

# HOUSE OF COMMONS

Friday, March 16, 1973

The House met at 11 a.m.

[Translation]

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

### BILINGUALISM

#### TEACHING OF FRENCH AS SECOND LANGUAGE IN NATIONAL CAPITAL AREA—STATEMENT BY SECRETARY OF STATE

**Hon. James Hugh Faulkner (Secretary of State):** Mr. Speaker, I am happy to announce that I have reached agreement with the Hon. Thomas Wells, the Minister of Education of Ontario, regarding the provision of supplementary funds to Ontario school boards in the National Capital Region for a pilot project in increased teaching of French as a second language.

[English]

These additional funds are to be made available in the context of an experimental project. In the first year, approximately \$2 million is to be provided through the Ontario Ministry of Education from the bilingualism programs budget administered by my department. The cost of research involved in the experiment, as well as its evaluation, will be borne by the Ontario government.

[Translation]

A decision on the exact amounts of money involved in the program will be made after proposals have been received from the four boards concerned on the Ontario side of the National Capital Region. I expect that the province will be receiving submissions from them shortly, after which we look forward to further consultations leading to implementation of the agreement at the beginning of the next school year.

[English]

Mr. Speaker, I would like to emphasize how pleased I am personally that we have been able to reach agreement on this new arrangement, which we expect will go a long way toward strengthening bilingualism in the National Capital Region. This form of co-operation, in a carefully evaluated experimental program, could, we think, lead to important new advances in this field. We also expect it will provide substantial new data on techniques of second language teaching which will be of value across the country. I am also very gratified at the initiative which has been taken by the school boards concerned and I believe they should be complimented on their foresight and interest in a problem which is of concern to all Canadians.

**Mr. Walter Baker (Grenville-Carleton):** Mr. Speaker, I should like to thank the minister for sending a copy of his statement to me. I want to say to him, through you, Sir, that the statement is most welcome. Perhaps, indeed, it could be characterized as a landmark. First, it recognizes

that the national capital is a particular area of need and that since the government of Canada is the major employer in the area the federal government has a major responsibility to ensure that the young people of this area, the majority of whom look forward to careers in the public service, will have a reasonable opportunity to compete and to advance. Second, it recognizes the very reasonable proposition that, over the long haul, second language training is better undertaken not when one has reached the age of maturity but when one is young and can be motivated to learn for the right reasons.

• (1110)

It is also vindication of the position I took during the campaign and in this House. We are, in effect, attempting to remake Canadian history in the national capital area, and we cannot effectively remake 105 years of that history in five years. It will not take 100 years either, but it must be recognized by everyone that the object of the whole exercise will never be achieved except in an atmosphere of acceptance and understanding. It is heartening to know that what was said and done in the latter part of 1972 has not been in vain. In that respect I welcome the statement.

I know that the four school boards in this area will be overjoyed with this announcement. I applaud their initiative. Their ratepayers have been pushing for action in second language training at a time when their expenditures are being curtailed. I am sure this will ease the burden for them. More important, it will ease the minds of parents who, with their children, have found themselves in the midst of a bilingual hurricane recently.

Most of all, Mr. Speaker, the young people of the national capital area will be the ultimate beneficiaries of this announcement. It is in their name that I welcome this announcement, for many of them will have doors opened for them in the private as well as public sectors that might otherwise have been only ajar and in some places closed. I congratulate the minister, Mr. Speaker.

[Translation]

**Mr. John Harney (Scarborough West):** Mr. Speaker, I should like first to congratulate the Secretary of State (Mr. Faulkner) on his success in negotiating this agreement.

For our part, we naturally welcome the establishment of a pilot project in the National Capital Region, especially as it is well-known that the school boards in question have often asked for help to go ahead with a program likely to promote bilingualism in this highly sensitive area of our country.

Having expressed our enthusiasm at the start, I should now like to make a couple of points that are perhaps a criticism of the government's bilingualism policy. First, it must be understood that, although there was a pretty