

They reject, for example, the discontinuance of the federal government, in which Quebec is very well represented. It is a well-known fact that Canada's Francophone community scored some important points during the past decade as it became aware of its political power. The federal authorities were the first, ahead even of Quebec itself, to pass language legislation to protect and spread the French language throughout Canada. I know that certain commentators in Canada and even in France are quick to say that the official languages policy initiated by Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau in 1969 has ended in failure. Many examples can probably be cited in support of that conclusion. The Canadian government itself, far from hiding the problems, reports on any failures. It was aware from the beginning that its language policy would meet with a great deal of resistance because it constituted a real revolution for English-speaking Canadians and its application would take years to ensure. It appointed an Official Languages Commissioner, a permanent, strict and uncompromising guardian to report to Parliament on violations to the spirit and the letter of the legislation. Just last week, in the middle of the referendum campaign, the Commissioner publicly and harshly criticized in his annual report the obstinate way in which the application of the Act has been and still is being delayed, neglected and resisted, ten years after the legislation was passed.

Can one really say that the policy has failed? Before answering that question, one has to carefully define what the policy was designed to accomplish. An apparently undying myth, and I say undying because it is still being propagated by responsible journalists, has it that Mr Trudeau dreamed of transforming twenty-three million Canadians into perfectly bilingual citizens. If that were really the case, his policy could only have ended in absolute failure. However, there was never any question of undertaking such a project. The objective of the Act and the policy is ambitious, admittedly, but it is also realistic. The goal is to ensure that every Canadian citizen is able to communicate with the central government and receive services from that government in the official language of his choice; to make possible the free use of French and English in the public service and all government agencies. In point of fact, the goal is to gain acceptance for the French language and give it equal status in the enormous State machine which had largely ostracized it for more than a century. It goes without saying that, after ten years, this goal has not yet been realized.

However, must we speak of failure and preach surrender when enormous progress has been made? The extension of French radio and television from the Atlantic to the Pacific does not constitute a failure. The simultaneous publishing in French and English of all legislation and of thousands of