

For example, Cultural Affairs and Western Europe in the Department of External Affairs and some ships in the Navy became French language units. Today there are about 27,000 people in 350 units. The intent is to try it out for about eighteen months and then assess it as a working management concept, the extent to which French becomes part of the civil service, and the extent to which Anglophones become familiar with the French scene.

In general there has been acceptance of the movement. Some Anglophones worry that, in spite of assurances to the contrary, their lack of French will handicap their careers; some Francophones think the encouragement to learn French is too little to late. Some, in the West especially, feel it is irrelevant. An official close to the program, asked how efficient it will be, said, "You can get an argument on this. There are some who say bilingualizing the public service will make it radically less efficient. But they act as though this or any public service is already one hundred per cent efficient. Sure there are some slowdowns, but there's nothing impossible."

[PARLEZ-VOUS?]

Though the thrust of the effort is to make a bilingual institution, rather than bilingual individuals, it clearly takes the latter to pull it off: senior officers, key officials, anyone in a French unit and anyone who meets the public in bilingual districts. There are now about 9,000 public servants in federal language schools, mostly English learning French. The old goal of total fluency has been modified. Four degrees of fluency have been defined, the third being func-

tionally bilingual, which is considered a successful level for most public servants. Specialized vocabularies are being taught for various jobs.

In earlier days of government language training, people took six to eight hours of classes a week, but this was scrapped in 1968 as ineffective both in cost and in terms of learning the language. The numbers of workers taking courses was high, but the number of those becoming bilingual was low, and there were many dropouts. Starting in 1968, total immersion courses of various sorts were begun. Typical today is a three week total dip, often in a resort-like setting, with nothing but the new language spoken day and night. This is followed by a return to the office with monitors provided to help polish the new skill. Programs may be as long as required — expenses and salary paid, of course. Senior officers may be moved, with their families, to a French or English community for a year. In Ottawa and other places outside Quebec where there are large French minorities, there is also French TV, radio, theater, and films.

[WATCHDOG: THE COMMISSIONER OF OFFICIAL LANGUAGES]

It's not surprising that Canada would create an ombudsman to police its intension that the two official languages be officially treated as equals. Ombudsmen are becoming as much a part of Canadian life as Royal Commissions. The linguistic ombudsman is the most independent federal official. Appointed for seven years and removable only by a vote of both houses, he has the power to investigate, subpoena, and enter virtually any government or crown corporation

## Education and Business

Besides suggesting how the federal government run its own house, the B & B Commission made scores of other recommendations for business and education and pointers on how to carry them out. Among them:

— That in the private sector in Quebec, governments and industry adopt the objective that French become the principal language of work at all levels, establishing French units, like the federal government.

— That Francophone job candidates be able to apply in French, and that employers take into account the difficulties the candidate may have had to face in his previous work, as a result of having to work in English.

— That the government of Quebec launch a task force to recommend how French may be

made the principal language of work in Quebec.

(The Commission pointed out some major exceptions to the general pattern, such as Hydro-Quebec. By doing business in French, the power company has forced other businesses to use French and French employees.)

— That study of the second official language be obligatory for all students in Canadian schools, with priority on speaking.

— That the languages not be taught as foreign, but as Canadian, with emphasis on the Canadian milieu.

— That both French- and English-speaking Canadians give less stereotyped pictures of one another in their histories.