

# HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, November 21, 1974

The House met at 2 p.m.

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[Translation]

### TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS

Second and third reports of Standing Committee on Transport and Communications, in both official languages—Mr. Campbell.

[Editor's Note: For text of above reports, see today's Votes and Proceedings.]

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[English]

### BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

#### AGREEMENT ON TIME LIMIT FOR SPEECHES DURING BUDGET DEBATE

**Hon. Mitchell Sharp (President of the Privy Council):** Mr. Speaker, there have been informal discussions amongst the House leaders and there is general agreement that, in order to give more members an opportunity to participate in the debate on the budget, speeches be limited to 20 minutes.

**Mr. Speaker:** Is that agreed?

**Some hon. Members:** Agreed.

**Mr. Speaker:** It is so ordered.

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[Translation]

### OFFICIAL LANGUAGES ACT

#### TABLING OF REPORT ON BILINGUALISM WITHIN PUBLIC SERVICE

**Hon. Jean Chrétien (President of the Treasury Board):** Mr. Speaker, I wish to table a report on the progress that has been made in implementing the resolution adopted by Parliament in June 1973 as it relates to carrying out the government's responsibilities under the Official Languages Act.

The report contains the results of the process of identifying the language requirements of all positions in the Public Service for which the Treasury Board is the employer. Information is provided on the number of bilingual employees occupying positions identified as bilingual, as well as data related to language training for public servants.

[English]

Mr. Speaker, hon. members will note that the number of positions identified as bilingual is approximately 53,600, compared to the estimate of 25,000 made in December, 1972. The main reasons for this are that the number of bilingual positions required to serve the public servants were underestimated. In addition, to allow public servants to work in the official language of their choice, the number of bilingual supervisory positions is higher than estimated. Criteria for identifying bilingual positions were established in consultation with certified bargaining agents.

● (1410)

Fifty-three per cent of incumbents of bilingual positions are bilingual, leaving an estimated training load of some 19,000, the majority of whom are Anglophones. Experience with full-time language training is still quite limited and it will be some time before complete data becomes available on the number of employees who will be able to complete language training successfully. However, the government wishes to ensure that the maximum number of public servants are able to acquire a knowledge of their second official language. Therefore, a study will be carried out by recognized linguists to determine why some persons appear to be unable to learn a second language and whether, as a consequence, teaching methods can be improved.

In addition, at the request of the government the Public Service Commission has agreed that, effective immediately, unilingual employees aged 60—or over, will automatically be exempted from language training while retaining the right to occupy or be appointed to bilingual positions. This means that a unilingual employee aged 60 or over who has all the other qualifications for a bilingual position can be appointed to the position without having to become bilingual.

[Translation]

Mr. Speaker, the resolution adopted by Parliament called for measures to increase the use of French within the Public Service as well as for ensuring full participation of both the anglophone and francophone communities. Hon. members will, I am sure, hope for a continued improvement in the situation indicated by the statistics describing a linguistic profile of the Public Service.

During the process of implementation of Parliament's Resolution the Certified Bargaining Agents have been consulted. The fruitfulness of our consultations with these employee representatives and particularly the work of the Official Languages Committee of the National Joint Council deserve special mention and I wish to express the appreciation of the government.