

*Supply—Secretary of State*

with the public or answer the phone. Is it not normal?

I appreciate that the hon. member for Carleton may be worried. He says that almost 50 per cent of the civil servants live in his riding. It is not because such a situation developed gradually that it must be allowed to linger.

It should be possible to take the necessary steps so that from now on those who join the civil service will know that they have a better chance, qualifications being equal, if they are bilingual.

Some crown corporations have set up language laboratories. Once, in a hotel north of Montreal, I saw some employees of the C.N.R. who spoke English only and who were taking French in a language laboratory sponsored by the C.N.R. Those men wanted to learn French and they did. It did not take them so long and at least today they can deal with the public.

We must start with the young. All sensible, sincere Canadians must accept, must approve the decision taken by the civil service commission and congratulate it for giving an additional percentage of points for bilingualism in the civil service.

In all the departments, whether is it the Secretary of State or the Department of National Defence, language courses can be organized to enable the newcomers to the civil service, those with chances for promotion, to reach the highest positions. If they are French Canadians, they can take English courses; if English Canadians, take French; so that all can benefit from the two languages and thus gain greater competence.

Think about it. There are ministers and senior civil servants who have to do business in other countries of the world. Well, nobody in this house can deny that when a citizen understands and speaks French and English, he can go almost anywhere in the world and make himself understood. In the fields of diplomacy, defence, broadcasting, trade and finance, when you speak both languages you can be welcomed and you can make yourself understood almost everywhere across the world. Therefore, it is a level of culture and competence a good civil servant must try to reach.

It is one of the criteria, even though not the only one, that must be taken into consideration in the case of a civil servant.

[Mr. Grégoire.]

• (9:30 p.m.)

[English]

**Mr. Churchill:** Would the hon. member permit a question?

**Mr. Grégoire:** Yes.

**Mr. Churchill:** I thought the hon. member needed a rest. I should like to ask him this: would he impose any restriction on people whose native language is other than English or French, those who speak Polish, Ukrainian, Italian, Greek, and so on. Would the hon. member oblige them to know both English and French before they could enter the Civil Service?

[Translation]

**Mr. Grégoire:** I admit this case is important. I know that in the prairie provinces, there are several people of Polish, Ukrainian or Hungarian origin, who already speak their own language, and it is expecting very much of them to speak two more languages in addition to theirs.

I believe that to become a good civil servant, they must speak one of the two official languages of Canada. It is a good start already and they are even more competent if they speak both official languages of this country.

I do not want to impose that on them, I do not want to ask that of them. On the other hand, between two persons of equal competence—and I really mean of equal competence here—which one should the government choose?

There is in St. Boniface, near Winnipeg where the hon. member comes from, quite a number of French Canadians. In Winnipeg, if two candidates apply for the same job, and they are equally competent though one of them is bilingual, speaking English and French, I believe the latter enjoys an advantage over the one who speaks English only. If the two citizens from St. Boniface speak French and are otherwise equally competent, I would say that, if one of them speaks English, he must have the precedence on the other.

I believe the hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre (Mr. Churchill) will admit that if two French Canadians apply for postmaster's job in the office where he collects his mail, the one who speaks English has an additional competence over the one who speaks French only.

That is what we claim and nothing else: Competence being equal, the one coming into