

In Canada, a country blessed with more prosperity and political stability than most, we are making our choices methodically and democratically.

In all parts of the country, within both language groups, there are those who call for uniformity. It will be simpler and cheaper, they argue. In the case of the French minority, isolation is prescribed as necessary for survival. We must never underestimate the strength or the durability of these appeals to profound human emotions.

Surely these arguments are based on fear, on a narrow view of human nature, and on a defeatist appraisal of our capacity to adapt our society and its institutions to the demands of its citizens. Those who argue for separation, in whatever form, are prisoners of past injustice, blind to the possibilities of the future.

We have rejected this view of our country. We believe in two official languages and in a pluralist society, not merely as a political necessity but as an enrichment. We want to live in a country in which French-Canadians can choose to live among English-Canadians and English-Canadians can choose to live among French-Canadians without abandoning their cultural heritage.

Those of us who have some experience of the difficulties and opportunities of this course are conscious of the risk. But we are convinced that, as a country and as individuals, we must take it. French Canada can survive not by turning in on itself but by reaching out to claim its full share of every aspect of Canadian life. English Canada should not attempt to crush or expect to absorb French Canada. All Canadians should capitalize on the advantages of living in a country which has learned to speak in two great world languages.

Such a country will be able to make full use of the skills and energy of all its citizens. Such a country will be more interesting, more stimulating and, in many ways, richer than it has ever been. Such a country will be much better equipped to play a useful role in the world of today and tomorrow.

How can we realize these aspirations? We believe that this bill is one step in that direction. It is not the first step, and, to place it in context, I shall mention some others which have been taken since the appointment of the Royal Commission under Mr. Dunton and Mr. Laurendeau in 1963.

A programme of language-training for federal public servants was started in 1964 and has since been greatly expanded to develop proficiency in both languages in those centres where it is required. The Government recognizes that its objectives in this field cannot be accomplished overnight, and that their fulfilment must not involve any prejudice to the careers of civil servants who are not bilingual and who have devoted many years of their lives to the Public Service. Nevertheless substantial progress has been made.

About 5,000 hours of language-training a day are now available for public servants. I am happy to note that a number of Members of this House have been taking advantage of these facilities.

Because we are engaged in a project that, as far as we know, is unique in the world in both size and scope, the rapid growth of this programme resulted for a period in serious problems of administration. As the demand for training has far exceeded the capacity of the system, priority has been given to training executive and administrative officers. The Government intends to expand the