

Department of External Affairs. It must also promote the interests of all Canadians of both major linguistic communities. Particularly in the projection of the Canadian character abroad, it implies that Canada must make a special effort to establish a proper balance by increasing her relations with francophone countries not only in Africa, where our programme has been stepped up, but also in Asia and in Europe. It also entails pursuing the effort which is already underway to reinforce and promote the use of our two official languages in international organizations and agencies. This we are doing.

At the same time, if our intention is to create a climate and conditions which will enable every officer to serve his country in either of the official languages, we must continue to encourage the use of the officer's own language as a working tool and to ensure that both English and French speaking officers have a sufficient knowledge of the two languages to be able to comprehend each other in day-to-day working situations. Especially in the performance of their duties abroad, our officers should be a living illustration of the Canadian linguistic duality. They must also meet the requirements of their fellow citizens travelling outside Canada.

All this means in practice that in our department and others concerned with Canadian activities abroad there is a particularly striking need for officers to be competent in both official languages. We therefore have to be very sure that this need is being met as effectively as possible. I think your presence here today, together with representatives from other departments which share in the important task of representing Canadian interests abroad, testifies to the importance which all of us attach to this task.

Over the past few years we have in fact accomplished a good deal towards translating the principles of bilingualism into practice. Our recruitment of junior officers, as you know, has been particularly successful in terms of their ability to work in the two official languages. We have also been fortunate in recent years in being able to bring about a substantial increase in the proportion