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BILINGUALISM IN CANADA'S PUBLIC SERVICE

Since it was the aim of the Government "to make the public service of maximum benefit to the people of Canada by attracting to it the most competent and qualified Canadians available in all parts of Canada", Prime Minister Pearson told the House of Commons on April 6 that the Government had for several years, "having regard to the character of our country... been taking practical steps to encourage bilingualism in the federal public service, as part of its fundamental objective of promoting and strengthening national unity on the basis of the equality of rights and opportunities for both English-speaking and French-speaking Canadians".

The Prime Minister went on to outline in the following words the Government programme for achieving the desired degree of bilingualism in the civil service:

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

In developing measures to assist those now in the public service more effectively to achieve a reasonable proficiency in both official languages and to improve the recruitment of civil servants with this proficiency, the Government has been guided by the following principles:

- (a) The achievement of bilingualism is in itself a desirable objective for any Canadian citizen. Where the need for bilingualism clearly exists in practice, above all in the national capital, it should be recognized as an element of merit in selection for civil service positions.
- (b) In conformity with the merit system, which must remain unimpaired, the requirement for bilingualism should relate to positions, and not only to individuals.

- (c) Bilingualism must be introduced gradually over a period of years in a manner which will not lead to injustice or misunderstanding. The various measures should be integrated into a well defined, long-term programme.
- (d) It must, therefore, be a requirement of any programme that, in areas where a need for bilingualism exists, civil servants and prospective recruits must be provided with adequate time and opportunity to adapt themselves to new conditions in the service in a way that will increase their own possibilities for a successful and satisfying career.
- (e) For similar reasons of equity, the careers of civil servants who are not bilingual and who have devoted many years of their lives to the service of their country, must not be prejudiced in any way by measures to develop bilingualism.
- (f) The Government will consult from time to time with civil service associations concerning its policy on bilingualism in order to obtain their point of view, and to provide them with all reasonable assurances and remove any possible misunderstandings in regard to measures being proposed.

PROPOSED MEASURES

On the basis of the above objectives of policy and principles of action, the Government has approved the following measures:

1. *In respect of civil service positions requiring prior university training*
 1. (a) Beginning in 1967, reasonable proficiency in the two official languages, or willingness to acquire it within a prescribed period of time