

*Ministerial Responsibility*

[Translation]

Every department and agency of the Government of Canada and every judicial, quasi-judicial or administrative body or Crown Corporation, established by or pursuant to an Act of the Parliament of Canada, has the duty to ensure that members of the public can obtain available services from and can communicate with it in both official languages.

● (1720)

[English]

This position is clear and unequivocal. It cannot be questioned.

[Translation]

But we refuse to accept without protesting the actions that demoralize and destroy honest and diligent civil servants. To illustrate my point, let me first quote an excerpt from the Commissioner's report to Parliament as found on page 4. I quote:

On November 21, 1974, the President of the Treasury Board announced the creation of a research project led by recognized linguists to determine why some persons appear unable to learn a second language and whether, as a consequence, teaching methods could be improved. The study group, headed by Dr. Gilles Bibeau of the University of Montreal, set about examining all elements entering into provision of language training in the public service.

The Bibeau commission proceeded with its enquiry and I read as follows:

One of Professor Bibeau's main conclusions is that many of the roughly 53,000 bilingual positions identified in 1973-74 were chosen without regard to any detailed evaluation of each department's specific needs. Indeed, levels of second-language ability required by various occupational categories for bilingual positions had been established in 1969 by the Public Service Commission in the following manner:

In other words, the policy was a failure and that failure is acknowledged by the Commissioner of Official Languages in his report.

[English]

To give some idea of the problems that this is creating for good honest well-meaning public servants who find, for one reason or another, that they are unable to learn a second language, I should just like to read from two letters that have passed over my desk recently. I am not going to cite names because I do not want to get anybody into trouble, but these are authentic documents and the names are here.

A civil servant at Shirley's Bay approximately nine years away from retirement finds that his job has been declared bilingual. He has been in the security line, presumably on perimeter security to make sure that the Shirley's Bay operations are not tampered with. I look back to the Bibeau report. Is this one of the 53,000 posts that were declared bilingual for no good reason other than to have 53,000 to report? I suspect it is.

This man tried to learn French but he is tone deaf. Anyone who has tried to learn a language, particularly at a certain age, knows that you need some tonality—you have to be able to hear changes from what you normally hear. The deafness does not affect his work and he has indicated that he very rarely needs the second language and gets along very well with one. Suddenly he was sent a letter on April 1 of this year which informed him that his position

[Mr. Munro (Esquimalt-Saanich).]

had been made bilingual and telling him that he should resign by letter immediately. The letter, which grieved me, said:

As you were unsuccessful in attaining the required level of language proficiency in the other official language—

He is tone deaf and has no need to use the language in his position, Mr. Speaker.

—those aspects of your duties which resulted in your position being identified as bilingual, shall not be carried out by you.

Even before this letter was sent it had been determined that an employee of the bilingual division of the public service was phoning around to other people in his division asking if they would take on his job. Is this the way to maintain morale in a public service? I must say I find it deplorable.

**Mr. Alkenbrack:** Despicable.

**Mr. Munro (Esquimalt-Saanich):** I am surprised that the President of the Treasury Board should accept it. There is another letter I should like to quote from which came from a highly trained professional scientist. I am not going to give the name but I have the letter. The division in which he was working has given national leadership in technology, training methods, and efficient management methods. I have to avoid a little bit of this because it could be identified. They publish their works in both French and English on the development of the system, and have received national and international acclaim. A second edition of one of their works has been published, and a request has been received from Spanish-speaking countries to have it translated.

The director of this particular part of the public service has developed his unit to the point where it has full international recognition. It has been operated as a bilingual unit for a long time and has played a major role in encouraging institutions in the province of Quebec to improve their methods and training.

All of a sudden this man and his administrator were called to go to a language course. The administrator had just finished a course in organization and administrative management by objective. He had just reported back when he got another letter to go off to a French course. They were expecting to implement the management by objective procedures that he had learned when he was sent off on two weeks' notice. My friend here suspected he would have two weeks' notice or so, and was making plans accordingly. But not a bit of it; he received two days' notice. Having cancelled his engagements he reported to the Centre Asticou in Hull. Unfortunately this is not where the story ends. He reminds me that in this sort of thing he is taken out of the world to which he has been committed all his life, and he writes;

This is grossly unreasonable and shows a flagrant lack of understanding of the professional role in the public service. No employer has the right to demand such sacrifice for any person, particularly when a unit has already demonstrated its capability in fully achieving the employer's goals, which includes bilingualistic facility in this instance.

Not only that, Mr. Speaker, when he got there he found people who had just joined the public service and had immediately been assigned to the Centre Asticou in Hull. One young person was sent on language training immediately on joining the public service. She had no intention of