

*Official Languages*

guage skills; that if they could not or would not become bilingual they would refuse a transfer to another position. That is completely false, Mr. Speaker, and I believe that such an attitude only creates dissent. The principles announced, including principle No. 6, were developed for all Canadians, for all public servants, whether English- or French-speaking.

Of course the number of unilingual public servants who are Anglophones is by far greater than the number of those who are Francophones. But such a disproportion is drastically reduced when considering only those areas of the Public Service where bilingualism is a foreseeable or established need. The government feels that members of both groups are entitled to job security in case of inability or refusal to become bilingual in recognition of newly recognized linguistic requirements for the position they occupy.

Furthermore, I am not prepared to question the integrity or the good will of public servants, or to presume, as some have done, that a majority or even a substantial number of unilinguals will reject the possibility offered them of becoming bilingual under the most favourable conditions. When such situations occur, departments and agencies will receive the required funds from the Treasury Board to take alternative administrative action in order to satisfy linguistic requirements.

[*English*]

In certain cases, the price of ensuring linguistic equality in the public service may indeed result in some additional positions being provided. However, I expect more often than not in such cases the option of a job transfer will be satisfying or even attractive to the employees, thus eliminating the need for alternative administrative arrangements.

• (1410)

We are determined that the development of bilingualism in the public service will be the product of evolution. The government acknowledges that such evolution is achieved at the cost of considerable outlays, of goodwill and of individual effort. The tempo of change we seek is based on our readiness to rely on the goodwill of the men and women who make up the public service of Canada, the staff associations, this government and members of parliament.

I should like to say that the support of the Chairman of the Public Service Commission to these principles and guidelines was indispensable to their successful development. The Public Service Commission has taken on a demanding task ranging from the determination of language proficiency levels required for individual positions, the administration of the merit principle in respect of appointments as required by the Public Service Employment Act, the reorganization of language schools so as to provide for continuous language training, to the hearing of appeals against the improper determination of the language requirements of positions.

The most notable development, however, touches on the subject of competitions for the minority of public service jobs which will be designated as bilingual. In order not to prevent Canadians from getting into the service of their country through lack of a language skill, which they may

[Mr. Drury.]

not have had the opportunity to acquire, unilingual English or French-speaking Canadians will be allowed to compete for bilingual positions if they have indicated their willingness to become bilingual. The Public Service Commission has extended such an advantage to present employees of the government as well as to new entrants, Mr. Speaker. Such candidates judged successful in respect of job requirements other than second-language skills will be given immediate access to continuous language training, at the completion of which they will be confirmed in their positions. Candidates unsuccessful in language training will also be provided with an opportunity for a review of their ability in the second language. In the event that they are unable to acquire the necessary level of bilingual ability, they will be given an equivalent unilingual job with no loss of earnings.

The Treasury Board's contribution with regard to these procedures will be to provide the parties with the means to replace those on language training and to ensure that positions are available for those who may be unsuccessful in language training. The Treasury Board will also be responsible for co-ordinating and monitoring the complex administrative task of implementing the guidelines.

The resolution before you, Mr. Speaker, does not spell out the timetable for the implementation of the nine principles; and I would like to explain this further.

The first step, known as the identification of positions requiring the knowledge and use of both French and English, will be completed by December 31 of this year, although we will be pressed to achieve this. The list of those positions, to be prepared by the departments and agencies, will be reviewed by the Treasury Board and with the staff associations.

The formal designation of positions as "bilingual" will follow the identification step by 15 months, and thus be effected progressively from April 1, 1975 to the end of 1978. Employees, will, therefore, have at least 15 months notice of the effective date of designation of the positions they occupy. Prior to the designation taking effect, unilingual persons in these positions will be able to take language training of up to 12 months at public expense.

After the identification of bilingual positions, the language requirements of all other positions in the public service will be listed on the following basis: English essential, French essential, or optional use of French or English.

I would like to draw the attention of the House to the principle that entitled long-service employees, those with 10 years continuous service in 1966 when Mr. Pearson addressed this House on the same issue, to have access without second-language skills to positions identified as bilingual. The Prime Minister in his address, has commented at length on the fulfilling of the commitments made to public servants by Mr. Pearson.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I should also point out that the Public Service Commission has for some time been hearing appeals against the language requirements of any position at the time that a selection process is taking place to fill vacant positions; whether unilingual or bilingual. This appeal route will be an added preventative to incorrect identification of the language requirements of the