

involved in the Public Service, especially in the national capital region, share, to a certain extent, this cost in money, energy, time and frustrations of which I just spoke.

If we are to believe the local newspapers and the spokesmen for many groups of public servants over the past years, there is willingness to share the cost of bilingualism in terms of money—at any rate, it is paid by the government—but not the cost in energy, inconvenience and frustration.

If we were to stop there, this would clearly be inadequate, not to say disastrous.

However, I cannot believe that the majority of our English-speaking citizens of this area have exhausted these features typical of their race: broad-mindedness and generosity. I trust that it will soon be realized that the uneasiness which afflicts us now will only be relieved by a common contribution of co-operation and good will.

This applies also to French-speaking public servants, leaders and journalists. The Commissioner of Official Languages stated in his report for 1970-71 and I quote:

If dialogue and trust are needed to help French-speaking public servants develop their potential, these qualities are required no less to help their English-speaking colleagues adapt to linguistic reform. Perhaps it is inevitable that in Ottawa, particularly, the climate surrounding bilingualism should be far from serene: after all, in this administrative capital, bilingualism is no distant matter of theory, it concerns jobs and careers right now. But by working in at least informal harmony, Members of Parliament (from Ottawa and elsewhere), staff associations, the Public Service Commission, the Secretary of State's Department, the Treasury Board and the Commissioner of Official Languages ought to be able to relieve a good deal of the anxiety raised, very often needlessly, by decisions and even rumours on this subject.

I agree, but up to December 14 last, nothing of the kind had occurred.

A few words about the part played by politicians in that matter in recent years. I am now referring not to all but to several candidates and members who generally speak more often and louder in all parties on both sides of the river and who for purely electoral purposes have done their best to fan fears rather than allay or dispel them. As the light at the other end of the tunnel which must not be allowed to go out, the bilingual question was constantly to give rise to bitter controversies. Elected or defeated those people will only have helped to write one of the most abject and contemptible pages of the political history of this area.

I twice mentioned December 14 last. I am of course referring to the policy statement on bilingualism in the Public Service issued on that day by the President of the Treasury Board. Nothing would have prevented such a statement being made four or five years ago; it seems to me utter nonsense that we had to wait so long before it was definitely determined which responsibilities rested with the Secretary of State, the Public Service or the Treasury Board.

[Hon. Mr. Lafond.]

Finally, crying over past events, as I am afraid I have been doing these last few minutes, will not get us anywhere.

There is no question of my going through the details of the new policy statement; we shall probably have the opportunity to do so at some other time.

But the document published four weeks ago by Mr. Drury permits us, for the first time in a while, to be somewhat optimistic. It gives us all the opportunity of a new start that must not be missed; and those who on either side called that statement a "victory" or a "retreat" contribute but very little to the solution of the conflict.

The editor of the *Ottawa Journal* showed in the December 27 edition of that newspaper much more wisdom than the reporters of the same newspaper when he wrote:

Some of the knee-jerk criticism of the new policies failed sadly to see both sides of the coin . . . For those in English-speaking Canada who consider the guidelines as mere window-dressing, there are some in Quebec who consider them a retreat from the commitment to greater bilingualism. Language fairness continues to require understanding and compromise from both linguistic communities. Guidelines written in heaven won't succeed without a will to make them work.

And I say: "Come on, Ottawa, let us make them work."

[Translation]

We are told, in the Speech from the Throne, that we will be asked to study a bill on election expenses. You will recall that a similar bill was left pending when the last Parliament was dissolved. It can be expected that the new bill will not differ much from the old.

There is need for such a measure. It may even be said that the need is pressing. Still, even with the best intentions in the world and total concentration, a first draft could not be expected to result in permanent legislation on the subject. To my mind, we will have to start by removing the main obstacles; then, after all political parties have tested the act through experience, its objectives can be refined and carried out further.

Again with regard to the electoral process, let us point out that it was quite satisfactory in spite of the handicap of major holidays, one of which fell during the enumeration period and the other during the revision period. There was considerable improvement in the fact that the results of the military and other votes were announced on general election day.

In spite of all this, however, I should like to see Parliament resume its study of the recommendations of the Representation Commissioner in his report on the methods of drawing up voters' lists as submitted in April 1968. The adoption of a system providing for continuous electoral rolls, a system which he recommends, would do much to shorten election campaigns and reduce expenses. It seems to me this goes hand in hand with legislation intended to reduce election expenses.

We also note that the revision of electoral boundaries which is carried out every ten years is now under way and proceeding very satisfactorily, thanks to the experience acquired in 1966. Inevitably, this exercise can never satisfy everyone, but that is the price we have to pay for