

up to the excesses in a program that is causing anxiety to public servants, incalculable expense to taxpayers and is slowly but surely shaking the faith and lowering the morale of those who have dedicated their lives to the public service.

Consider how foolish it is, Mr. Speaker, to establish a goal that cannot possibly be accomplished with a time-frame that is itself unrealistic. This government is blindly on the road which is likely to lead Canadians to the point where they will have the worst of both worlds. What has been trumpeted as a program to "institutionally bilingualize" the public service has become a program to bilingualize the public servant, and we should get back to first principles very quickly.

As I have said before, and I say it again, the policy of bilingualism means that within the limits of practicability Canadians should have the right to federal government service in either official language. We should continue to search for equality. There ought to be a commitment to equality. We must not forget that entering the public service and advancing within it must be based on equality of opportunity for all Canadians. Every member of parliament has a duty to ensure that the public service is a place where Canadians can work together. All members, not just those who represent ridings with public servants in them, must ensure that the public service is a place where justice is not only done to every public servant but where it is seen to be done.

We must never forget that bilingualism involves the right to be unilingual, and that right applies to both English and French-speaking Canadians. There was a very heavy burden on this government with regard to the public service of Canada. It is a matter of history and record that the government failed with respect to that burden. On June 4, 1973, I joined with my leader in asking the government to go the second mile with public servants and put the so-called guidelines into law. The government has not done so, and in fact every one of the members of the government voted against that proposal. So much for their commitment to justice!

Nothing that has happened since that time has led me to any other conclusion than that this was the first step, that it was right then and that it is right now. There would be the assurance of an independent, trusted tribunal, which there is not now, and all of us would be assured that there would be no order, directive or regulation issued contrary to the law and, if there was, then important rights could be preserved and protected.

I believe that the time has come to review and reassess the basis of the procedure of implementation and the process of designation. This must be undertaken, not on some mystical quota system that does not square with the facts, or on some unscientific or subjective basis, or on the basis of pressure, whether subtle or otherwise, but on the basis of an examination of the real function, need and requirement for capacity of a bilingual nature based on a study of each position in each department and in terms of the requirement to give service. It would have to be recognized that the scope of this requirement would vary from department to department, but I believe that that is the real meaning of institutional bilingualism.

*The Address—Mr. Baker*

As part of a new approach to the problem of implementation, it goes without saying that the revolutionary aspect must be recognized as unreasonable and unacceptable. This means, of course, that we must end once and for all time-frames which have thus far been unrealistic and which as a result impose a coercive element upon the public service that is neither conducive to learning nor to anything else except resentment. This leads to pressures that are equally non-conducive to learning. Moreover, there is a growing feeling that the present procedure may be injurious to opportunities because superiors, who have a responsibility throughout all of this to get work out, are developing a noticeable tendency to fill the job with someone who does not need to go off on language training.

In this approach we would have to admit that the requirement for bilingual public servants would be reduced in the numerical sense, but I am willing to bet that the quality of the bilingual capacity and the desire to achieve that capacity among public servants would increase, and for the right reasons. To foster this desire the government, I believe, would be bound to provide language training. Most important, the public service would be a place which all Canadians would find attractive to work in and many of the anxieties and fears would be removed. I do not regard this as breaking faith with the principles of the Official Languages Act. Rather, I believe that the proposal is supportive and, moreover, that it is positive. These proposals are not intended to be exhaustive but, rather, to make a new beginning.

I want to make it clear that the Treasury Board, or any member of the government or of this House, ought not to be insensitive to the feelings of the public service of the country. For a start, all of us must face up to the fact that a new attitude is needed, because the pebble of insensitivity that was dropped into the pool has caused waves of misunderstanding that have travelled a fair distance and they will not go away because some members choose to ignore them.

In the few moments that I have left I want to turn to another subject which is important in this area, and that is the relationship of the people who live in it in terms of their local government and its relationship with the federal government. That relationship is best expressed to us in this area through the workings of the National Capital Commission. I am happy to say that of all the commissions and agencies of government, this commission and its workings are beyond the matter of party politics and dissent. I want to commend the government on its choice of a new chairman for the commission. He has held the office for some time. I have heard him speak, I have talked with him and I have come to know him. I believe he bears within his soul and heart the attitude of compromise that will make all the difference in the relationship between the federal government and local government.

However, it is important that there be a sound and strong contact between the two levels of government. I would hope the government would consider taking up with the National Capital Commission and, between the two of them, consider the appointment to the commission of the chairman of the Outaouais regional municipality board on the Quebec side, and of the chairman of the regional municipality of Ottawa-Carleton on the Ottawa