

*Recruitment of Francophones*

[English]

**PUBLIC SERVICE**STATEMENT ON PROGRAM FOR HIRING FRANCOPHONE  
UNIVERSITY GRADUATES

**Hon. C. M. Drury (President of the Treasury Board):** Mr. Speaker, on January 26 of this year I gave assurance to the House that the hiring of Francophone university students would not be charged to contingency vote 5 of the Treasury Board without first advising the House.

I am pleased to advise the House that the government, on the recommendation of the Treasury Board, has authorized the expansion of certain departmental programs and projects involving positions where French is the language of work. The total personnel costs of these programs will be approximately \$2 million and the number of personnel involved will be 276.

I outlined in my statement to the Miscellaneous Estimates Committee on March 9 the government's policy of making the Public Service progressively more representative of the two major linguistic communities of Canada. "In accordance with this policy, it is a basic goal of the government to assure equality of opportunity in the Public Service to both French-speaking and English-speaking Canadians."

I went on to say that this would be achieved through the progressive identification of positions as requiring a proficiency in both languages or a proficiency in French or in English, through increasing and improving the language training facilities for both Anglophones and Francophones, and through "the accelerated recruitment of Francophones to the Public Service and development of those already in it."

I noted that, to achieve these goals, departments would have to adopt carefully elaborated manpower development plans.

This program represents a step in the direction of achieving the objective of a more representative Public Service. Specifically, the government proposes to allocate \$2 million among ten departments which have submitted proposals for extending certain programs which, at one and the same time, would contribute to the realization of program objectives and would involve positions in areas of the Public Service where French is normally used. The experimental French language units to which I made reference in my statement on March 9 will not be involved since none has yet been established. Of the 276 positions, 128 will be administrative trainees, and the balance will be junior positions in the social science, biophysical sciences and applied science fields.

It is proposed that the program extensions involved, and specifically, the increase in the numbers of positions in the Public Service, be financed out of the contingency fund.

**Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition):** Mr. Speaker, I wish to thank the President of the Treasury Board for providing me with a copy of his statement in advance.

[Mr. Speaker.]

I accept, of course, the principle of equality of French and English in the Public Service and the importance of the Public Service representing the reality of the country.

I have said before and I say now that this or any government must be careful in attaining that representation that it does so in such a way that there will be no sense of injustice on the part of any group within the Public Service.

The confusion and secrecy that surrounded this particular program when it first became known was a perfect example of how not to proceed in matters concerning bilingualism in the Public Service. The present statement by the minister is at least an improvement in that regard in that it is frank and open except that, with regard to the number of persons and the cost of their employment the minister's statement is still vague.

I think that the people of Canada, and the Francophone graduates involved will want assurances that this program does not involve make-work projects. As the minister pointed out, it does not involve any experimental unilingual units because he says that none of these has yet been established. However, it does involve the expansion of existing programs and projects which involve positions where French is the language of work. In other words, the inference will be drawn that there may be other projects equally as meritorious as those that are being expanded but that these have been chosen because French is the language of work in these projects. Language of work will appear to many Canadians to be a rather new and curious principle upon which the Treasury Board recommends the establishment of particular projects.

I must tell the minister that the timing of the program is, in economic terms, unfortunate. In addition to the mass unemployment that prevails across Canada, it is public knowledge that it has been the policy of the government over the past year or more to cut back on the numbers of federal public servants. To what extent has this policy been changed and what is the policy now? In other words, if this is a program purely and simply to hire French-speaking Canadians without reference or relation to the government program in general, then I suggest it will not be acceptable to Canadians and it will not be acceptable to French-speaking Canadians.

The question we must ask ourselves is whether such a program really serves either Canadian unity or the legitimate Francophone presence in the federal Public Service. We must recognize the fact that there will be suspicion among non-Francophone Canadians. In the interests of harmony I think the government must allay that suspicion. That is why I suggest to the minister and to the government that it as quickly as possible present all available details of the programs involved.

I note that the minister says that in the ten departments concerned new employees and additional work on already existing programs will be involved and that their work will more effectively contribute to the goals that these programs are designed to achieve. That may be a