons has been considering the application of the Act in the policies and programs initiated by the government. To do so, it has frequently invited to appear before it representatives of the central agencies responsible for implementing the Act within the Public Service, as well as outside it, among the official-language communities themselves. The Committee has also heard representatives of various government departments and bodies. And also, it has on a number of occasions discussed possible improvements to the Act with the two most recent Commissioners of Official Languages. It has regularly tabled to Parliament Reports concerned with such improvements: in July 1981, June 1982, April 1983 and June 1985.
6. The Committee is thus in an excellent position to assess the appropriateness of the changes the Government is planning to make to the Act. Its members, both Senators and Members of the House of Commons, share a lively interest as well as a broad range of expertise in the area of official