

available from federal offices or facilities within the national capital region in either official language.

In keeping with that, Ottawa tower became fully bilingual 16 hours a day as of June 1990 and 24 hours a day as of March 1991. The cost of this was and still is outrageous. The staffing of Ottawa tower calls for 17 controllers but at present there are only 9 controllers available for duty. Part of the problem is that all positions are designated as bilingual imperative. This means a controller must be fully bilingual to even apply for the position.

I for one have no problem with the concept of providing bilingual service where demand is sufficient to warrant cost effective language services. I already mentioned this at the beginning of my talk. Just how much demand constitutes sufficient is a questionable point and well worth examining here.

Before I begin to discuss the need in the tower I would like to add that the full bilingual service is in place at Ottawa tower. It is now in the process of being implemented in Ottawa terminal.

Let us look at how one might determine what demands are and how much service is needed to satisfy those demands, if in fact they are in need of being satisfied.

Simulations were run on equipment then located at the research and development department in Hull. Operating from a single bilingual position, traffic that included 30 per cent French speaking pilots was handled acceptably. This establishes a rate at which we can then look at staffing plans if it can be determined that the demand exists. What of the demand? Controllers at Ottawa tower record each contact requesting service in French. The optimum amount of requests they receive is 2 per cent, one-fifteenth of the amount that has been demonstrated can be handled safely from a single position.

A little side note on that 2 per cent figure, these figures include Air Canada pilots who can obviously speak and operate in English. It includes an airline whose next stop after Ottawa is Boston. It includes pilots from Transport Canada who fly all over this country.

I suggest there is no justification at all for bilingual air traffic control services in the Ottawa area. If there is, it should only be in that single position originally envisioned which could demonstrably control not only that amount of traffic but a tremendous and unexpected amount of growth in the future.

The cost of this bilingual service is just one of the concerns of this program, but it certainly is a significant one. At present the combined cost of the overstaffing needed to implement the bilingual program in Ottawa terminal plus a shortage of three bilingual controllers from the tower who are now on training for the terminal to staff the new bilingual positions is almost \$1 million per year. There are English speaking tower controllers in

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Ottawa who can relieve this cost but they are not allowed to control in the tower because they do not speak French. These costs are only the tip of the iceberg.

At the beginning I also mentioned the concern about safety. The source of this concern is the way the English speaking controllers are being dealt with during this highly questionable implementation of bilingual services. Incumbent rights are being ignored. Original implementation plans are being scrapped. Controllers' futures are up in the air, no pun intended.

• (1555)

I fly a lot, as do most of the members in this House. I would not want to have open heart surgery from a doctor whose face I had just slapped the night before. Why then are we doing the same thing to the people whose hands we place our lives in every time we take to the skies?

This is but one small example of the problem caused by the Official Languages Act. However it is a very important example of the extent to which this is getting out of hand.

The time to end the problem is now. It is time that we became the external force that will put an end to the motion of a program that has never worked in the interests of anyone.

**Mr. Mac Harb (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister for International Trade):** Mr. Speaker, for a moment I did not know where I was, until the member had concluded his remarks.

I want to correct the record. This capital city has already declared itself bilingual. In excess of 30 per cent of the people in this city speak both official languages. There are over 1.1 million people who live in the national capital region and use the international airport. I would say that over 55 per cent of those people speak French and English.

Is the hon. member trying to tell me that if I were a franco-phone living on the Quebec side and I used the international airport that I should not be entitled to speak to somebody in French?

On the other side there is a correction to the hon. member's comments. The Ottawa international airport not only serves other municipalities across Canada and the United States but it also serves some places in Europe. It is an international airport.

It is our intention to enhance the bilingual services at the Ottawa international airport. My hope is that we will reach a point where every airport in Canada will have the same flexibility and the same kind of services that are now provided at the Ottawa international airport.

I was not born a French or English Canadian. I came to this country a few years ago. I look at it as an enrichment and an honour for me to be able to speak French, English, Arabic and a little bit of Italian. I am working on my Chinese.