

discussion of the implementation of the Canadian system in the field of international relations. They also provide an opportunity for an examination, not only by experts but by the public at large, which can only serve to enhance Canadian unity and the interests of all Canadian citizens.

Canadian foreign policy must not only be consonant with the interests of Canadians across the country but must also take account of our distinctive Canadian cultural and linguistic heritage. Thus, in framing and implementing foreign policy, the Canadian Government must recognize the traditions which both French- and English-speaking Canadians seek to maintain and develop within the fabric of the Canadian federation. Accordingly, it must be based upon equal status for the two official languages across the range of operations of the 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 its 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 under way 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 of new officers speaking French as their mother tongue. In the last three years, close to one-third of the new entrants have been French-speaking. Because these groups, taken together, involve some 140 officers, they have improved the linguistic balance in the service as a whole. This is of vital significance, for bilingualism cannot possibly flourish unless both groups are well represented.

In promoting this policy, it is important to keep in mind that French-Canadian diplomats, in the same way as English-speaking officers, should be assigned to a great variety of functions in all our missions and divisions. It is not the policy of the Department to have one or other group specialize in