

APPENDIX

STATEMENT OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE, THE HONOURABLE GÉRARD PELLETIER,
TABLED IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS ON NOVEMBER 6, 1969, CONCERNING THE
FEDERAL GOVERNMENT'S POLICY WITH RESPECT TO VOLUME II OF THE
ROYAL COMMISSION ON BILINGUALISM AND BICULTURALISM

I. GENERAL REMARKS

Over the past few months careful and detailed consideration has been given to those aspects of Volume II of the report of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism which are of particular interest to the federal government. Special attention has been devoted to an examination of the extent to which the federal government may be able to assist in this area.

The government acknowledges that much of the substance of the recommendations put forward in Book II is more in the provincial domain than that of the federal government, both in terms of constitutional jurisdiction and as a practical matter. Nevertheless, we believe that there is a dimension to the problem which perforce involves the federal government.

As we see it, this entails the development and encouragement of programs to reinforce and advance the use of the two official languages across the country. More specifically, it relates to twelve of the royal commissioners' recommendations which are addressed directly to the federal government. We also believe that it involves a concerted effort in co-operation with the provinces to ensure that full advantage is taken of the widespread desire, not only to ensure equal rights to the official minority language communities, but also to encourage second-language learning.

The government's basic position is that we accept the principles underlying the recommendations addressed to the federal government and are prepared to provide for a financial contribution to support their implementation. This means that the government is ready to accept its responsibilities as set out by the royal commissioners. It is clear of course that action in this field cannot depend on the federal government alone, for these proposals relate to educational institutions and programmes which are a provincial responsibility. Translation of these principles into practice therefore requires acceptance by the provinces, and beyond that a willingness on their part to take the initiative in putting new programmes into effect.

Secondly, the federal government welcomes and fully supports the view expressed by Canadians that the time has come to provide a better opportunity in Canada, particularly among young people, to learn the second official language, whether this be French or English, as the case may be. We recognize that this would require a concerted effort in the field of education, which is pre-eminently the concern of the provinces, and we will be examining the possibilities for action in this area with the provinces.

Because the government is aware not only of provincial interests but of provincial responsibilities and jurisdiction, our suggestions have been put forward as a basis for discussion and consultation and it is the government's hope that further consideration of the matter can go forward in this spirit. Federal representatives look forward to meeting with their provincial counterparts to work out formulae which will be satisfactory to all concerned.

With respect to financing the programmes involved, the government has indicated that it has no choice but to establish priorities and limitations for all programmes across the range of governmental activities. We have suggested that, realistically, even the best will in the world does not necessarily carry with it the ability to disperse unlimited funds. We have therefore informed the provinces that, after the most careful consideration, the government feels obliged to place at least approximate limits on the amounts which it can contribute to this programme.

II. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE ROYAL
COMMISSION WHICH ARE ADDRESSED
TO THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

The twelve recommendations specifically directed to the federal government can be grouped into five categories: the first is recommendation 26 which asserts a general principle; second, recommendation 27 has reference to minority language schools; third, there are four recommendations—numbers 28 and 29, 41 and 42—which have regard to