

contact with the public and who can speak both languages is the one who should enjoy priority.

An hon. Member: The two official languages of the country.

Mr. Grégoire: Obviously, let us not talk about other languages now.

[*English*]

Mr. Churchill: May I ask another question. I take it the hon. member does not agree with the proposition put forward by the Minister of Mines and Technical Surveys who is reported to have been insisting that people entering the Civil Service must know both French and English. I want to speak on behalf of those whose native language is neither English nor French.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Grégoire: Mr. Chairman, quite understandably, this is a field where flexibility is required when such a suggestion is implemented. One must be flexible enough to admit that this situation exists and that, at present, most of our civil servants are unilingual.

The suggestion made by the Minister of Mines and Technical Surveys (Mr. Pepin) to allow a certain number of additional points to a bilingual civil servant seems quite normal to me, since he acknowledges and establishes the following principle, namely that a Canadian civil servant who must deal with the public and who can speak both official languages is necessarily more competent than another who speaks only one of those languages.

This is what such a principle should recognize. We have another solution to offer. Let us give an additional bonus of \$200 or \$300 to any civil servant who can supply proof that he can speak and understand both languages.

So, upon entering the civil service, everyone would be on the same footing, whether bilingual or not. Once in the civil service, if he wants to be entitled to the bonus, it is up to him to study in a language laboratory to learn French or English according to whether he is a French or English Canadian.

At this time, according to the program we proposed three years ago, to give an additional bonus to everyone who is bilingual upon entering the civil service for any department they would all be on the same footing, but once in the service, the bilingual employee would receive the bonus if he can understand and speak both languages.

Supply—Secretary of State

That will force civil servants to learn the other language. If they are French, they will learn English and if they are English they will learn French, should they want the bonus. And it would not take too long. I know that the former Secretary of State had conceived a plan for civil servants. Now, all that would be beneficial to those now in the civil service. They could immediately learn the other language that they do not know and then get their bonus. Besides, in six months or a year from now, they could speak French or English and be understood by everyone in his own language.

I think that the member for Winnipeg South Centre should be satisfied with this. He should find such an attitude or such a principle satisfactory.

● (9:40 p.m.)

[*English*]

Mr. Churchill: Mr. Chairman, I have another question, even though I think we should get the estimates through tonight and with that in mind I anticipate a short answer. Would the hon. member recommend a bonus for a person whose native language is English but who has learned Eskimo in order to communicate with some of our native people, and a bonus for others along the same line, for those who act as interpreters in Russian, German and so on?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Grégoire: No, Mr. Chairman, the bonus would be for bilingual people, namely those who speak and understand the two official languages in Canada. It is rather exceptional to speak Russian, and a Russian interpreter gets a much higher salary, because he had enough determination to learn Russian; it is his bonus, because he has an extra qualification, due to the fact that he speaks Russian. I do not know Russian, but nobody would pay me the salary of the Russian interpreter either.

But to be bilingual, that is to speak French and English, that is an additional asset in the civil service, and it deserves a bonus, in order to promote the development of true bilingualism in Canada. This bonus, will be an incentive for the officials actually in service to learn French, if they speak English only, or to learn English if they speak French only. Does this answer satisfy the hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre?