

Accepting Bilingualism in English-speaking Canada,  
Testing the Limits of the Official Languages Policy in the Federal Public Service,  
1962-1972

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## Abstract

This work is concerned with the way that official bilingualism emerged as a part of English-Canadian values in the 1960s. Much of this work is about the effort in the 1960s to change the federal public service from a stronghold of English-speaking Canada to an organisation where English-speaking and French-speaking Canadians could work in their own language on an equal footing. The archival records of the Professional Institute of the Public Service provide detailed insight into this change and the resistance to it. It is the thesis of this work that the adaptation to official bilingualism in the Public Service of Canada played a key role in setting English-speaking attitudes to bilingualism. The struggle to define and impose official bilingualism in the federal public service was a testing ground for the evolution of bilingualism in English-speaking Canada as a whole. As much of English-speaking Canada accepted the value of bilingualism in principle, the public service worked out the practical ramifications of this culture change. The result was a slow and only partial progress toward effective bilingualism in the federal public service and in Canada as a whole.

## Acknowledgements

I want first to acknowledge the inspiration and guidance of Professor Michael Behiels who fed and shaped my enthusiasm for a return to the great topic of English-French relations in Canada in the 1960s. In addition I want to recognise the leadership of Professor's Damien-Claude Bélanger, Serge Durflinger and Pierre Anctil who replaced Michael Behiels after his retirement and who pushed me to develop and express my thoughts within the rigorous discipline of the professional historian. Whatever the success of the final product, I have learned a great deal from the comments and suggestions of each of these professors.

I want also to acknowledge the assistance of the librarians and archivists at Library and Archives Canada who are still succeeding, within the desperate constraints of budget cuts, to hold and make available so much of the documentation necessary to the study of history in Canada. I wish for them that the Government of Canada will soon be convinced of the need to reinvest in this essential part of our heritage.

Finally, let me thank colleagues, friends and family who have suffered from my long absences in libraries or before the computer. It is a strange retirement they would say. My wife and friend Sylvie has not only been a key part of my long affair with bilingualism, she helped with her ideas and memories of Ottawa in the 1960s. I will be sure to consult you all before I take on any more such adventures.

## Preface

Preparing a thesis on a topic and time that I have known has some unique advantages and challenges. Undoubtedly, it provides me with knowledge that is useful in understanding the issues. Equally certainly, it runs the risk of falling prey to my own biases and selective perceptions. I have tried to be aware of this danger and have used the work of many other more experienced historians to keep me on track. In spite of these efforts to triangulate objectivity, I believe that the best way to prepare a reader for my work is to provide a thumbnail sketch of my own background.

This work deals with a time and I topic that I have known well all my life. I was a high school student in Beamsville, Ontario, at the opening of the 1960s. I had grown up in Loyalist Canada. My early sympathies lay with the Upper-Canadians who had fought the War of 1812 along the same pathways and gullies that I followed to school. My tendencies were High Tory and I thought that 'The Family Compact' an altogether better social framework than the rebellion proposed by William Lyon Mackenzie. I had little knowledge of any part of Canada further away than the Canadian National Exhibition in Toronto. I remember Victoria Days more than Dominion Days, the passage of Princess Elizabeth through my village more than the visit of any Canadian politician. From 1964 to 1967 I studied history at Trent University where T.H.B. Symons was President and my tutor. I regretted the passing of the Red Ensign as much as any young Tory at that time.

By 1970, I was a Foreign Service Officer in the Department of External Affairs. I had accepted the political neutrality of the public servant, although my views still lined

up somewhere between Red Tory and NDP. I had by then been exposed to many of the regions and cultures which make up Canada and I had become modestly bilingual.

Later in my career (1996-2005) I managed the Official Languages Program and Multiculturalism Program as Assistant-Deputy Minister, Canadian Identity, in the Department of Canadian Heritage. In that job I got to know and appreciate even more the complex fabric of Canadian society. I dealt daily with the political, social, cultural dynamics of Canadian unity. I defended the positions of the Government on Canadian diversity and I shared a sense of pride in the Canadian model of pluralism.

The work in this thesis is certainly infected by the enthusiasm for bilingualism and multiculturalism which my job and my personal life have provided. Those who judge Canadian society today and find that it is still under the spell of certain of its WASP pretensions may not be able to see as well as I can how far we have moved from the old British-Canada of my youth. Societies do not change quickly or in a constant progression. They zig-zag; they crawl forward and they fall back. Sometimes they retreat into a fearful dark age where old 'verities' shove aside new learning and new evidence. The Canada that I examine here has progressed and I have been lucky enough to share in and at times add to that progression.

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# **Accepting Bilingualism in English-speaking Canada, Testing the Limits of the Official Languages Policy in the Federal Public Service, 1962-1972**

“Oh bless the continuous stutter  
Of the word being made into flesh”.....Leonard Cohen<sup>1</sup>

## **Introduction**

When it was created in 1963, the terms of reference of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism (RCBB) started from a seemingly simple proposition, “...to develop the Canadian Confederation on the basis of an equal partnership between the two founding races...”<sup>2</sup> In the Canadian context this proposition was anything but simple. Canada had not developed on the basis of an equal partnership between its English-speaking and French-speaking peoples. The dominance of the English-speaking population in numbers, territory, economic and political clout had been clear for at least 100 years. By the 1960s, French-speaking Canadians, particularly those in Québec, were

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<sup>1</sup> Leonard Cohen, ‘The Window’ from *Recent Songs* album 1979.

<sup>2</sup> Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, *Final Report, Volume 3* (Ottawa: Queen’s Printer, 1969), 351.

making it obvious that this domination was no longer acceptable; English-speaking Canada would have to change or face the separation of Québec. The RCBB was a major part of the effort to help English-speaking Canadians realise that a new larger place would have to be made for French-speaking Canadians in Canada. As the 1960s advanced, bilingualism became a central part in this new partnership both because of its symbolic equating of the two cultures and because of its practical effect in allowing French-speaking Canadians more effective access to their federal government and the broader society of Canada. The imposition of bilingualism in the Public Service of Canada would become the most practical and visible demonstration of the new partnership. It could not eliminate the demographic or territorial dominance of English-speakers but it could represent a commitment to protect both cultures everywhere in Canada.

Bilingualism is a tortured term in Canadian English. It has been subjected to many meanings and interpretations. Rarely has a word caused Canadians to ‘stutter’ more as individuals, organisations and government have tried to flesh out what it means in a practical sense. Bilingualism may refer to personal or organisational capacity; it may be territorial or personality based; it may be ‘official’ or informal. Within the public service it may imply the ability to serve the public in both languages, and it may mean building a workplace where members of either language community can work in their own language. In Canada it is almost always used to refer to French-English bilingualism, but many more Canadians are bilingual if other languages are taken into account. Many in English-speaking Canada feared that official bilingualism meant that every individual would have to know and use both languages. To many in French-speaking Canada it

symbolised the equality of the two founding European cultures in Canada. When it was twinned with biculturalism in the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, many in Québec conflated it with bi-nationalism, but any attempt to move toward a ‘two-nation’ theory of Canada was strongly opposed by a majority of English-speaking Canadians. All in this ambiguity and disagreement has made bilingualism easy to attack as retired Air Force Colonel, J.V. Andrew did in his polemical *Bilingual Today, French Tomorrow*<sup>3</sup>, or to praise as historian Matthew Hayday did in his much more scholarly *Bilingual Today, United Tomorrow*<sup>4</sup>. This ambiguity has also made it a flexible and valuable tool in the struggle for Canadian unity. This work looks primarily at official bilingualism in the Public Service of Canada but even there the arguments over what exactly constitutes bilingualism will be an ongoing part of the story.

On April 6, 1966 Prime Minister Lester Pearson outlined to the House of Commons for the first time the scope of his government’s policy on official bilingualism. In the optimistic words of Prime Minister Pearson when he presented the policy in the House, “a climate will be created in which public servants from both language groups will

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<sup>3</sup> J.V. Andrew, *Bilingual Today, French Tomorrow: Trudeau’s Masterplan and How it can be Stopped* (Richmond Hill: BMG Publishing, 1977). Andrew was a retired Air Force officer who felt that his own career and those of many English-speaking colleagues had been undermined through the introduction of official bilingualism. In his book he argued that official bilingualism was just the first step toward a takeover of Canada by French-speaking Canadians.

<sup>4</sup> Matthew Hayday, *Bilingual Today, United Tomorrow* (Montreal-Kingston: McGill-Queens University Press, 2005). This book is based on Matthew Hayday’s PHD thesis on the development of guarantees for the educational rights of French-speaking minorities from early financial supports by the federal government to the eventual protection in the 1982 Constitution Act and its subsequent interpretation by the courts.

work together toward common goals, using their own language and applying their respective cultural values, but each fully understanding and appreciating those of the other.”<sup>5</sup> Pearson introduced an ambitious, even idealistic, plan that committed the federal government to serving the public in both French and English and to creating a workplace where employees could work in either official language. The plan made it clear that bilingualism would be an element in the merit qualifications for many positions in the public service. Pearson’s statement was intended to move the public service quickly down the road to bilingualism, but it contained two powerful caveats. First, Mr. Pearson promised that the careers of existing unilingual public servants would not be damaged by this new policy. Second he exempted from the immediate application of the policy all employees in technical, professional and scientific positions. It was this exemption for professional staff that underlined the role of the Professional Institute of the Public Service (PIPS) in the development and implementation of the bilingualism policy. As the new policy of official bilingualism was implemented, public servants, PIPS in particular, looked to these promises as the cornerstone in the protection of the careers of English-speaking public servants.

It is the thesis of this work that the adaptation to official bilingualism in the Public Service of Canada played a key role in the cultural transformation of English-

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<sup>5</sup> Lester Pearson, *Debates of the House of Commons April 5, 1966*. “Statement of Policy Respecting Bilingualism”. A transcript of Pearson’s address to the House of Commons on April 5, 1966, found in LAC RG33/80 Box 149. This version is a true copy of Pearson statement but also includes annotations by someone on the staff of the RCBB which indicates some of their disappointment with parts of his statement.

speaking Canada the 1960s. The struggle to define and impose official bilingualism in the federal public service and especially in the professional, technical and scientific operations of the public service, was a testing ground for the evolution of bilingualism in English-speaking Canada as a whole. As much of English-speaking Canada accepted the value of bilingualism in principle, the public service worked out the practical ramifications of this culture change. The compromises and contradictions in the implementation of official bilingualism were first worked out in the public service. This thesis will show that in the 1960s, the federal public service moved away from the assumption that English was the only natural language of work and service. It accepted the policy of official bilingualism while resisting many of the programs needed to implement it. The public service worked through the fundamental choice between a territorial model of bilingualism versus a Canada-wide model. It struggled to balance the broad social goal of fostering national unity through a fully bilingual public service with the stated objective of protecting the careers of all unilingual public servants. The ultimate result in the federal public service was a policy based on principle and high ideal and a reality based on pragmatic choices. The overall experience of Canada would in many ways mirror this conflicted conclusion.

### **Timeframe and scope of this work**

This work will examine primarily the shift in attitudes in English-speaking Canada toward bilingualism in the 1960s, largely through the window of one of its great

institutions, the Public Service of Canada and more particularly through the experience of the Professional Institute of the Public Service and its members. To understand the changes in the public service, the work must look also at the changes in the broader English-speaking society of Canada. The public service does not operate in a vacuum; it is shaped by the features of the community it serves and by the way that the elected government interprets the wishes of the broader public. However, the public service is not merely a projection of government policy and the broader society; it has its own institutional interests and internal conflicts that affect how it adapts to changes in the broader society.<sup>6</sup> The tensions within the public service and between interests of the public service and the broader society frame the story in this work. They explain many of the obvious contradictions in government policy and practice, and why one step forward may lead to several steps sideways or backward. Michael Behiels in his history of linguistic conflict in Canada captured this essential cycle of action, resistance and adaptation. “The history of the state’s involvement in the expansion of language rights reveals that the progress was never linear, expansion and consolidation came in fits and starts.”<sup>7</sup> To achieve any progress at all requires more than policies, programs and systems of control. The players must be motivated by factors that outweigh tradition, inertia and

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<sup>6</sup> J.E. Hodgetts, *The Canadian Public Service, A Physiology of Government 1867-1970* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1973), 5-6.

<sup>7</sup> Michael Behiels, “Contested Ground: The State and Language Rights in Canada, 1760-2006.” *Supreme Court Law Review 2<sup>nd</sup> Series*, 39 (2008), 24.

their own personal interest. In the 1960s this motivation would come from two complementary sources: the push of Québec separatism and the pull that bilingualism offered as an alternative to separation. The progress of English-speaking Canada and the public service toward the acceptance of official bilingualism was full of contradictions, but the underlying trend toward effective bilingualism, was clear even in the 1960s when so little real change was evident.

Throughout this text reference is made to the broad movement of attitudes in English-speaking Canada and to a lesser extent in French-speaking Canada. Of course large societies do not move in a single direction or at the same speed. Where appropriate this work limits the changes described to the elites or leaders in society, but at times, especially when broad polling supports it or the will of the majority can be deduced from the actions of federal and provincial governments together, references are made to the shift of position in the broader society.

### **An Equal Partnership**

In 1960, the English-speaking ‘founding race’ was totally unprepared for any form of equal partnership with its French-speaking counterpart. The Commissioners of the RCBB set out to learn at first-hand about the expectations of both national communities in Canada and to stimulate a national debate about how equality of the two cultures could be achieved. They had little trouble understanding French-speaking Canada and its ambitions. It was possible to come up with an answer to the often repeated question ‘What does Québec want?’ Québec wanted respect and equality; it wanted to guarantee

the survival of its language and culture; it wanted increased political power and less federal intrusion into provincial fields of power. If it could not achieve those goals within Canada it was willing to explore a new form of federal structure (e.g., sovereignty-association) or to seek full independence. English-speaking Canada was not so easy to pin down.

Just as he was about to take on the co-chairmanship of the RCBB, André Laurendeau commented in *Le Devoir* on the elusive nature of English-speaking Canada “...what is English Canada thinking today about politics?... we do not know. English Canada manifests...curiosity and uneasiness about Quebec opinions, but it expresses scarcely any attitude of its own. It maintains towards us a great silence.”<sup>8</sup> Laurendeau was more critical in his diary where he commented that English-speaking Canadians are “astonishingly lacking in self-criticism” and where English-speaking Canada was portrayed as suffering from “a fatigue that comes from being Canadian – an almost impossible undertaking and a heavy responsibility given the proximity of the United States.”<sup>9</sup> Laurendeau had grown up in the 1930’s when English-speaking Canada was still confident of its British identity. By the 1960s English-speaking Canada did not exist in the way that Laurendeau may have expected to find it. Instead many of the leaders of English-speaking Canada were searching for a new definition of Canada that would reduce the importance of the old British traditions and would include Québec and the

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<sup>8</sup> Ramsay Cook and Michael Behiels eds., *The Essential Laurendeau* (Toronto: Copp, Clark, 1976), 253.

<sup>9</sup> André Laurendeau, *The Diaries of André Laurendeau* (Toronto : J. Lorimer, 1991), 4.

many other minority cultures present across the country. Bilingualism and multiculturalism would emerge as the means to respect this essential diversity of communities in the context of individual rights and freedoms.

### **The Public Service: First Target for Change**

Throughout the 1960s the political leaders of Canada and the provinces tried to find constitutional formulas that would hold Canada together. At the same time the federal government decided to move ahead where it could to recognise the equality of English and French in Canada. It made the public service a prime target of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, and without waiting for the Commission to begin its work it created a Cabinet Committee chaired by Maurice Lamontagne, President of the Privy Council, to implement immediate reforms.<sup>10</sup> The federal public service was the logical place to demonstrate respect for the bilingual nature of Canada. Official bilingualism in the public service would provide a practical way to integrate French-speaking Canadians into the Canadian power structure and it would provide a powerful symbol of the equality of the two charter groups. The federal public service had long been a symbol of English-speaking Canadian unwillingness to accommodate the legitimate aspirations of French-speaking Canadians. Just before the Royal Commission hearings opened, Maurice Lamontagne stated in a speech to the Canadian Club in Toronto, “the

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<sup>10</sup> John Saywell, *The Canadian Annual Review 1963* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1964). 88-89.

situation of French-speaking Canadians outside of Québec within the federal public service is intolerable.”<sup>11</sup> The public service was under the direct authority of the federal government and therefore could be ordered to make changes. But it was a massive institution and old habits die very hard. In a battle to change organisational direction, culture generally beats policy. To change the federal public service, powerful forces in the broader society would have to be supportive.

Research for the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism showed that the key English-speaking urban elites of Toronto and Montreal were ready to get behind bilingualism in the public service. These elites agreed that the federal public service should be able to serve Canadians of both official language groups in their own language and they agreed that French-speaking Canadians should have an equal opportunity for careers in the public service.<sup>12</sup>

What was not apparent to the leaders of Canada at the time was the sheer complexity of changing the culture of such a large organisation as the federal public service in a relatively short time. As Gordon Robertson, who was the most senior public servant in the federal government at the time, notes in his memoir, “I doubt if anyone at the time realised how ambitious a policy and program it (official bilingualism) was.”<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> *Ottawa Citizen*, November 5, 1963 Page 1.

<sup>12</sup> Peter Regenstrief, “Elite Opinion on Bilingualism and Biculturalism,” Report to the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, December 1965. Library and Archives Canada, Amicus No.3500837.

<sup>13</sup> Gordon Robertson, *Memoirs of a Very Civil Servant: Mackenzie King to Pierre Trudeau* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000), 223.

The public service had to move from a situation where English was the assumed language of business to one in which both French and English would have equal status. There was no experience that could be drawn upon in Canada or elsewhere about how to make such a change. Other countries and even the City of Montréal worked in two or more languages, but none had gone through a shift from one language and culture to a bilingual model in recent history. The direction was easy to state but the way to get there was murky and controversial.

By the end of the 1960s much had changed. Canada and the federal public service were intensely preoccupied by the question of Canadian unity and had embarked on a program of official bilingualism as one of the key ways to reach out to French-speaking Canadians. The change in English-speaking Canada and the public service was significant and enduring, but it was not simple or complete or without contradictions. Support for French language education for francophone minorities expanded throughout the period. Provincial spending on French second language education grew substantially, but efforts to establish official bilingualism in provinces other than New Brunswick were strongly resisted.

The Public Service of Canada was one of the key players in setting the tone for the reaction to official bilingualism in English-speaking Canada. In 1960, the federal public service provided a unique crucible in which the tensions around bilingualism were played out. The modest success in transforming the public service from a unilingual English-speaking stronghold into a more balanced institution began in the 1960s when the

optimism and the fears surrounding bilingualism crystalized. From the beginning, the public service claimed to accept the broad direction of the policy on official bilingualism but resisted the ways in which the policy was implemented. In reality the public service readily accepted the commitment to provide bilingual services to Canadians because it had little impact on the jobs of most public servants. The public service resisted the move to a bilingual workforce because that would oblige almost any public servant that wished to rise to middle or senior management levels to be bilingual. This resistance changed the rate of progress, and the degree and type of change that resulted. It became a struggle for power within the public service pitting the politicians and senior bureaucrats against the mid-level staff and their union representatives. This struggle was perhaps strongest in the ranks of the professional and technical employees who were represented by The Professional Institute of the Public Service of Canada (PIPS) and it is the story of this resistance that will form the central part of this work.

**Structure of this work:**

In this work, the point of view is most often that of English-speaking Canadians and the leaders of that society, but French-speaking sources and viewpoints are used to provide their perception of the issues and actions throughout the period. The chapters follow the chronology of the period, weaving together the distinct stories of English-speaking Canada, French-speaking Canada, the federal public service and its professional employees.

Chapter One of this work gives a quick overview of the history of language conflict in Canada and an outline of the way that federal public service came to be dominated by English-speaking Canadians in the period up to 1960. In looking at the evolution of the federal public service after 1921 this work will examine the role of the Professional Institute of the Public Service, a staff association representing professional, scientific and technical employees. It will show that neither English-speaking Canada nor the federal public was prepared for the national unity debate that was about to break out.

Chapter Two (1962-66) outlines the state of English-speaking Canada and the public service of Canada in the early 1960s when the decline in the importance of British traditions signaled a search for a new definition of Canada, and when the demands from Québec ensured that the relationship between English-speaking and French-speaking Canadians would be the most important cultural and political issue facing Canadians. It will show how the flag debate and the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism shaped Canada and it will highlight the early reaction of public servants to the introduction of official bilingualism. It will show how the lobbying efforts of PIPS helped to shape the bilingualism policy. Finally, it will begin to show the rising resistance to official bilingualism in the ranks of the public service as the impacts on individual careers began to be recognised.

Chapter Three (1968-72) will show how most of English-speaking Canada gradually accepted a more pluralistic definition of its identity and began to support the use of two official languages in Canada. It will indicate how the federal public service

became the focus for the policies of official bilingualism and how resistance within the bureaucracy shaped the eventual nature and extent of official bilingualism.

### **Definitions of Key Terms<sup>14</sup>**

Before going further in this work it would be useful to define some of the key terms as they will be used here:

#### The Federal Administration:

All organisations and employees managed by the federal government including departments, the Armed Services, agencies, commissions, the judiciary and crown corporations.

#### The Public Service of Canada (aka: the federal public service):

The federal public service of is one component of the federal administration. It includes all of the departments reporting directly to Ministers in the Cabinet. Until the Public Service Employment Act was passed in 1967, it was known as the Civil Service of Canada.

#### Bilingualism:

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<sup>14</sup> These definitions draw on various sources. Those related to the federal government structure come largely from the work of R.M. Dawson and E.J. Hodgetts. The definitions of bilingualism are my own, drawing on several sources. Biculturalism comes from the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism. The definitions of cultural communities come largely from the work of Michael Behiels.

Bilingualism seems a relatively simple concept referring to the ability to communicate effectively in two languages. Once it becomes a principle of law and administrative practice it requires many more nuances:

Official bilingualism refers to language requirements defined by policy, statute and regulation for the use of English and French within Canada.

Individual bilingualism refers to the ability of a person to communicate in two languages. In the context of the federal public service it is closely linked to the classification of positions as bilingual, meaning that the incumbent must be able to use both languages. It also applies to the training and testing of individuals to make sure they are competent in both languages.

Institutional bilingualism refers to the capacity of an organisation to operate in two languages. It covers both the external requirements for service to the public and internal requirements to ensure that persons of either language group are able to work and to advance in their career in either official language.

Biculturalism:

This term was coined for the mandate of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism where it came to mean “the existence in Canada of two principal cultures- that associated with the English language and that associated with the

French”.<sup>15</sup> Within the context of official bilingualism in the public service it came to mean efforts to create a working environment where employees from each official language community could work in their own language and culture.

Canadian ethno-linguistic communities:

The term British-Canada is used to describe the English-speaking part of Canada at a time when the traditions and values of Great Britain and the Empire-Commonwealth were still the dominant identity. While no firm dates can be fixed for the end of British-Canada as the dominant force in English-speaking Canada, it was during the 1960s and particularly around the flag debate of 1964 that most English-speaking Canadians were able to agree that they shared a more diverse identity.

The term English-speaking Canadians applies to all Canadians for whom English is the official language of preference. It replaces the old ethnic terms British-Canadians and English-Canadians Today it includes many people whose ethnic origin is not English.

The term French-speaking Canadians refers to all Canadians for whom French is the language of preference. It includes French-speaking Canadians from all parts of Canada. French-speaking minorities applies to the French-speaking population in the nine provinces of Canada where English is the language of the majority.

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<sup>15</sup> Davidson Dunton, “Biculturalism”, *Canadian Encyclopedia, Vol 1*, (Edmonton: Hurtig Publishers, 1985), 170.

## **Methodology:**

This work is based upon research in primary and secondary sources. For the story of English-speaking Canada, its attitudes to the other founding race and the history of the two linguistic communities in the public service this work relies heavily on secondary sources, supplemented at times by memoirs and newspaper coverage of the periods in question. To capture the specific political, social and cultural milestones of the 1960s and to get a contemporary view of their importance this work draws heavily on the editions of the *Canadian Annual Review 1960-1972*. The general history of the public service draws on key secondary sources as well as the research done for the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism. For the more detailed history of the Royal Commission and the reaction of the public service to official bilingualism the work turns to primary sources in the archival fonds of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism and the Professional Institute of the Public Service, again supplemented by media coverage. The main Ottawa newspapers, *Le Droit*, *The Ottawa Citizen*, and *The Ottawa Journal*, have been reviewed around the key milestones in the bilingualism debate to capture the local public service reactions to the main issues. *The Globe and Mail* has been followed in the same period to sample the reaction of the English-speaking urban elite.

### **Principal Secondary Sources:**

W.L. Morton provides a contemporary view of the English-speaking Tory tradition among Canadian historians of the mid-twentieth century.<sup>16</sup> In his works, *The Kingdom of Canada* and *The Canadian Identity*, he reflects the British Canadian tradition of thought and political practice. Morton's sensitivity to the complex nature of the English-speaking Canadian identity and his recognition of the importance played by the presence of a strong French-speaking population in Canada provide valuable clues to the ultimate reactions of other leaders of traditional English-speaking Canadian society to the unity crisis that began in the 1960s. His submission to the Royal Commission, *Biculturalism*, was both unsolicited and unedited. As such it represents a primary source from the mind of an important scholar. It delves more deeply into the complex make-up of English-speaking Canada.

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<sup>16</sup> W.L. Morton, *The Kingdom of Canada* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1963), *The Canadian Identity* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1961), and "Biculturalism", A Submission to the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, 1966, Library and Archives Canada. Amicus No. 3506078.

Ramsay Cook represents the liberal historical thought of the 1960s.<sup>17</sup> As an observer of the 1960s and a skilled historian, Ramsay Cook best captures the positive view of the evolution of English-speaking Canada at this time. Cook's interpretation of Canadian history led him to the conclusion that diversity and collective compromise were the core Canadian values. He coined the idea that in the 1960s English-speaking Canadians abandoned ethnic nationalism for a new form of civic nationalism. Cook and Michael Behiels' edited collection of the main writings of André Laurendeau form a double mirror of English-speaking Canadians looking at a French-speaking Canadian intellectual who in turn is often reflecting on English-speaking Canada.

A French-speaking perspective is found in the work of historian Michel Brunet, a contemporary of Morton and Cook. His work captures a darker view of English-speaking Canada as seen from the point of view of a French Canadian nationalist scholar.<sup>18</sup> He rejects the views of earlier Québec elites who found satisfaction in *la survivance* and evidence of the vigour of French-Canadian society in the leadership roles of Cartier and Laurier. His history is intended to be the antithesis of these old bromides,

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<sup>17</sup> Ramsay Cook, *Canada and the French Canadian Question* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1967); *The Maple Leaf Forever* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1971); Ramsay Cook, and Michael Behiels eds., *The Essential Laurendeau*, (Toronto: Copp, Clark, 1976).

<sup>18</sup> Michel Brunet, *La Présence anglaise et les Canadiens* (Montréal: Beauchemin, 1958); *Québec-Canada anglais, Deux itinéraires un affrontement* (Montréal: Collection Constantes, HMH, 1968).

what he calls “Quelques cents ans d’illusionisme collectif”<sup>19</sup> He describes English-speaking Canada in terms of its role as conqueror and governor and sees little evidence that English-speaking Canada ever sought to understand and work with French-speaking Canada as an equal founding race.

Michael Behiels’ works on minority language communities and the history of language conflict captures the persistence of the presence of the French-speaking community outside of Québec, and the open hostility and eventual indifference shown by English-speaking majorities to these communities.<sup>20</sup> Behiels’ work is key to understanding how it was still possible in the 1960s to imagine and build a Canada where French would be used in all parts of the country, at least as a language of family, education and culture. He also helps us to understand how the French-speaking minority community, with its very high levels of bilingualism, was well placed to take advantage of the arrival of official bilingualism in the federal administration.

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<sup>19</sup> Michel Brunet, *Québec-Canada Anglais*, 12.

<sup>20</sup> Michael Behiels, *Canada’s Francophone Minority Communities: Constitutional Renewal and the Winning of School Governance* (Montreal-Kingston: McGill Queens Press, 2004), and “Contested Ground: The State and Language Rights in Canada, 1760-2006.” *Supreme Court Law Revue 2<sup>nd</sup> Series*, 39 (2008), 23-89.

Marcel Martel documents the long history of language conflict in Canada and outlines the ultimate failure of the dream of a Canada that would be truly bilingual.<sup>21</sup> His work reminds us that whatever progress has been made toward a Canada where French-speaking and English-speaking Canadians can participate on an equal footing, in their own language, it is a far cry from what had been envisioned by Henri Bourassa in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century or even by Lester Pearson when he introduced official bilingualism to the government of Canada.

Jack Granatstein's history of Canada from 1957-67 is a powerful overview of this period of change, indecision and contradiction.<sup>22</sup> He describes the sense of rupture with the past and uncertainty about the future that prepared Canada for change and renewal. He captures the frustration of Canadians in 1957 after decades of Liberal government, the hope and disappointment of the Diefenbaker years and the deep sense of aimlessness that infected most of English-speaking Canada as it faced American cultural dominance and a resurgent Québec. His book *The Ottawa Men* on the senior public service in Ottawa in the 1940s and 50s gives a clear portrait of the domination of English-speaking Canadians, their language and their culture in the public service prior to 1960. He clearly admires their dedication and success but deplores their ethnocentric myopia.

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<sup>21</sup> Marcel Martel, *Le deuil d'un pays imaginé: Rêves, luttes et déroute du Canada Français* (Ottawa: Les Presses de l'Université d'Ottawa, 1997); and Marcel Martel and Martin Pacquet eds., *Speaking Up: A History of Language and Politics in Canada and Quebec* (Toronto: Between the Lines Press, 2012).

<sup>22</sup> Jack Granatstein, *Canada 1957-1967* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1986); *The Ottawa Men, The Civil Service Mandarins, 1937-57* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1982).

Two historians provide the main lines of the story of the decline of British Canada. Writing in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century, historian José Igartua lays out the main pieces of the transition of English-speaking Canada from 1945-1971.<sup>23</sup> He presents the changes as a positive progression from a dominantly British English-speaking Canada, through a series of crises and disappointments that undermined the sense of attachment to Britain and culminate in the civic nationalism described by Ramsay Cook. C.P. Champion looks at all of the same episodes and agrees that the decline of British Canada is obvious through this period, but he sees a strong residue of the old and negative British-Canadian attitudes even after this period of change.<sup>24</sup>

Two authors are particularly relevant to the portrait of the public service. In 1962, R.M. Dawson provided an overview of the structure of the Government of Canada and its public service in the early 1960s.<sup>25</sup> J.E. Hodgetts described the role and history of the public service and wrote a detailed history of the Public Service Commission and its work.<sup>26</sup> He was notably sensitive to the place of French-speaking Canadians in the public service and the impact of English-speaking dominance on that institution. His work on the

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<sup>23</sup> José Igartua, *The Other Quiet Revolution: National Identities in English Canada 1945-71* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2006).

<sup>24</sup> C. P. Champion, *The Strange Demise of British Canada, The Liberals and Canadian Nationalism 1964-1968* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's Press, 2010).

<sup>25</sup> R.M.Dawson, *The Government of Canada, Fourth Ed.* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1962).

<sup>26</sup> J.E. Hodgetts, *The Biography of an Institution: The Civil Service Commission of Canada, 1908-1967* (Montreal, McGill-Queen's University Press, 1972).

way in which the merit principle was skewed to favour English-speaking Canadians is central to understanding the challenges facing governments that tried to introduce official bilingualism into the public service.

In 1970 John Swettenham and David Kelly wrote a history for the Professional Institute of the Public Service (PIPS).<sup>27</sup> Although this is an authorised history, it presents much of the essential background and perspective of this key staff association. The scientific, professional and technical employees represented by PIPS were a particular stronghold of English-speaking Canadians and the efforts of PIPS to influence the course of official bilingualism form a central strand to this work.

The two volume history of bilingualism in the Canadian Armed Forces by Jean Pariseau and Serge Bernier provides a very detailed overview of the challenges involved introducing this major cultural change in an established organisation.<sup>28</sup> Their work outlines how resistance to change can continue long after new policies have been put in place and supposedly accepted. The struggle in the public service would parallel in many ways that in the Armed Forces.

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<sup>27</sup> John Swettenham and David Kelly, *Serving the state; a history of the Professional Institute of the Public Service of Canada, 1920-1970* (Ottawa: Le Droit, 1970).

<sup>28</sup> Jean Pariseau et Serge Bernier, *Les canadiens français et le bilinguisme dans les Forces armées canadienne Tome II, 1969-1987* (Ottawa: Ministère des approvisionnements et services Canada, 1991).

Daniel Bourgeois has examined the history of the failed attempt to divide Canada into formal bilingual districts.<sup>29</sup> He documents the negative reaction of provinces to the recommendation of the RCBB to create bilingual districts and then provides a thorough analysis of the efforts within the federal public service to follow such an approach. His evidence would argue that the challenge of drawing specific lines on the maps that would determine language rights was impossible from the beginning, but he argues that the ultimate failure to proceed in this direction within the public service stemmed from a lack of political will. In the end Pierre Trudeau's reluctance to align ethnic-national and territorial boundaries certainly contributed to the demise of this concept.

Several works were used to understand the evolution of Québec and French-speaking Canada in this period. William Coleman gives an overview of the growth of nationalism in Québec in the period after 1945 and its transformation into an independence movement in the 1960s.<sup>30</sup> Robert Comeau presents a collection of articles on the Quiet Revolution and the impact of the Jean Lesage government on Québec and Canada.<sup>31</sup> In a collection of essays twenty year later Guy Bérthiaume and Claude Corbo

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<sup>29</sup> Daniel Bourgeois, *The Canadian Bilingual Districts, From Cornerstone to Tombstone* (Montréal-Kingston : McGill-Queen's University Press, 2006).

<sup>30</sup> William Coleman, *The Independence Movement in Quebec 1945-1980* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984).

<sup>31</sup> Robert Commeau ed., *Jean Lesage et l'éveil d'une nation, Les Débuts de la révolution tranquille* (Sillery: Presses de l'Université du Québec, 1989).

show that the Quiet Revolution had in fact been gestating in Québec long before 1960 and it was far from the total upheaval of society that it so long seemed to be.<sup>32</sup>

To supplement these formal historical works it was also very useful to examine some of the memoirs of leading figures in Canada at the time of these changes. Lester Pearson<sup>33</sup>, Gérard Pelletier<sup>34</sup> and Gordon Robertson<sup>35</sup> all commented on the issues of bilingualism in their memoirs. Pierre Sévigny<sup>36</sup> and Léon Balcer<sup>37</sup> provide the point of view of French-speaking Ministers in the government of John Diefenbaker and help to understand how deep and strong the dominance of English was in the federal administration. Marcel Chaput's polemic on Québec independence shows clearly how unreceptive the federal public service of the late 1950s was for a French-speaking Canadian who wanted to maintain his language and culture. He also presents the argument that bilingualism is not a solution to the national aspirations of Québec.<sup>38</sup>

### **Unpublished Theses:**

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<sup>32</sup> Guy Berthiame et Claude Corbo eds., *La Révolution tranquille en héritage* (Montréal: Boréal, 2011).

<sup>33</sup> Lester Pearson, *Words and Occasions* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1970).

<sup>34</sup> Gérard Pelletier, *L'Aventure du pouvoir, 1968-1975* (Montréal: Stanké, 1992).

<sup>35</sup> Gordon Robertson, *Memoirs of a Very Civil Servant: Mackenzie King to Pierre Trudeau* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000).

<sup>36</sup> Pierre Sévigny, *Le Grand Jeu de la Politique* (Montréal: Les éditions du jour, 2000).

<sup>37</sup> Léon Balcer, *Léon Balcer raconte* (Sillery: Pelican Septentrion, 1988).

<sup>38</sup> Marcel Chaput, *Why I am a Separatist* (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1962).

Lee Blanding's Ph.D thesis on the emerging theories of immigrant accommodation in Canada in the 1950s-70s shows from another point view how the old British conception of Canada was breaking down even then.<sup>39</sup> His focus on the pioneering work being undertaken in the Department of Immigration to get away from the old assimilationist models supports the idea that English-speaking Canada was seeking a new form of civic nationalism long before the concept of multiculturalism was anchored in policy.

Robert Talbot's Ph.D thesis is one of the main sources of information about the members of the English-speaking elites in Canada who were looking for a rapprochement with French-speaking Canadians long before the 1960s.<sup>40</sup> He details how institutions like the Canadian Clubs, business and professional associations and political parties, in many major cities worked to build bridges between the two cultures. His work shows the foundations for the policies that those elites were able to implement in the 1960s, and the network of potential supporter that was already in place once the government decided to promote official bilingualism.

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<sup>39</sup> Lee Blanding, "Re-branding Canada: The Origins of Canadian Multiculturalism Policy, 1945-1974", (Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Victoria, 2013).

<sup>40</sup> Robert Talbot, "Moving Beyond Two Solitudes: Constructing a Dynamic and Unifying Francophone/Anglophone Relationship, 1916-1940" (Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Ottawa, 2013).

## Primary Sources:

*The Canadian Annual Reviews 1960-1972*: University of Toronto historian John Saywell edited throughout this period a review of the main events in politics, economy, science and culture in Canada.<sup>41</sup> The *Review* draws strongly on the reporting in media, especially newspapers, of the era but it adds the editorial perception and commentary of many of Canada's leading academic thinkers. Saywell himself wrote the overview of political events at the national level that marked each year. No one captures better the aimlessness of English-speaking Canada in this period. Each *Review* included works about French-speaking Canada, by French-speaking Canadians in French. (These French language sections in the *Review* were neither translated nor abstracted for English-speaking readers.) Not only does the *Review* provide the key events and chronology but it also reproduces many of the raw impressions and opinions that dominated at the time. It is a primary source with the careful overlay of skilled academic interpretation, but lacking the perspective of time to sort out the lasting from the ephemeral.

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<sup>41</sup> John Saywell ed. *The Canadian Annual Review, 1960 through 1972*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1961-73).

### **Records of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism:**

The archival records of the Royal Commission are extensive and represent the largest portion of the primary material examined to explore the general issues of the place of English and French in the federal administration.<sup>42</sup> The records contain many of the working papers, the correspondence, the research reports and many drafts of the volumes of the Commission. It also is linked to several book length reports that are recorded and classified as separate library items. Two of these are of particular importance. The first is the unsolicited essay by W.L.Morton, noted above. The second is a report by Peter Regenstrief, pollster, political advisor and political scientist, of his research on the attitudes of Canadians elites to the issues surrounding the mandate of the Royal Commission.<sup>43</sup> His work is critical in demonstrating the leading role that these elites were to play in crafting the eventual approach to official bilingualism and in implementing the programs designed to achieve it.

### **Records of the Professional Institute of the Public Service (PIPS):**

The archived records of the Professional Institute of the Public Service provide key information on the background and debate within the professional, scientific and technical

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<sup>42</sup> Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism Fonds, Archival Collection Library and Archives of Canada (RG33/80).

<sup>43</sup> Peter Regenstrief, "Elite Opinion on Bilingualism and Biculturalism", Library and Archives Canada. Amicus No.3500837.

branches of the public service as official bilingualism was adopted and implemented.<sup>44</sup> The PIPS records include correspondence with members, records of annual general meetings, briefing notes for the Executive Director. Of central importance is the aide memoire prepared for the meeting with Prime Minister Pearson in 1966, just before Pearson announced the policy of his government on official bilingualism. The records also include an extensive collection of press clippings and speech texts deemed relevant by PIPS to the issue of bilingualism.

### **Records of the Commissioner of Official Languages:**

Although the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages only came into existence at the end of the period under study, some important materials were found in the archived records of that office.<sup>45</sup> The early records show something of the confusion that reigned in the government surrounding the responsibility for implementing bilingualism inside the public service. From these records it was clear that it took some time for the government to realise that official bilingualism needed to be viewed as a seamless network from point of service, to government operations, to the highest levels of management.

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<sup>44</sup> Professional Institute of the Public Service Fonds, Archival Collection, Library and Archives Canada, (MG 28 I 36, 1963-1972).

<sup>45</sup> Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages Fonds, Archival Records of Library and Archives Canada (RG122).

## **The Place of this Work in the Historiography**

This work is generally in agreement with the views of historians that Canada went through a fundamental and positive shift in identity in the 1960s. It accepts the arc of change in English-speaking Canada, from complacency to confusion to resolution, laid out by Morton, Granatstein, Igartua and Champion. It is in line with the conclusions of Cook that a new, civic identity came to dominate English-speaking Canada as the old British Canada declined. Where this work differs from others is the importance that it accords to the emergence of support for and resistance to official bilingualism, both in the general population of English-speaking Canada and in the federal public service, as a key factor in this shift. Even Hayday and Bourgeois, who focus on aspects of official bilingualism, do not look at the way that official bilingualism in the public service interacted with the broader society. This work focuses directly on bilingualism and the role that the public service played in the acceptance and resistance to the official languages policy in English-speaking Canada. The work shows that official bilingualism in the public service was directly linked to the unity crisis and to the effort in most of English-speaking Canada to find an acceptable way to indicate its support for the French language and culture in Canada. By looking in particular at the impact of bilingualism on professional, technical and scientific employees of the federal government this work shows how significant the challenges of official bilingualism were. It identifies this power struggle and resistance in the public service as one of the defining elements in the choices that the broader society would make about the new relationship of English-speaking and French-speaking Canadians.

The evidence used in this work can only respond to a portion of the issues raised by the introduction of official bilingualism in the federal government and the general reactions to this policy. First, by relying on the coverage of polling materials in secondary sources this work has the advantage of seeing this survey work in context, but it misses some of the complexity and nuance that would have come from a return to original polling results. Second, the use of secondary sources to tell the story of the broad shifts in society means that there is a strong risk that well informed readers will already know the material. Finally, by focusing only on the Professional Institute of the Public Service for primary reactions in the public service to official bilingualism there is a danger of overstating the opposition to that policy. None the less the PIPS position is a clear statement of the concerns and positions of those public servants who felt most threatened by official bilingualism and the importance of their collective and individual voices did help to shape policy.

### **Setting the Scene**

Canada entered the 1960s without a viable template to guide it in the challenge of developing an equal partnership between English-speaking and French-speaking Canada. Most English-speaking Canadians had never thought of the country in these terms. It would take the powerful demands from Québec, the eclipse of the old British-Canada, the promotional efforts of successive Liberal governments and the provocation of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism to move English-speaking

Canadians to a vision of their country where bilingualism would be a prime strategy for national unity, and the public service the prime target for practical bilingualism. The public service would have to implement this conversion to two official languages based on little more than the ideals of their political leaders and the demands of French-speaking Canadians.

At the end of the 1960s, public service remained largely an English-speaking institution, but already the fears and the resistance of many unilingual English-speaking public servants were tangible. After ten years of increasing efforts to introduce official bilingualism in the public service, unilingual English-speaking employees were seeing, or hearing about, the negative aspects of the bilingualism programs on their careers. Many had received language training and almost none were satisfied with the results. Individual bilingualism was proving to be an exceptionally difficult challenge for mid-career public servants. Some had competed for bilingual positions and were certain that their lack of success was directly related to the new language policies. All had heard about the special recruitment efforts for French-speaking university graduates and many felt that this practice was discriminatory. By 1972 there was real anger among the English-speaking public servants. In the general election that year the Liberal Party lost two key seats in the Ottawa area as a result of dissatisfaction over official bilingualism in the public service. After the election, the implementation of official bilingualism was slowed and the protections for mid-career unilingual (almost always English-speaking) public servants were increased. The change to an officially bilingual public service would take longer than initially hoped and it would never meet the early dreams captured in Lester Pearson's

announcement of the policy in 1966. But the advantage in such a ponderous organisation as the federal public service is that once it starts to move in a new direction, it is very hard to deflect it. By the 1990s, the Public Service of Canada was much more bilingual and bicultural than it had been in 1960. Services were routinely offered in both languages across the country; the number of public servants from the French-speaking population had climbed to levels very close to their proportion of the Canadian population and, French-speaking Canadians held many of the most senior positions in the public service. The open opposition of English-speaking public servants had virtually disappeared.

For such a significant change to have occurred in the public service it had to be aligned with what was happening in the broader Canadian society. By the end of the 1960s a large majority of English-speaking Canadians had embraced bilingualism as one of the key means of supporting Canadian unity. In 1970, sixty percent of English-speaking Canadians approved of the Official Languages Act.<sup>46</sup> In the years since the 1960s, Canada has not become a bilingual country from coast to coast. It more resembles a country split into two linguistic, territorial fiefdoms, French in Quebec, English in eight of the nine other provinces, with New Brunswick and the federal administration as formally bilingual exceptions. Large numbers of English-speaking Canadians have continue to support the teaching of French as a second language, but Canadians remain ambivalent about official bilingualism. A lot of that ambivalence flows from the fact that

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<sup>46</sup> George Perlin, "Anglophone Attitudes Towards Bilingualism", in Daniel Bonin ed., *Toward Reconciliation?*(Kingston: The Institute of Intergovernmental Relations, 1992) 100.

most Canadians live far away from places where the other official language is dominant. They may feel open to bilingualism but it has little meaning in their daily lives. Outside of Québec, the federal administration in general and the public service in particular make up a very large proportion of jobs where the French language is a requirement. Thus, the degree of bilingualism in the federal public service thus becomes a benchmark for the importance of the two official languages in Canada and a key motivation for the learning of French as a second language in the school systems of English-speaking Canada. The mitigated success of bilingualism in the public service both reflects and confirms Canada's stuttering commitment to its two official languages. To understand why this half-success represents significant change it is important to look at Canada and the public service from 1945-1960.

## **Chapter One:**

### **‘Speak White’ and the Prelude to Compromise**

This chapter provides a background to linguistic conflict in Canada. It will look at the position and state of the language issue in Canada generally and in the public service in particular in the period leading up to the 1960s. It begins with an introduction about the situation prior to 1945 and then focuses on the period 1945-62. At many times in its history the majority of English-speaking Canadians resisted bilingualism and any concessions to French-speaking Canada. They simply expected that everyone would or should learn English. In the 1960s English-speaking Canada largely accepted a path of moderation and compromise. This chapter will attempt to outline how this occurred.

In retrospect it may appear that the awakening of nationalist pressure in Québec made the acceptance of bilingualism from coast to coast an inevitable response in English-speaking Canada. This was far from obvious in 1945 or even 1960. English-speaking Canadians could have imitated their American neighbours and insisted that their language should be the sole language of governance, education, commerce and the law everywhere in the country, certainly everywhere outside of Québec. There were many voices in English-speaking Canada willing to defend this option. That English-speaking Canada took a different course results from two concurrent factors. First, English-speaking Canada became less attached to its British origins and more aware of its intolerant past. Second, French-speaking Canadians made it clear that they would have to

find an honourable place in Canada or the country would break up. This chapter will show how these two key preconditions to change developed slowly and almost invisibly throughout this period in English-speaking and French-speaking Canada and it will show that change in the public service would lag, waiting for clear signals from the broader society and from its political leadership. It will also begin to show that official bilingualism would not flow from a high principle and a clear plan, but from a pragmatic and somewhat desperate impulse to respond to a new reality in French-speaking Canada.

### **The Linguistic Conflict in Canada**

Language is one of the strongest markers of cultural difference. It often determines the make-up of interest groups. The European settlement of North America and the conquest of New France by Britain in 1759 shape the history of language conflict in Canada. For four centuries the English and the French and their settler offspring have competed for power and position in the northern half of North America. It has long been an unequal competition, with the English-speaking population greatly outnumbering the French. In Canada this was not always the case. For one hundred years after the Conquest, the French-speaking population formed the majority. Only at the beginning of the 1860's did this change. Canadian Confederation was a carefully crafted compromise designed to allow both language communities to develop within protected boundaries. For the first half century after Confederation, the leaders of English-speaking Canadians tried to limit the use of French outside of Québec and within the economic sectors in Québec, while

French-speaking Canadians defended the French language in Québec and tried to support the development of French-language communities elsewhere in Canada. National bilingualism was the dream of many French-speaking leaders, while English-speaking Canadian leaders remained deeply opposed to this idea and afraid of the influence that French-speaking Canadians could gain in Canadian society if their language was accepted.

To understand the significance of the change achieved in Canada in the 1960s requires a context that lies in the 200 years of conflict and competition between French-speaking and English-speaking Canadians. John Porter, sociologist and researcher on Canada's cultural cleavages dealt with the conflict between French-speaking and English-speaking Canadians in his book *The Vertical Mosaic*. "Canada has two charter groups, although they have by no means equal strength... each has significant control over the settlement of new groups on its territory..."<sup>47</sup> Porter poses three questions that have dominated the relations between the English-speaking and French-speaking charter groups. First, did the French-speaking Canadians as the first charter group in Canada have the will and power to survive and grow? Second, once English-speaking colonists began to arrive in large numbers, what territory would fall to each charter group? Finally, what

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<sup>47</sup> John Porter, *The Vertical Mosaic* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1965), 60.

compromises could be worked out between the two groups in areas where their interests and power overlapped? <sup>48</sup>

The answer to Porter's first question was clear by 1867: French-speaking Canadians did have the will to maintain their language and culture. By the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century the answer to the second question was also evident. French-speaking Canadians would be masters in the territory of Québec. English-speaking Canada would dominate in the rest of the country. Québec had a French-speaking majority of about 5 million, dominant in culture and politics but secondary in the economic sphere. French-speaking minorities of almost one million people in total were spread across all provinces, but except for New Brunswick and Eastern Ontario they were declining in absolute and relative terms. English-speaking Canadians, 15 million strong, made up the growing majority of all other provinces. The English-speaking residents of Québec felt not so much as a minority in that province as part of the majority in Canada. Nowhere was bilingualism seen as a priority. Most English-speaking Canadians were opposed or indifferent to learning French. The answer to Porter's final question about the kinds of compromises that would be required to keep the two groups together was still very much uncertain. Until the 1960s most of the burden of compromise had fallen upon French-speaking Canadians. After 1960 Québécois would insist that English-speaking Canadians make major adjustments to their view of Canada and their behaviour toward French-speaking Canadians.

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

In the 1960s the federal administration became a key focus in the ongoing struggle for organisational power between the two charter groups. French-speaking Canada could no longer accept its exclusion from an equitable participation in the administration of the federal government. English-speaking Canadians eventually accepted that simple justice as well as national unity supported bilingualism and biculturalism in the federal public service. The public service would become a key arena in which the essential compromises between the two charter groups would be worked out. It is here that the ideal of Canada as a bilingual nation from coast to coast would be adapted to the reality that French and English would coexist in a very limited sphere.

Albert and Raymond Breton, social scientists, place language at the centre of Canada's unity crisis, competition between linguistic groups over the distribution of what they chose to call organizational power. They suggest that attempts by one language group to expand the use of its language are an indirect means of increasing its organizational power.<sup>49</sup> Dominant groups insist on the use of their language for contacts with other groups. Subordinate groups will use their language as a barrier to the invasive culture of the dominant group. All of these forms of competition played out within the federal public service in the 1960s. But, human groups are also able to work out essential compromises for a perceived greater good and they sometimes learn over time to

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<sup>49</sup> Albert Breton and Raymond Breton, *Why Disunity?* (Montreal: The Institute for Research on Public Policy, 1980), 40.

accommodate their differences and to cooperate on common goals, even at the expense of some individual members of those groups.

English-speaking Canadians long supported policies to reduce or eliminate the French presence anywhere it could in Canada. From the 1870 decision in New Brunswick to eliminate public funding for the catholic schools in which French was the language of instruction, to the elimination of French in the government and schools of Manitoba in the 1890s, to Regulation 17 the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century that removed the right to French-language public education in Ontario, the rights of French-speaking minorities were destroyed. The efforts of the English-speaking majority greatly limited the extent of French presence outside of Québec, but they never succeeded in making Canada a unilingual country. Instead the ongoing presence of a stable French-speaking society in Canada has shaped English-speaking Canada. As the majority culture, English-speaking Canada has often ignored the way in which the competition, conflict, compromise and accommodation with French-speaking Canada has affected its history and its character. Yet, it is one of the strongest roots of English-speaking Canadian identity. The historian W.L. Morton underlines this central factor in Canada's make up. He notes that English Canada even in the years of its greatest intolerance has been shaped by its often reluctant obligation "to allow two cultures to flourish in one political nationality."<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> W.L. Morton, *The Canadian Identity* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1963), 3.

In the years after Confederation there were some English-speaking Canadian leaders who sought a more positive understanding with French-speaking Canada, but these voices remained a minority until the resurgence of Québec nationalism made compromise necessary. By the early 1960s the English-speaking urban elites were beginning to openly acknowledge that the presence of the French culture in Canada was one of the country's strengths in fighting the cultural domination of the United States.<sup>51</sup> One of the obvious roots of the Canadian model of diversity lies in the many, often painful lessons derived from living with the competition between English and French-speaking Canada.

### **Language relations in Canada and the federal government prior to 1945**

From Confederation to 1920, French-speaking Canadians competed with English-speaking Canadians over two different visions of Canada. Michael Behiels captures the complexity of this struggle in his 2008 Article in the *Supreme Court Law Review* where he notes the persistence of the struggle, the dominance of English in most of the country balanced somewhat by the modest success of French-speaking Canadians in maintaining their society and culture.<sup>52</sup> The hope of many French-speaking Canadians in the 19<sup>th</sup> century was that Canada would evolve as a bilingual country from sea to sea.

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<sup>51</sup> James Laxer. "A Search for Canadian Policy," *The Varsity 1964 Week Two*. 2

<sup>52</sup> Michael Behiels, "Contested Ground", 23-89.

Sir Georges Étienne Cartier supported this ideal when he secured the entry of Manitoba into Confederation as a bilingual province in 1870. But, the Orangist leadership of Toronto and Ontario flooded Manitoba with English-speaking Protestant settlers in a deliberate effort to make English dominant there. In two decades they had won the demographic struggle and used the English-speaking majority in the provincial legislature to override the constitutional guarantees for the French language. An article in the 1889 *Mail*, a leading Toronto newspaper sums up the degree of prejudice held at this time by a large part of the English-speaking population, “language is the lynchpin of French-Canadian culture, holding together a fabric of delusion, superstition and know-nothingness.”<sup>53</sup> By 1890 the linguistic-territorial map of Canada was largely set. Only parts of Québec Ontario and New Brunswick were still contested.

In spite of this English-speaking dominance already clear in the 1890s some Québec leaders, notably Henri Bourassa politician and editor of *Le Devoir*, still dreamed of a bilingual Canada. His bilingual dream might have been, as W.L. Morton called it in his unsolicited submission to the RCBB “the first ‘all-Canadianism’...French Canada as it really was and English Canada as it might be”<sup>54</sup>, but it was doomed to die in the ethnically biased environment of early 20<sup>th</sup> century Ontario. In the east and north of Ontario substantial French-speaking and Catholic communities grew from 1890 to 1910

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<sup>53</sup> Chad Gaffield, *Language Schooling and Cultural Conflict*. (Kingston-Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 1987), 24.

<sup>54</sup> W.L. Morton, “Biculturalism”, 41.

and the Protestant majority in Ontario feared the power these communities might gain if left unchecked. Through Regulation 17 in 1912 the Government of Ontario clamped down on the use of the French language in publicly funded schools. In 1917, this language conflict in Ontario and the conscription crisis across the country provoked the most acrimonious and violent division the country had ever known. In the 1917 election, the Canadian electorate split substantially on ethnic and linguistic grounds. Only the Liberal Party avoided the full impact of the split when Mackenzie King and a few others stuck with Laurier in opposition to conscription.<sup>55</sup> It would take decades to repair the damage to Canadian unity.

A small but significant number of English-speaking and French-speaking organisations worked throughout the 1920s and 30s to build better relations between Canada's charter groups. Robert Talbot in his 2013 doctoral dissertation gives a very full description of the efforts made in English-speaking Canada to repair relations with French-speaking Canada after the dual disasters of Regulation 17 and the Conscription Crisis of 1917.<sup>56</sup> It started with the Toronto based academic and politician, William Henry Moore, whose 1918 book *The Clash* was a condemnation of Orange-Protestant prejudice in Ontario.<sup>57</sup> Rebuilding French and English understanding continued through the revival

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<sup>55</sup> Roger Graham, *Arthur Meighen: The Door of Opportunity* (Toronto: Clarke, Irwin, 1960.), 249. As was often the case King seems to have straddled the issue, advising Laurier to accept conscription, but then running as a 'Laurier Liberal' against conscription in the 1917 election.

<sup>56</sup> Robert Talbot, "Moving Beyond Two Solitudes", 119-167.

<sup>57</sup> William Henry Moore, *The Clash, A Study in Nationalities* (London: J. M. Dent & Sons), 1918.

of the Bonne Entente Movement, the active engagement of Canadian Clubs and private sector associations, and the political moves of Mackenzie King and the Liberal government.<sup>58</sup> The immense rifts of 1917 were partially healed by 1939. Of symbolic importance were the decisions of the King governments to introduce bilingual postage for the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Confederation (1927) and the move to bilingual currency in 1935.

### **The Public Service in the interwar years**

In the interwar period the federal administration became increasingly English in language and culture. In 1920 French-speaking Canadians made up about 24% of all employees in the public service. By 1949 this number had dropped to 13.4%.<sup>59</sup> Up until 1918 staffing in the public service had been the responsibility of Ministers. While this often led to patronage and a negative impact on the effectiveness and efficiency of the public service, it did ensure a reasonably representative balance between the English-speaking and French-speaking members of the public service at all levels of the bureaucracy. The Civil Service of Canada was transformed in 1918 when the Civil Service Act took the power to hire civil servants away from Ministers and gave it to an independent Civil Service Commission (the Public Service Commission since 1967), effectively ending the widespread practice of political patronage. The Canadian legislation was drafted along the lines of reforms which had occurred in the United

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<sup>58</sup> Robert Talbot, "Moving Beyond Two Solitudes", 405-420.

<sup>59</sup> J.E. Hodgetts, *The Biography of an Institution, The Civil Service Commission of Canada 1908-1967*, (Montreal-Kingston: McGill-Queens University Press, 1972), 472.

Kingdom and the United States in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the British Civil Service was often looked at as the model to be emulated in Canada.<sup>60</sup> At the core of the new staffing process was the notion that appointments should go to the candidate that best met the requirements of the merit system. Merit was intended to be defined by objective criteria directly related to the skill required to do the job. Very often these criteria were based on recognised educational and professional certification. No provision was made in the definition of merit to recognise capacity in Canada's two official languages. It was not surprising then that the federal public service from 1920 to 1960 became more and more like a bastion of British-Canadian culture. As J.E. Hodgetts notes in his history of the Civil Service Commission of Canada, in the early 1920s "bilingualism and biculturalism in the contemporary sense were simply not part of the universe of political discourse."<sup>61</sup> The move to a merit based system was supported by most members of Parliament, both English and French-speaking. It possibly did not occur to the French-speaking MPs that the net result of merit would work against French-speaking Canadians in such a profound way.

The definition of merit was not just blind to the existence of two cultures in Canada, it was skewed toward English-speaking Canadians. French-speaking Canada favoured education in the classics and the professions of the law, medicine and education. English-speaking Canada had a strong base in those traditional professions and had

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<sup>60</sup> Ibid, 478.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid, 474.

already developed a much wider and deeper educational base in science, technology and engineering. Given that the civil service already had a majority of English-speaking Canadians in 1920 it was natural that they would define merit and educational qualifications in ways that favoured their own cultural background. John Carson, President of the Public Service Commission, commented on the history of the Civil Service Commission in a speech in 1971. He concluded that English-speaking Canadians had become a disproportionate majority because the selection process was primarily designed to reflect cultural values of English Canada. “The early Commissioners were operating in a universe where bilingualism and biculturalism were not a concern...”<sup>62</sup> There was no consideration given to the idea that it might not just be unfair to fail to offer services in French to French-speaking citizens, but that it might be inefficient as well. As Hodgetts put it, “Curiously the sheer inefficiency of unilingual services in a bilingual country does not seem to have impressed itself upon English Canadians at the time.”<sup>63</sup>

At the same time that the Civil Service Act (1918) came into effect the professional, technical and scientific workers of the federal government decided to form an association, known now as the Professional Institute of the Public Service of Canada (PIPS). The Professional Institute authorised the writing of an official history in 1970. It

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<sup>62</sup> John Carson, “Speech to the Staff of the Public Service Commission, June 1971”. PIPS Fonds. Library and Archives Canada MG28 I 36 Box 1.

<sup>63</sup> J.E.Hodgetts, *The Biography of an Institution*, 474.

was called *Serving the State*, a title that captures the image that PIPS wanted to project.<sup>64</sup> It saw itself and its members as professionals working for the Canadian state, but not necessarily for every government of Canada. From the outset it played an active role in the implementation of the merit system and eventually it would play a particularly forceful role in the resistance to the implementation of official bilingualism. As the merit system was implemented in the early 1920s, PIPS played a key role in determining the way that jobs were classified and remunerated. The first classification system had been developed for the government by a firm of American consultants and their recommendations were controversial. Professionals in the public service felt that their interests were threatened and they turned to their new association to help them make their case. PIPS built its reputation by giving voice to these professionals and winning important modifications to the proposed classification system.<sup>65</sup>

Swettenham and Kealy note that in 1920 PIPS reflected the British-Canadian values of Canadian society and the civil service in general, “As with most of her democratic institutions, Canada copied Britain and finally caught up with British practice in 1918.”<sup>66</sup> PIPS itself was inspired by the Professional Institute of Civil Servants in London. From the beginning there were French-speaking Canadians among the members

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<sup>64</sup> John Swettenham and David Kealy, *Serving the State*, 3.

<sup>65</sup> PIPS Website <http://www.pipsc.ca/portal/page/portal/website/aboutinstitute> (Accessed February 15, 2014).

<sup>66</sup> John Swettenham and David Kelly. *Serving the state*, 4.

of PIPS. They were not barred from membership or even discouraged, if they would speak English. Because the professions were dominated by English-speaking Canadians, the job descriptions and hiring processes were all tilted against the few French-speaking Canadians who would apply. Any who did get hired would have to work in English and compete against English-speaking colleagues for promotion.

To make matters worse for French-speaking Canadians, the introduction of the Civil Service Act of 1918 coincided with the application across the federal government of a significant exception to the merit principle. In all cases, war veterans were to be hired ahead of other candidates as long as they met the minimal requirements for the job. Given the respective records of participation in the armed services by English-speaking and French-speaking Canadians this often led to an advantage for English-speaking Canadian veterans when competing against French-speaking candidates of greater skill and higher qualification. Introduced after the First World War, the veterans' preference remained in place until 1960. The significance of its impact can be seen in the record of hiring in the period just after the Second World War, "From 1946-1952, out of 160,028 males appointed, 98,547, or 61.5% were veterans."<sup>67</sup> Nowhere in the history of PIPS is there any indication that they objected to this exception to the merit system.

Some attempts were made by the governments of Mackenzie King to at least appear to be dealing with the issue of French in the civil service. Ernest Lapointe,

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<sup>67</sup>R.M. Dawson, *The Government of Canada*, 273.

Minister of Justice and King's Québec lieutenant, often used his political clout to try to get the federal public service to hire qualified French-speaking civil servants, but he rarely tried to attack the structural issues at the root of the problem. Paradoxically, as Hodgetts points out, Lapointe's efforts to intervene with his colleagues probably added to the bias among English-speaking Canadians who felt that French-speaking Canadians were always trying to get around the merit system. French-speaking Canadians' complaints "were generally categorized as attempts at gaining special privileges."<sup>68</sup> In 1938, Earnest Lapointe and a backbench Liberal MP, Wilfrid Lacroix, did manage to have Parliament pass an amendment to the Civil Service Act that made the capacity to serve the public in the official language of the majority of clients in their region an explicit part of the merit system. But in Hodgetts' words "it does not appear to have been taken seriously."<sup>69</sup> Perhaps the 1938 Amendment would have fared better if war had not broken out one year later, but even without that distraction it would have required sustained political effort to overcome the English-speaking culture of the federal public service. Instead the dominating presence of English-speaking Canadians in the federal public service continued to grow during and after the Second World War. In examining this record of Anglo-dominance in the civil service, researchers for the Royal Commission on

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<sup>68</sup>Hodgetts, *The Biography of an Institution*, 475. This failure of the Governments of Mackenzie to deal in a substantive way with the place of French-speaking Canadians in the civil service are particularly surprising given the efforts made by King Governments to introduce bilingualism into the celebrations of Canada's 60<sup>th</sup> birthday in 1927, to issue bilingual postage in the same year and bilingual currency in 1936. These were all very visible and even controversial actions. Why the more discrete process of civil service reform received no real push deserves more examination.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, 476.

Bilingualism and Biculturalism identified two main reasons for this outcome, "...the permeation of both the political and bureaucratic elements of the federal administration with a unilingual conception of efficiency and rationality...and, even more important, a traditional bias against Francophones among Anglophone Ministers and higher public servants."<sup>70</sup>

The Professional Institute of the Public Service played a strong role in the defense of the merit system. Defence of the merit system and suspicion about attempts to increase the representation of French-speaking Canadians in the civil service were to live hand in hand in the policies and positions of PIPS, but merit and its application are never as black and white as theorists of bureaucratic organization and management would like. Exceptions to the strict application of merit are common in the creation of a healthy organization. Regional biases are a good example. A federal government unit in a regional office is expected to hire a significant share of its employees from that region even if all of the best qualified candidates, as identified through competitive exams, are from the other side of the country. Even more fundamental is the example of the veterans' preference that was clearly a violation of the merit principle. PIPS did not systematically oppose either of these exceptions to the merit principle. The PIPS stand on attempts to increase the participation of French-speaking Canadians in the civil service would follow quite a different line

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<sup>70</sup> Beattie, Désy and Longstaff, *Senior Federal Civil Servants at mid-Career*, 10.

## **English-speaking Canada, 1945-62: A New Identity begins to emerge**

The Second World War affected the emerging Canadian sense of national identity in several, sometimes contradictory, ways. English-speaking Canadians felt a sense of pride in the role that Canada had played in the victory, both on the battlefield and in the industrial production that supplied the war effort. The affection of English-speaking Canadians for Great Britain rose as Churchill led world resistance to Hitlerism. The Second World War also helped to make theories of racial superiority less defensible. Before the war, as the historian and Communist Party member Stanley Ryerson notes, English-speaking Canadians widely accepted a "...deep-seated prejudice, based on the race-mythology of Anglo-Saxon superiority."<sup>71</sup> Six years of fighting Nazi racism and the horror inspired by the revelations of the Holocaust made claims of racial or ethnic superiority less palatable.

Britain ended the war essentially bankrupt and increasingly ready to rid itself of the responsibilities of Empire. For most of its history Canada had depended on the relationship with Great Britain to maintain a degree of independence from the cultural, economic and political power of the United States. By the 1950s it was clear that Great Britain would no longer be able to play this role. The Commonwealth and the shared monarchy could still provide an emotional crutch for some English-speaking Canadians

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<sup>71</sup> Stanley Ryerson, *French Canada: A Study in Canadian Democracy*, (Toronto: Progress Books, 1944), 170.

but many of them were starting to look for a uniquely Canadian identity that would be a new bulwark against American cultural and economic dominance.

A series of actions initiated by the Mackenzie King Government in 1945 marked the opening salvo in the attempt to move away from this British identity and to create a Canadian nationality. King allowed legislation to be developed on a Citizenship Act, on a new national flag and on the change in name of July 1 from Dominion Day to Canada Day. The initiatives for a new flag and for the name change of Canada's national holiday were both dropped in the face of opposition from English-speaking Canadians. The much more substantive Citizenship Act was passed in 1946. Until the passage of that Act Canadians had been defined only as 'British Subjects' and immigrants from Great Britain could claim Canadian citizenship merely by establishing residence in Canada. The Citizenship Act put immigrants (at least those from white, Northern nations) on an equal footing. Canadians would still be the subjects of the British monarch but they would first and foremost be citizens of Canada. It was an important change on the road to a new Canadian identity.

King's process of change by increments helped English-speaking Canadians to gradually slough of their Britishness. Each of the measures proposed by the King Government in 1946 gave the supporters of British-Canada a chance to proclaim their allegiance to the old flag and the old Empire. By backing down on the proposals for a new flag and the shift to 'Canada Day' the Government provided the proponents of British tradition in Canada with two 'victories' and he avoided what would have been a highly

emotional conflict over Canadian symbols. For the more important Citizenship Act, King's government was ready to insist.

Debate on the Citizenship Act provided lots of scope for pro-British Canadians to state their case. Their criticism focused on the fact that the new law would treat immigrants from Great Britain in the same way as those arriving from any other country. G. R. Pearkes, MP for Nanimo, B.C., (a Victoria Cross winner in the First World War, and future Minister of National Defense in the Government of John Diefenbaker) opposed the Citizenship Act because it failed to recognise the unique qualifications of British immigrants. In words that seem improbable today but were nearly commonplace in 1946, he summed up his stance in the following way. The immigrant from Britain "will have learned about the Magna Carta, he will know of habeus corpus and the bill of rights and he will know something of the Statute of Westminster. He is of the breed."<sup>72</sup> Thus the British immigrant would arrive fully prepared to be an effective Canadian citizen and therefore he might be insulted by the obligation to wait some time and learn some basic facts about Canada before becoming a citizen. Pearkes seemed not to recognise that Canada might have some unique qualities (such as federalism, an indigenous population and a strong cultural minority) which the knowledge of British Parliamentary tradition might not encompass. Passing the Citizenship Act not only legalised and standardised the process for become Canadian, it made every Canadian a citizen of Canada.

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<sup>72</sup> Ibid, 21.

Many in the Canadian English-speaking cultural elite in the 1950s were preoccupied by the invasion of American pop-culture. The Massey Royal Commission on the Arts, Letters and Sciences was created by the St. Laurent government 1950 in response to growing concerns, especially among the cultural elite in English-speaking Canada, about American cultural dominance. In its search for ways to support Canadian culture and make it more distinct the Massey Commission favoured the active intervention of the state in the support of Canadian culture. It showed a remarkable understanding of the place of French culture in Canada. Historian William Coleman notes that the “usually nationalist Jesuit journal *Relations* lauded the Commission ... for its sympathetic attitude toward French Canada, its respect for bilingualism,...,and its frank and open Canadian nationalism.”<sup>73</sup> A few English-speaking Canadian cultural leaders even thought that the Massey Commission should have gone further in exploiting the potential of French-speaking Canadian culture to play a role in the quest for cultural independence from the USA. Nathan Cohen, a Canadian theatre critic and TV producer, saw much potential for cultural exchanges between English-speaking and French-speaking Canadians and lamented that the Massey Commission largely ignored this; “nor is there anything really concrete said about bringing our English and French speaking cultural elements into closer and more positive proximity,”<sup>74</sup> The work of the Massey

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<sup>73</sup> William Coleman, *The Independence Movement in Quebec 1945-80* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984), 69.

<sup>74</sup> Nathan Cohen. Quoted in Carmen Rothwell. “Cultural Nationalism and the Growth of English Canadian Drama, 1945-1960”, Unpublished M.A. Thesis. University of Ottawa 1993, 169.

Commission represents one of the first signs that openness to French culture and to the notion of bilingualism were beginning to attract active support in the elites of English-speaking Canada. Unfortunately from the point of view of Québec nationalists, the Commission also strongly favoured concerted action by the federal government to support culture across Canada including support for higher education.

The Quebec government took offense at this incursion into a provincial area of responsibility. Provoked by the federal interest in culture, the government of Québec launched the Tremblay Commission to explore the state of French culture in Québec. Québec nationalist historian Michel Brunet noted the problem posed by the new federal interest in culture. In considering the work of the Massey Commission he noted “les élites du Canada Anglais se montrent très sympathiques envers la culture franco-canadienne .... un moyen de défense contre l’influence américaine.”<sup>75</sup> Brunet then underlined the dilemma that this posed for French-speaking members of the cultural community. To embrace the new Canadian national focus on culture risked inviting the federal government into a field of central importance to the maintenance of French culture in Québec. For Brunet, it was the work of the Tremblay Commission, “le premier véritable examen de conscience collectif du Canada français” that allowed Québécois to focus first

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<sup>75</sup> Michel Brunet, *La Présence anglaise et les Canadiens*, 12.

on ways to build their language and culture in Québec and avoid federal intrusion into the field of cultural policy.<sup>76</sup>

In the mid-1950s there were few other signs that English-speaking Canada was ready for more openness to the French language and culture. Most English-speaking Canadians thought of Canada as British in culture and English in language. G.V. Ferguson, the Editor of the *Montreal Star*, who wrote in 1956 about the English-speaking Canadian viewpoint and noted the cultural diversity of English Canada, concluded “it is true that the mark and pattern of the English-speaking Canadian is more British than it is anything else.”<sup>77</sup> He lamented that English-speaking Canadians know so little about their French-speaking fellow citizens. He said that from the English-speaking Canadian viewpoint, French-speaking Canada seemed only a distant and waning anomaly, destined to assimilate into Canadian and North American culture. Yet he concluded his piece by commenting that relations had never been better between the two founding cultures.<sup>78</sup> This fundamental misreading of the aspirations and determination of French-speaking Canadians, which came on the heels of the work of the Tremblay Commission, can only be seen as another example of vast distance between the two solitudes.

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<sup>76</sup> Michel Brunet, *Québec-Canada Anglais*, 96.

<sup>77</sup> G.V. Ferguson. “The English-Canadian Outlook”, in Mason Wade (ed.), *Canadian Dualism-La dualité canadienne*. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1960). 3.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid*, 18.

The Suez crisis marked an important step in the evolution of English-speaking Canada. It was the most visible test of Canadian independent foreign policy since the Second World War. British leaders and many pro-British Canadians assumed that Canada would automatically back the Anglo-French military action in Suez. When the Canadian Government of Louis St Laurent decided instead that Canada would align itself with the US opposition to the British-French military action in Egypt, it became abundantly clear that Canada no longer felt an obligation to back Great Britain in all of its wars. As Igartua concludes, "...The Suez Crisis constituted a significant juncture in the dissolution of English-speaking Canada's self-representation as a British nation."<sup>79</sup> Perhaps just as important in this erosion of the link to Great Britain was the ill-fated campaign by the Diefenbaker government to keep Britain out of the European Economic Commission. In a series of interventions from 1959-62 Diefenbaker attempted to convince the British government that Commonwealth trade preferences should be more important than trade ties to Europe. In spite of Canadian efforts to try to promote Commonwealth preferences, it became obvious that Britain saw its economic future in the European Community. When the Diefenbaker Government tried to convince the British that they should not develop closer trade ties with Europe at the expense of the Commonwealth and Canadian trade there was little support from the Canadian press.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> Igartua, *The Other Quiet Revolution*, 115.

<sup>80</sup> Robert Spencer, "External Affairs and Defence" in John Saywell ed. *Canadian Annual Review 1960*, 135.

In the shifting sands of cultural identity, commercial decisions can provide strong clues to changing priorities. For 30 years *Maclean's* magazine had a monthly report from London by Beverly Baxter on the political news and social gossip of Great Britain. It was the only foreign capital covered in this way by *Maclean's* and Baxter's articles were followed by many English-speaking Canadians both as a source of information and as a sentimental link to Great Britain. On July 30, 1960 the magazine announced that it would no longer be publishing Baxter's column.<sup>81</sup> This simple commercial decision reflected the editor's view about what topics attracted readers in 1960. Clearly, London and the politics of Great Britain were a declining interest for English-speaking readers of *Maclean's*.

### **French-speaking Canada speaks up**

The decline of British-Canada may have been a necessary condition for the emergence of a new relationship with French-speaking Canada, but it was not enough by itself. Québec nationalists would have to provide the second great force behind the changes in English-speaking Canada. The years from 1945-60 witnessed no remarkable conflicts between English-speaking and French-speaking Canada. In the corners of 'la grande noirceur' that seemed to hang over Québec during the Government of Maurice Duplessis there were signs that a new French-speaking Canada was being conceived.

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<sup>81</sup> Robert Bothwell, Ian Drummond and John English, *Power, Politics and Provincialism* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987), 239.

Artists led the way in 1948 with the ‘Refus Global’ that condemned the oppression of thought and action in Quebec by both government and church. Their polemic was largely ignored at the time but became a rallying cry for a new Québec in the 1960s. The trade union movement gathered strength as a voice of French-speaking Québécois. Duplessis launched the Tremblay Commission and refused to allow the federal government to fund Québec universities. *Cité libre*’ emerged in the 1950s as a voice of individual freedom and openness. Industrialisation and urbanisation continued to shape a new Québec far removed from the rural and agricultural base of traditional society.<sup>82</sup> Education levels were rising. Radio and television were exposing French-speaking Canadians to wider worlds of culture. All the while a pressure was building for more fundamental changes.

As Québec modernised in the 1950s Québécois began to be much more concerned about their second class status in Canada. Employed in industry, living in cities, French-speaking Québécois were brought into more frequent contact with English-speaking Canadians. They did not like what they saw. Everywhere in industry, commerce and finance English-speaking Canadians were in charge. A French-speaking Canadian who wanted to succeed (or even to shop at Eaton’s) had to learn English. French-speaking Canadians resented the attitudes and actions of English-speaking Canadians, but as University of Québec at Montréal sociologist Jacques Beauchemin points out, they also saw themselves reflected in a most unattractive light. “Plus grave encore, les années 50

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<sup>82</sup> Lucia Ferretti, “La Grande Noirceur, mère de la Révolution tranquille?” dans Berthiaume et Corbo, *La Révolution tranquille en Héritage* (Montréal: Boréal 2011), 29.

découvraient que ce que nous avons eu l'habitude d'attribuer à une histoire d'oppression relevait également d'un certain consentement."<sup>83</sup> This sense of being partners in their own oppression would become a powerful motor for change among the new leaders of French-speaking Canada. 'Maîtres chez-nous,' the political mantra of Jean Lesage's Liberal Party in the 1960s grew from this desire of French-speaking Québécois to take responsibility for their own affairs. The slogan was first and foremost an affirmation by French-speaking Canadians that they were capable of leading in all aspects of Quebec life.

At the same time, across Canada, experience in the 1950s seemed to have confirmed for French-speaking activists who tried to influence English-speaking Canada and the federal government that even modest attempts to gain recognition for the French language would provoke hostility. Historian Marcel Martel points out how resigned some of these groups had become. "Le Conseil (de la vie française en Amérique) tient le moins possible de manifestations publiques de peur de susciter l'opposition de certains éléments du Canada Anglais qui ont un héritage orangiste."<sup>84</sup> By 1960, 15 years of cautious lobbying by the Le Conseil, l'Ordre de Jacques Cartier and other voices of moderate reform had achieved little beyond bilingual cheques for payments sent directly to Canadians by the federal government (1959). Even this minor change had been resisted by anti-French elements in English-speaking Canada and it appeared that the attitudes of

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<sup>83</sup> Jacques Beauchemin, "Entre le rejet du passé et les promesses de l'avenir" dans Berthiaume et Corbo, *La Révolution tranquille en Héritage* (Montréal: Boréal 2011), 168.

<sup>84</sup> Martel, *Le deuil d'un pays imagine*, 76.

English-speaking Canadians would never change.<sup>85</sup> It is hardly surprising, in the face of this response from English-speaking Canada that a significant portion of the French-speaking majority in Québec turned away from pan-Canadian solutions and focused on reinforcing the French language and culture in Québec.<sup>86</sup>

In Quebec, 1959 and 60 were watershed years. Following the death of Premier Maurice Duplessis, Paul Sauvé, the new Premier, set out reforms in education, hospital care, highways, agriculture and labour relations. He started a constructive dialogue with the government in Ottawa. Even though Sauvé died after only three months in power, his successor moved to implement much of the program he had laid out. When Québec chose Jean Lesage's Liberals as their new Government in June 1960, they confirmed the direction and pace of change. For those English-speaking Canadians who followed Québec politics it appeared that Québec was at last ready to be an active and positive force in Canada. Each month seemed to produce new initiatives to move Québec confidently into full possession of its own destiny.

### **The Early Reaction of English-speaking Canada to the New Québec**

Neither English-speaking Canadians nor their national government in Ottawa understood the power of the renewed ethnic nationalism that accompanied the Quiet

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<sup>85</sup> Ibid, 172.

<sup>86</sup> Brunet, *Québec-English Canada*, 228.

Revolution. The new Québec was not willing to hunker down in its isolation or to assimilate into English-Canada. It wanted a better deal in Canada and it was ready push for independence if it could not get it. The reaction of most of English-speaking Canada to this awakening in Québec was marked by ignorance and incomprehension. Pierre Sévigny who was Associate-Minister of Defense in the Diefenbaker government, recalled it this way in 1964 when he was writing his memoirs, “Les Canadiens anglais observaient tout le chalus, mais ils ne s’en faisaient pas... Peu de gens réalisaient que Lesage et son équipe d’apprentis-sorciers avaient reveillé un géant.”<sup>87</sup> The leaders of English-speaking Canada would spend the next generation trying to understand and deal with this giant. Typically they would do this through often contradictory actions that would at times welcome and at times resist the demands of French-speaking Canadians for a more equitable place in Canada and more particularly in the federal government. Official bilingualism in the federal administration would become one of the key battlefields in these attempts to craft a new balance between the two founding cultures.

### **Storming the Bastion: French-speaking Canada targets the Public Service**

For most Canadians, the federal civil service was their only direct contact with the federal government. Judging by the makeup of the public service in the 1950s one would conclude, as R.M. Dawson did in the 1964 edition of *The Government of Canada*, that it

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<sup>87</sup> Pierre Sévigny, *Le grand jeu de la politique* (Montréal: Les Éditions du jour, 1965), 224.

was "...based almost exclusively on English-Canadian concepts and dominated by English-Canadian personnel..."<sup>88</sup> When French-speaking Canadians or Canadians of other ethnic backgrounds looked at the public service they saw that they had little presence and little opportunity in that institution. In the years from 1945 -1962 there was no substantial improvement in the level of service to the public in French and no improvement at all in the place of French speaking Canadians in the federal public service.<sup>89</sup>

The dominant position of English-speaking Canadians was just as evident in all parts of the federal administration. The Canadian Armed Forces were just as English-speaking in their culture as the public service. In 1947 only 15% of officers in the army were French-speaking, only 4% of officers in the air force and 2.5% in the navy.<sup>90</sup> Efforts to make the Armed Forces more bilingual and more representative were attempted when Brooke Claxton was Minister in 1951. He stated, "Les deux langues devraient être sur le meme pied et les deux groupes ethniques devraient avoir des chances égales dans les force canadiennes."<sup>91</sup> His efforts had little effect in the face of obstruction from the top echelons of the services. It would take decades and many ministers to overcome

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<sup>88</sup> R.M.Dawson, *The Government of Canada*, 272.

<sup>89</sup> Daniel Bourgeois, *The Canadian Bilingual Districts: From Cornerstone to Tombstone* (Montréal, Kingston: McGill-Queens Press 2006), 45.

<sup>90</sup> Jean Pariseau et Serge Bernier, *Les Canadiens Français et le bilinguisme dans les Forces armées canadiennes, Tome 1* (Ottawa: Service historique de la Défense nationale, 1987),178.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid, 149.

opposition and inertia within the Armed Forces.<sup>92</sup> Federal crown corporations were no better. In 1962, Donald Gordon the Chairman of the Canadian National Railway was hung in effigy by French-speaking youth across Québec when he justified the lack of French-speaking Canadians on his board by claiming that no qualified candidates were available for the jobs. Outside of Parliament and the judiciary, there was little space for French-speaking Canadians in the federal administration.

In the 1950s, the English-speaking leaders in the federal administration had no understanding of the place that the French language and culture should have in the federal government. Gordon Robertson, who was one of the most powerful public servants of his generation, commented in his memoirs, written in the 1990s, about the place of French-speaking Canadians in the government and the public service during the St. Laurent governments, “PMO reflected the very limited place that was given to the French language in the public service of Canada in general. There was no language problem in either government or the service: the language was English...with no thought about the unfairness that imposed on French-speaking Canadians.”<sup>93</sup> This observation is wholly consistent with view that Jack Granatstein would note in his history of the top levels of the public service in the period 1935-1957, “Nor was there a single French-Canadian in the mandarin group”.<sup>94</sup> St. Laurent himself was the child of an English mother and French

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<sup>92</sup> Ibid, 157.

<sup>93</sup> Robertson, *Memoirs of a Very Civil Servant*, 75.

<sup>94</sup> Jack Granatstein, *The Ottawa Men*, 4.

father. He was fully bilingual and took little interest in language issues. Pariseau and Bernier noted, “St. Laurent ...ne s’attaqua jamais publiquement à régler les nombreuses injustices suscitées à l’endroit des Canadiens français dans la FP (Fonction Publique) et les forces armées.”<sup>95</sup> By 1960 French-speaking Canadians were beginning to demand change in their federal public service. In very different ways Eugène Therrien and Marcel Chaput combined to paint a stark portrait of the federal administration as seen through the eyes of French-speaking Canadians at the beginning of the 1960s. Therrien was one of the Commissioners of the Royal Commission on Government Organisation (the Glassco Commission), charged by the Government of John Diefenbaker to examine organisation, management and efficiency in the federal public service. Marcel Chaput was a professional employee of the Department of National Defense and a declared supporter of Québec independence. Therrien’s views were carefully phrased and somewhat hidden as a dissenting opinion in the middle of a very extensive Royal Commission report. Chaput on the other hand achieved instant notoriety when he published his views in *Pourquoi je suis séparatiste* in 1961.<sup>96</sup>

The report of the Glassco Commission in 1962 did recognise briefly the problems of a unilingual public service in a bilingual country, “The language of central administration is, for the greater part exclusively English, and the French-speaking citizen

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<sup>95</sup> Pariseau et Bernier, *Les Canadiens Français et le bilinguisme dans les Forces armées canadiennes Tome I*, 156.

<sup>96</sup> Marcel Chaput, *Why I am a Separatist*.

whose affairs bring him to the central offices may well experience difficulty in trying to discuss those affairs in his mother tongue.”<sup>97</sup> The Commission also acknowledged the particular problems for a French-speaking Canadian in the federal public service. But then it washed its hands of the whole problem by concluding that the subject of bilingualism in the federal public service lay outside of its mandate. Therrien was forced to file his dissenting opinion. He said, “The terms of reference of the Commission should, in my opinion, have led to more specific and more detailed conclusions and recommendations concerning the incidence of bilingualism in relation to the efficiency and economy in the federal administration”<sup>98</sup>

Therrien went on to note the many failings of the federal administration with regard to French-speaking Canadians: the public was not adequately served in the French language; recruitment of French-speaking Canadians was insufficient; there were far too few French-speaking public servants at senior levels; the expense of translating every French document flowing to the government into English was excessive. In short, practices around the use of the French language were unfair, costly, inefficient and ineffective. His words seem to have led to a slightly more positive attitude in Volume V, the final report of the Glassco Commission that appeared in 1963. It called for greater efforts to increase bilingualism among public servants and to advance the recruitment of

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<sup>97</sup> Royal Commission on Government Organisation, *A Plan for Management*, (Ottawa: Queen’s Printer, 1962), 24.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid*, 66.

French-speaking public servants.<sup>99</sup> But the real impact of Therrien's work would be felt only when the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism used his observations as the base for a much more extensive examination of the place of the French language and culture in the federal administration.

Marcel Chaput wrote *Pourquoi je suis séparatiste* first in French (1961) and then in English, *Why I am a Separatist*, (1962). It was not just an attack on the place of French in the federal administration; it attacked the whole concept of a bilingual Canada. It added to Chaput's notoriety that he was still a federal public servant when he published his work. He was accused of treason for espousing the separation of Québec from Canada, but his indictment of the English-speaking Canadian culture in the public service could not be easily refuted. He catalogued the poor position of French-speaking Canadians in the public service at all levels. He decried the absence of French-speaking officers in the fields of finance and commerce, while he satirized their overrepresentation among the elevator operators. He awoke some English-speaking Canadian leaders to the strong sense of injustice felt by most French-speaking Canadians when looking at the federal administration. John Maffre writing in the *Montreal Star* captured Chaput's impact in speaking to students at L'Université Laval, "Somehow he expressed the deep and abiding sense of insult, the word is not too strong, that his young listeners felt about the French Canadian minority in a largely Anglo-Saxon country."<sup>100</sup> Chaput did not see bilingualism

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<sup>99</sup> Ibid, 96.

<sup>100</sup> John Maffre, *Montreal Star* November 20, 1961. Quoted in the *Canadian Annual Review 1961*, 47.

as the solution. For him bilingualism was the path to assimilation for French-speaking Canadians—“proof of their enslavement”.<sup>101</sup> Neither Therrien nor Chaput were in a position to directly influence the policy of the government on bilingualism, but both added to the pressure for change.

There was very little progress anywhere in the federal administration for French-speaking Canadians in the 1950s. Simultaneous translation was introduced into the debates in the House of Commons in 1957 by the Government of John Diefenbaker. Léon Balcer, a Minister in that Government describes the situation before simultaneous translation. When a French-speaking MP would address the House in French the other MPs would get up and leave, not in protest, but merely because they could not understand. He noted, ‘La traduction simultanée a réellement transformé la Chambre des communes’<sup>102</sup> But this transformation did not penetrate into the public service. Balcer also describes the extraordinary effort that it took him to get the government to bring out a French-language version of *Trees of Canada*, a subject that he thought was just as relevant to French-speaking Canadians as to their counterparts in English-speaking Canada.<sup>103</sup>

Prime Minister Diefenbaker claimed to have responded to the problem of the underrepresentation of French-speaking Canadians in the public service. The Civil Service Act was amended in 1961 to make bilingual service a requirement in geographic

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<sup>101</sup> Chaput. *Why I am a Separatist?*, viii.

<sup>102</sup> Balcer, *Léon Balcer raconte*, 124.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid*, 125.

areas where both official languages were used extensively, but little action was taken to implement this new law before the Diefenbaker Government fell in 1963. The Diefenbaker Government also introduced “a program of actively recruiting the French-speaking talent which good government in Canada required”.<sup>104</sup> In spite of these actions by the end of the Diefenbaker years there was little to show for this program. Few French-speaking Canadians entered the federal public in those years. Léon Balcer describes his frustration as Minister of Transport trying to have his department use Diefenbaker’s program. “Délai par dessus délai marquait chaque nomination où toute mesure qui pouvait être avantageuse pour le Québec.... Cette francophobie était loin de nous aider avec les électeurs.”<sup>105</sup>

### **The Professional Institute and the place of French-speaking Canadians**

In 1960, PIPS represented the bulk of the professional, technical and scientific workers in the public service. These were highly educated workers, doctors, nurses, agricultural researchers, geologists, etc. They carried out many of the most visible and most sensitive work in the public service. PIPS had only about 6,000 members<sup>106</sup> (out of about 8,500 professional employees in the public service) but the members of PIPS

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<sup>104</sup> John Diefenbaker, *One Canada, The Memoires of the R.H. John G. Diefenbaker: The Years of Achievement 1957-62*, (Toronto: Macmillan, 1976), 300.

<sup>105</sup> Balcer, *Léon Balcer raconte*, 130.

<sup>106</sup> Swettenham and Kealy, *Serving the State*, 91.

carried influence beyond mere numbers because of the skills, knowledge and prestige of their members. The world of science and the professions was dominated by English and no one seemed to question this reality. The greatest perceived challenge at the time for the government in managing its professional employees was to prevent its best workers from being drawn away to the private sector in Canada or the United States.

The Professional Institute was unprepared to face the urgent demands for bilingual services and a balanced representation of French-speaking Canadians in their ranks. Far from associating bilingualism with efficiency, effectiveness and merit, the leadership of PIPS would view the demands for change as a return to patronage and raw politics. The defense of the merit principle would be used by PIPS to oppose many efforts to increase the representation of French-speaking Canadians in the professional ranks of the public service. The ranks of PIPS, even more so than elsewhere in the public service, were filled with English-speaking Canadians. This demographic preponderance of the English language was combined with the growing tendency worldwide to see English as the ‘language of science’. Based on these ‘realities’ and biases PIPS would be quick to express its concern about the way that official bilingualism was being defined and implemented in the public service.<sup>107</sup>

At the same time, PIPS was working hard to expand its own membership, including among French-speaking public servants. The Institute competed with other

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<sup>107</sup> Len Trecarten, “Management, Leadership and De-Professionalism in the Public Service of Canada.” PIPS Website: <http://www.pipsc.ca>. Accessed February 15, 2014.

public service staff associations for members, because with membership came resources in the form of fees and influence in dealing with the government employer. Other public service staff associations, particularly the Public Service Alliance, argued that one big association would have more clout. PIPS argued that professional employees had unique issues and should have separate representation. PIPS was much smaller than the Alliance and had to fight to expand its membership. As early as the mid-1950s PIPS targeted French-speaking professionals in the public service. A French-speaking member was appointed to the membership committee and bilingual membership forms were prepared.<sup>108</sup> The PIPS journal began to include articles written in French. In 1962 PIPS passed a resolution at its annual meeting to “add the title of the Journal in French to the masthead.”<sup>109</sup> By the early 1960s there were enough French-speaking members from Québec in PIPS that they began to lobby for their own position on the board of management.<sup>110</sup>

PIPS would have to navigate the shoals of official bilingualism while dealing with many other pressures on their members. During the post-war boom the gap between public service salaries and competing salaries in the private sector had grown substantially. Public servants had no right to collective bargaining or even to meaningful consultation with the government on issues of salaries and benefits. There was certainly

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<sup>108</sup> Swettenham and Kealy, *Serving the State*, 91.

<sup>109</sup> Professional Institute of the Public Service, “Annual Meeting Resolutions 1963”, (PIPS, LAC), MG28 I 36 Volume 22.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*

no right to strike. In the professional job categories represented by PIPS dissatisfaction was growing, employees were leaving the government and efforts to recruit new professionals were falling short. A wage freeze imposed by the government in mid-1962 amplified the sense of dissatisfaction.<sup>111</sup> In this atmosphere the Professional Institute gradually increased its influence. From 1961 to 1967 the role of staff associations underwent a profound change.<sup>112</sup> Following the passage of the Civil Service Act (1961) that increased the influence of all staff associations, PIPS was intensely focused on defining and implementing its role as an organisation responsible for the collective bargaining of all issues related to the employment of professionals in the public service. When the government of Prime Minister Pearson finally established collective bargaining rights in the public service, PIPS had to develop a new capacity to bargain for its members.

### **English-speaking Canada in 1960**

In 1960 the old verities seemed to be still largely in place. Canadians were experiencing a slight economic downturn, the third since the Second World War. They were not happy with the slump but there was no sense of panic as the Government of Prime Minister John Diefenbaker searched for ways to stimulate growth. That Government was in the middle of its mandate, and its mid-life slide did not yet look fatal.

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<sup>111</sup> Swettenham and Kealy, *Serving the State*, 123-4.

<sup>112</sup> J.E. Hodgetts, *The Canadian Public Service 1867-1970*, 278-283.

The Liberal Party was reconstructing itself and Lester Pearson was emerging as a credible alternative leader who could test Prime Minister Diefenbaker. Ontario was feeling serene, superior and generous under the leadership of Leslie Frost. English-speaking Canadian opinion leaders were more worried about the impact of American influence than they were about Québec nationalism.

The 1961 census began to show a portrait of the new Canada which would emerge throughout the 1960s. Canada was more populous, urban, middle class and more multi-ethnic. In the decade since the census in 1951 the population had grown by 4 million to 18 million. Every province had grown, particularly Ontario. The number of foreign born grew by 38% to 2.8 million, most of whom moved into the large urban centres of Canada. The proportion of Canadians of British origin fell from 48% in 1951 to 44% in 1961, while the population of French origin fell marginally from 30.8% to 30.4 %. Most of the rest of the population was made up of immigrant groups from Europe. In 1960, Canada was also very youthful, 34% of the population was under 15 years of age.<sup>113</sup> Changes in the immigration policy in 1962, which eliminated overt discrimination against immigrants based on race, seemed to guarantee that this new Canada of many cultures would continue to grow.<sup>114</sup> It was the representatives of this multicultural Canada who would react most strongly to the language of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism

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<sup>113</sup> Donald Foster, "The Economy," in Saywell ed., *The Canadian Annual Review for 1962* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1963), 201.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid*, 205.

when it set out to create a model for a new Canada based on an equal partnership between the ‘two founding races’.

In 1960, the main items before the Parliament of Canada reflected the evolution of the country.<sup>115</sup> Parliament gave the vote to all Aboriginals. The Commons debated the abolition of capital punishment but never brought it to a vote. Opposition members deliberately delayed the passage of divorce bills to underline the absurdity of requiring an Act of Parliament to get a divorce in Canada. Prime Minister Diefenbaker presented his Bill of Rights to Parliament and it was approved, but already the debate had begun on the need to have these rights entrenched in the constitution. The issue of the place of French-speaking Canada in Confederation was not on the political radar screen of the Diefenbaker Government. In early 1962 Diefenbaker summarily rejected André Laurendeau’s call for a commission of enquiry into English and French relations in Canada. Throughout the 1960s, John Diefenbaker would remain opposed to any action by the federal government that would seem to grant recognition of the equal place of the French language and culture in Canada. His ‘One Canada’ policy would be a rallying cry for those English-speaking Canadian who would resist the decline of British Canada and the rise of official bilingualism, and an easy target for French-speaking Canadians who wanted to demonstrate the intransigence of English-speaking Canadians.

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<sup>115</sup> Saywell, *The Canadian Annual Review 1960*, 3-20.

## **Chapter Two, 1962-1967**

### **What kind of Canada?**

This chapter looks at the way that the decline of old British-Canadian values, the emergence of multiculturalism and the rise of the nationalist movement in Québec changed English-speaking Canada in general and the federal public service in particular. It will explore the major events that shaped this change in English-speaking Canada including particularly the flag debate and the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism. It will examine the sense of loss and uncertainty in English-speaking Canada as the decade opened. Finally it will look at the efforts of the Pearson government to introduce bilingualism into the public service and the early impacts of those efforts, particularly upon the professional, scientific and technical employees of the federal public service where the dominance of English-language staff was greatest. It will draw heavily on the reactions of the Professional Institute of the Public Service to understand the dynamics within the federal administration to this major shift in organisational values.

In 1962, there were signs that the urban, educated elites of English-speaking Canada were drawing away from Canada's British roots and starting to search for a new national identity, but there was no certainty about what this new identity would be. Before any new direction would emerge English-speaking Canadians would have to debate their own roots and identity. Québec was increasingly guided by a sense of its own national mission. English-speaking Canada struggled to react to a new reality that was shaped by

the decline in the attachment to British traditions, the emergence of multiculturalism and most importantly by the insistent demands of the new Québec. The result was not always coherent or consistent. Official bilingualism in the federal public service (without much sense of what it meant) emerged, as one of keys way of responding to the demands of French-speaking Canada for respect and equality. This chapter will show how limited and unsatisfactory the first steps toward official bilingualism were.

In the context of this work, 1962 marks a significant turning point. The year began with André Laurendeau's appeal in *Le Devoir* for a Canada-wide inquiry into the state of relations between the English and French communities<sup>116</sup>, and by Prime Minister Diefenbaker's brusque rejection of the idea. But Canadians were moving away from the policies and politics of Prime Minister Diefenbaker. His government was reduced to an unstable minority in the elections that year. Notably, the voters of urban Québec and Canada returned their support to the Liberal Party. Only the rise of the Social Credit Party in rural Québec and the continued popularity of John Diefenbaker in rural and Western Canada allowed the Progressive Conservatives to win a plurality of the seats. Meanwhile the Liberal Government of Jean Lesage in Québec was driving home the message that Québec intended to be recognised as a full partner in Confederation with the power to manage its own economy, society and culture. The year was closed by Opposition Leader Lester Pearson's passionate speech in the House of Commons committing the Liberal

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<sup>116</sup> André Laurendeau, "A Commission for Canada," in Cook and Behiels, *The Essential Laurendeau*, 250.

Party to a new approach to French-English relations in Canada and endorsing specifically the call for a full national inquiry on French-English relations.

During the 1960s, although English-speaking Canadians and their leading journals would often ask “What does Quebec want?” this only masked the real issue. Paul Lacoste, one of the Québec members of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism suspected that the question masked an important vacuum in English-speaking Canada. In a note found in the Royal Commission working papers he wrote, “La question a une certaine efficacité, elle permet à celui qui la pose de demeurer dans une attente confortable. Elle ignore ce fait élémentaire qu’il s’agit d’un problème qui engage les deux parties, qui exige une demande des deux côtés.”<sup>117</sup> By 1962 the political leadership in Québec was beginning to be clear about what it wanted. Not until several years later did the leaders of English-speaking Canada begin to formulate their response to the corresponding question, “How much is English-speaking Canada prepared to change?”

Lester Pearson while Leader of the Opposition framed this debate in his December 17, 1962 statement in the House of Commons by telling English-speaking Canadians that they would have to be prepared to examine their own history and admit that they had not done enough to allow French-speaking Canadians to live as equal

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<sup>117</sup> Paul Lacoste, “Remarks about a preliminary report”, RCBB working document, RG 33/88 Box 130, 9.

partners in Confederation.<sup>118</sup> The Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism would drive home this message. The fear that the country would break up propelled the process of change but only the erosion of British-Canadian ascendancy allowed the response to take a positive direction.

The federal administration emerged quickly as a logical place to build equality between the two founding cultures. In the editorial response to Lester Pearson's statement of December 17, 1962, the *Globe and Mail* while rejecting a general inquiry supported the idea that the public service and crown corporations were fitting targets for a commission of inquiry on French-English relations in Canada.<sup>119</sup> Just below the editorial, there were two letters to the editor that underscored this theme. Both were reacting to the coverage of the protests that erupted in Québec after Donald Gordon's claim that he could not find competent French-speaking Canadians for appointment to the Board of the Canadian National Railway. Jacques Monet of the Société Saint-Jean Baptiste commented about "the lack of understanding on the part of English-speaking management in federal departments and crown corporations which could have adapted requirements for office to legitimate French-Canadian aspirations." In a second letter, the historian Ramsay Cook suggests that "the ability to speak French and English might be considered an important

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<sup>118</sup> Lester Pearson, *Debates of the House of Commons 26<sup>th</sup> Parliament 1<sup>st</sup> Session, December 17, 1962*, 2723.

<sup>119</sup> "Patience and Understanding", *Globe and Mail* December 20, 6.

component of competence” in public service staffing.<sup>120</sup> It soon became clear to public servants that the focus of the new Liberal government on English-French relations would require great efforts on their part to reflect and serve both founding cultures in Canada.

### **The Federal Administration in 1962**

In 1962 the federal government was the largest employer in Canada. The public service itself had 130,000 employees and the federal administration including crown corporations, agencies, the judiciary, the RCMP and armed services came to 500,000. The federal administration had offices in virtually every community in the country. The senior members of the public service were ranked among the most powerful groups in Canadian society by John Porter in *The Vertical Mosaic*.<sup>121</sup> W.L. Morton, one of Canada’s most respected historians at the time, in his 1964 edition of *The Kingdom of Canada* called public service “the highest secular calling”.<sup>122</sup> In the decades of rule by the Liberal Party, from 1935-1957, the public service had grown close to the ruling party. Senior members of the public service crossed into politics as ministers or key political advisors to the government. Lester Pearson and Mitchell Sharp are but two examples of this phenomenon. The career of Gordon Robertson, the highest ranking public servant in

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<sup>120</sup> “French and English”, *Globe and Mail* December 20, 6.

<sup>121</sup> John Porter, *The Vertical Mosaic*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1965).

<sup>122</sup> Morton W.L., *The Kingdom of Canada*, 493.

Ottawa through much of the 1960s showed that the process worked in both directions. He began his career in the Department of External Affairs in 1941 then moved to the Prime Minister's Office under Louis St Laurent, served as Deputy Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs during the Diefenbaker years and then was appointed Clerk of the Privy Council by Lester Pearson in 1963.<sup>123</sup> Although the public service strongly avowed its political neutrality and its ability to serve any government, it was evident that twenty-two years of uninterrupted Liberal governments from 1935-1957 had molded a deep affinity between the top of the public service and the leaders of the Liberal Party.

The years from 1957-63 were a challenge to the somewhat complacent cooperation of senior public servants and elected ministers. The government of Prime Minister Diefenbaker suspected the senior public service of being close to the Liberal Party. During its six years in power the Conservative government never established a relationship of confidence with the public service. The government appointed the Glassco Royal Commission to examine in detail the organisation and management of the public service and it was in 1962 that the commission made its extensive recommendations to change the way the public service operated. The Glassco Commission recommendations launched a program of administrative decentralisation to departments over many spending decisions and personnel management issues. At the same time governments were moving toward acceptance of unionisation, collective bargaining and a broader role for staff

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<sup>123</sup> Robertson, *Memoirs of a Very Civil Servant*.

associations in the public service. In the next several years, staff associations would emerge with much stronger roles and larger organisations to defend the interest of their members. All these changes to the federal public service would make it more difficult to impose new central policies like those affecting bilingualism.

On the surface the policy of official bilingualism in the federal administration, as it was gradually defined in the 1960s, seemed relatively simple. All Canadians would have the right to be served by the federal government in the official language of their choice, and every public servant would be able to work in his or her own official language. In reality these seemingly simple principles spawned a complex web of regulations and programs that would affect every public servant who aspired to reach the management ranks of government service. The new rules affected classification, staffing, training, publications, point of service location, budgets, promotion and pay. To make matters more difficult, the implementation of the policy would be based on the faulty assumption that unilingual public servants at mid-career could be trained to become effective in their second official language. As the complexity, the difficulty, the impact on individual careers and the cost of official bilingualism began to emerge opposition to the policy would rise.

In 1962 the federal public service was still an English-speaking world. By 1972 it would be committed official bilingualism and struggling to implement it. This would require a huge effort, sustained pressure and frequent adjustments to respond to the challenges of implementing such a significant shift in values. The public service would

have to accommodate the culture of bilingualism as it grew in size and implemented very large changes in its internal management. Normally, the public service can be neutral as it implements major new government policies, but in the case of official bilingualism the public service was one of the main targets of the new policies. It was not always possible for public servants or their staff associations to be neutral when the careers of long term public servants were threatened. Organisations representing the interests of public servants, like the Professional Institute of the Public Service (PIPS), would have to walk a tightrope between the support of the broad policy of official bilingualism and the defense of the interests of their unilingual members.

The professional employees of the public service were particularly hard hit by this change in culture. The slower development of education in the sciences and professions in Québec and the strong English language culture in the broader world of science in North America meant that establishing a culture of bilingualism in the professions and sciences would be more difficult than elsewhere. Incumbent officers would be more likely to be adversely affected in their careers by these changes. PIPS was to find itself at the centre of the implementation of official bilingualism. The debates and pressures around the introduction of bilingualism would absorb more time and energy of the Professional Institute than any other issue in the 1960s.<sup>124</sup> The Institute had to develop and promote its own positions; to balance the interests of its English-speaking and

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<sup>124</sup> Swettenham and Kealy, *Serving the State*, 153.

French-speaking members; to lobby the government and other parties, and to represent individual members who felt injured by the implementation of official bilingualism.

### **The Challenge from Quebec**

The most active centre of economic, social and political change in Canada in the opening years of the 1960s was in Québec. The process of industrialisation and the move to urban centres had accelerated in the 1950s. Only the conservative power of Maurice Duplessis and the Catholic Church maintained the façade of an unchanging Québec. Under the surface of Québec society, a new form of nationalism was growing based on what historian Marcel Martel called “une conception territoriale de la nation”.<sup>125</sup> Québec was quickly detaching itself from the old dream of a pan-Canadian culture of two languages and two peoples. When Duplessis was replaced by Paul Sauvé, even more so when the Liberal party came to power under Jean Lesage in 1960, the full force of change was unleashed. Reforms were launched in every sphere of Québec society. Education was taken away from the Catholic Church and made a responsibility of the state. The Québec government sought direct relations with foreign governments in areas of Québec’s jurisdiction. The defensive nationalism of the Union Nationale government was replaced by the new nationalism of the Liberals that was far more ready to proclaim Québec’s capacity to manage its own affairs and to insist on having the powers and the tax

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<sup>125</sup> Martel, *Deuil dun pays imaginé*, 19.

resources needed to do that. It was clear under the Lesage government that Québécois saw themselves as a distinct national society that must have control of the key factors of its economic, cultural and social development. The Lesage government made ‘L’État du Québec’ a dominant force in economic development and delivered remarkable economic growth and social change.<sup>126</sup> Perhaps most importantly from the point of view of the federal public service, the government of Québec made their public service highly professional and effective.<sup>127</sup> They attracted the best and brightest graduates to their service, very successfully competing with Ottawa’s attempts to recruit French-speaking Canadians. Armed with this new public service, Québec arrived at key meetings with other provinces and the federal government fully prepared to present and defend its interests.

Without the pressure from the rising independence movement in Québec both timing and the shape of the transformation of Canada would have been substantially different. It was the fear of Québec separatism that would drive change in English-speaking Canada and in the federal public service. Language and culture were important tools in the battle to increase the organisational power of French-speaking Canada in both the private and public sectors. There was great debate within Québec and across French-

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<sup>126</sup> Pierre Fortin, “La révolution tranquille et l’économie” in Berthiaume and Corbo, *La Révolution Tranquille en Héritage*, 87-183.

<sup>127</sup> Monique Jerome-Forget, “Un héritage épuisé et paralysant”, in Berthiaume and Corbo, *La Révolution Tranquille en Héritage*, 250.

speaking Canada about whether and how such an equal partnership could be achieved and on the place of the French-speaking minorities outside Quebec, but there was no question that a secure place for both of the two founding cultures would have to be part of any new deal.

While nationalism had always been part of the political spectrum in Québec, a far more strident form of this nationalism was thrust into the consciousness of English-speaking Canadians in the 1960s through the actions of mainstream politicians and fringe extremists. As early as 1964, when he was still a Minister in the Lesage government, René Lévesque declared that only the status of an associate state would be acceptable to Québec.<sup>128</sup> In response, the *Winnipeg Free Press* on May 25 called on Premier Lesage to clarify his position and that of his Government on the question of Confederation, “at some point Mr. Lesage must take an unequivocal stand...”<sup>129</sup> Lesage did make an effort during the year to make his case for reformed federalism. While he did not directly support the notion of an associate state, he wanted a Canada where provinces would have more power and where the special nature of Québec society and culture would be recognised in a new constitutional arrangement.

A radical fringe of the Québec separatist movement claimed that revolution was the only way to reform Canada. Bombs were planted, several people were killed. The visit

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<sup>128</sup> Saywell, *Canadian Annual Review for 1964*, 54.

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid*, 55.

of Queen Elizabeth to Québec City in 1964 became a lightning rod for extremists and a very visible source of concern for Canadians. There were threats that the Queen would be murdered, announcements of boycotts, plans for demonstrations and finally a violent confrontation between the police of Québec and a small number of separatist demonstrators. It was deeply disturbing for most English-speaking and French-speaking Canadians. English-speaking Canadians began to realize that Canada was being changed by these events and the pressures that gave rise to them. As the *Globe and Mail* summed it up in its editorial on October 14, “we have found out things about ourselves which we did not know before and we will have to take these realities into account in determining what kind of a country we want to have in the future.”<sup>130</sup> It was an admission that the problem of Québec’s place in Canada could no longer be denied. It was the first a necessary step in the preparation of a new Canadian model. What that model would be was still unclear. Before a majority of English-speaking Canadians could define where they wanted to go, they had to consciously abandon their old image of British-Canada.

### **The Waning of British-Canada**

In 1962 a majority of English-speaking Canadians thought of Canada as an English-speaking nation linked to Britain through the crown, British Parliamentary tradition, the common law and the British Commonwealth. The USA was seen as the

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<sup>130</sup> Ibid, 45-49.

greatest cultural and political threat to Canada as was evident in the federal election campaigns of 1962 and 1963. If the leaders of English-speaking Canada thought about the dynamic emerging Québec, most imagined that as its economy expanded and its people were better educated it would just gradually melt into the rest of Canada. In spite of the apparent stability of this façade, English-speaking Canadians were questioning their collective identity. They had seen the significance of the British tradition wane since the end of the Second World War and they were at a loss to find a new identity. Jack Granatstein summed up Canada in the period 1957-1967 as, "...a nation changing rapidly from an entity that seemed to understand the verities of life to one that was adrift on a sea of conflicting choices and too rapid change."<sup>131</sup>

At the centre of the choice facing Canada was the debate about 'two nations', which was made more complex by the contradictory definitions applied to the term. French-speaking Canadians in Québec had no trouble seeing themselves as a nation both culturally and politically. For English-speaking Canadians it was different. On October 25, 1965, The *Montreal Star* printed the text of a speech by Douglas Le Pan, Principal of University College at the University of Toronto, in which he insisted that English-speaking Canada had never defined itself as a nation, distinct from French-speaking Canada, "the facts cannot be made to yield an English-speaking nation, for neither English-speaking Canada nor any of its parts ever thought of themselves that way."<sup>132</sup>

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<sup>131</sup> Jack Granatstien, *Canada 1957-1967*, xiii.

<sup>132</sup> Douglas Le Pan, "Defining English Canada", *Montreal Star*, October 20, 1965, 17.

Léon Dion is quoted in Morris and Lanphier's *Three Scales of Inequality* to much the same effect, "...few English-speaking Canadians see themselves as constituting a separate nation within the Canadian context".<sup>133</sup> It took a decade of wrestling with the concept of 'two nations' for a majority of English-speaking Canadians to be comfortable answering the question "What does English Canada want?". By 1972, the leaders of English-speaking Canada had begun to define objectives for constitutional change and a new framework of bilingualism and multiculturalism had been largely set out. Canada would be less British. Canada would accommodate two cultural nations within the political framework of a federation of ten equal provinces. Provincial powers would be respected but Québec would have no special status. It was up to the governments of Québec to negotiate for as much power as they could get within this framework, and it was up to the Québec people to decide if that would be enough to keep them in Canada.

As the 1960s began the Government of John Diefenbaker did little to help English-speaking Canada understand the new Québec or how to react to it. In 1962, the Progressive Conservatives had been in power for five years and they were trailing the Liberal in the polls leading up to the general election that year. The party campaigned on a platform focused almost entirely on economic issues. Nothing was designed to respond to the new restiveness in Québec. Lester Pearson and Liberals included 'National Unity' in their platform but without a great deal of substance to back it up. In the end the

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<sup>133</sup> Léon Dion, cited in Morris and Lanphier, *Three Scales of Inequality: Perspectives on English-French Relations*, (Toronto: Longman's 1975), 202.

Conservatives were returned with a weak minority in Parliament. The popular vote showed the Conservatives were still favoured in much of English-speaking Canada. They received 45% of the English-speaking vote, compared to 34% for the Liberals and 13% for the NDP.<sup>134</sup> No Party emerged with a clear mandate in French-speaking Canada. The Liberals had won 35 seats in Québec but many of them were from the English-speaking enclaves around Montreal while the Social Credit Party had won 26 seats mostly from French-speaking, rural Québec. The election confirmed the Liberal Party as the party of urban Canada, with 70 of their 99 MPs coming from urban or mixed ridings while the Conservative caucus was dominated by representatives of rural Canada.

The 1962-63 minority government of John Diefenbaker was dependent on the support of the Social Credit members elected in Québec. These MPs shared some of the conservative economic values of the Progressive Conservatives, but not their views on the place of French-speaking Canada in Confederation. It did not take long for the cleavages in this alliance to appear and it was not surprising that the first difference to emerge would involve the symbols of Canadian identity. As Saywell noted, “Any sense of political stability on Parliament Hill disappeared on November 7 when six Socreds walked out in protest against Tory backbenchers talking out a resolution to have *O Canada* adopted as the national anthem.”<sup>135</sup>

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<sup>134</sup> Saywell, *Canadian Annual Review for 1962*, 22-24

<sup>135</sup> Saywell, *Canadian Annual Review for 1962*, 39.

On December 17, 1962 Lester Pearson, made a commitment to review and improve the relationship of English and French in Canada in a speech made in the House of Commons. Looking back on his career in 1970 Pearson called this speech the most important one of his career.<sup>136</sup> It placed him well out in front of the majority of his English-speaking Canadian electorate. In his speech, Pearson reviewed the history of French-English relations since Confederation and concluded that English-speaking Canada was in need of a ‘shock treatment’ to wake up to the legitimate grievances and aspirations of Québec.<sup>137</sup> He pledged that the Liberals, if elected, would undertake a major inquiry into the relationship of French-speaking and English-speaking Canadians and seek recommendations about how this relationship could be transformed into a solid basis for Canada’s future. He called for “Canadians, individually or in their associations and organisations, to express their ideas on this situation.”<sup>138</sup> He admitted that English-speaking Canadians had too long ignored this issue and he placed the onus on English-speaking Canadians to show that they were ready to make the changes necessary to support a partnership of equals.<sup>139</sup> Diefenbaker continued to oppose the idea of a fundamental review of English-French relations in Canada. In this position he was supported by the *Globe and Mail* which argued that time and development would lead to the gradual absorption of French-speaking Canadians into the English-speaking

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<sup>136</sup> Lester Pearson, *Words and Occasions* (Toronto: U of T Press 1970), 191.

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid*, 194.

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid*, 196.

<sup>139</sup> Saywell, *Canadian Annual Review 1962*, 42.

mainstream and that a national inquiry could just exacerbate friction between English and French.<sup>140</sup> In the coming election Canadians would face, as part of their choice, a decision about which Party offered the best way to deal with English-French relations in Canada.

In the general election of 1963, the Liberal Party and Lester Pearson were given a minority mandate. While Canada-USA relations dominated the election, the Liberals maintained their core commitment to examine the English-French partnership at the core of the Canadian identity. The Conservatives ran on an early version of John Diefenbaker's 'One Canada' theme. It was correctly seen as a rejection of the demands of French-speaking Canadians to be recognised and supported as equal partners in Confederation. The Liberals owed a large part of their victory to an increase of 12 seats in Québec where they emerged with 47 of the 67 seats. In addition they elected members in eight ridings in Ontario, New Brunswick and Manitoba where the French-speaking minorities formed a large bloc of voters<sup>141</sup>. The Liberals maintained their dominance in urban Canada and emerged with a legitimate capacity to speak on behalf of French-speaking Canada in the federal Parliament. They moved quickly to set up the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism. Diefenbaker continued to say that the mandate of the Royal Commission smacked of the 'two nations' theory of Canada, and he predicted that the Commission would do more harm than good.

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<sup>140</sup> "Patience and Understanding", *Globe and Mail* December 20, 6.

<sup>141</sup> From the Parliament of Canada Website on general election results.  
<http://www.parl.gc.ca/About/Parliament/FederalRidingsHistory>. Accessed March 21, 2014.

For many English-speaking Canadians this period of change was confusing and disheartening. Saywell captures this sense of inadequacy and frustration in the opening sections of the *Canadian Annual Review* for the years 1964, 1965 and 1966. He describes 1964 as “a year when the great Canadian structural problems emerged simultaneously to cast all else into the shade.”<sup>142</sup> In 1965, Saywell reflected the mood of despair in Canada in the introduction to the *Review* for that year. He describes the results of the federal election as seeming “to reveal that Canadians possessed an organised incapacity to govern themselves or that they had reached the limit of their powers to deal with national dilemmas.”<sup>143</sup> The next year Saywell quoted Frank Underhill’s comments in the *Toronto Star* of October 8, 1966. “Canada is going through a mental depression...we are numbed by the realisation that we seem to have lost whatever inspiring or unifying sense we may once have had of a common national purpose.”<sup>144</sup>

The angst in English-speaking Canada about the demands coming from Québec was also very apparent within the public service. At the Annual General Meeting of the Professional Institute of the Public Service in 1964 and 1965 language issues were debated.<sup>145</sup> In a prelude to many constitutional debates at the federal-provincial level, the PIPS members from Québec proposed that a special seat be created on the PIPS Board to

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<sup>142</sup> Saywell, *The Canadian Annual Review 1964*, 1.

<sup>143</sup> Saywell, *The Canadian Annual Review 1965*, 1.

<sup>144</sup> Frank Underhill, cited in Saywell. *The Canadian Annual Review 1966*, 1.

<sup>145</sup> Swettenham and Kealy, *Serving the State*, 148.

represent French-speaking members. PIPS rejected this model and moved the following year to a Board with representation from each province, thus giving the Québec member of the Board the implicit role of representative of French-speaking members.<sup>146</sup> Most of the efforts to increase bilingualism in the public service made in the first three years of the Liberal Government of Lester Pearson made little progress. Before the public service could seriously implement the new push toward official bilingualism it would need much stronger signals from the society at large and from successive governments that such a change would be supported. Before real change could begin, English-speaking Canadians needed an education in the bilingual and bicultural nature of their country, and they needed the motivation provided by a deep fear that their country might break up.

### **Change of Symbols, Symbols of Change: The Flag Debate**

The flag debate, when it emerged in 1964, was not so much a debate between French-speaking and English-speaking Canadians, but a powerful struggle among English-speaking Canadians to define the symbols that best represented their values and traditions. Peter C. Newman commented on this in the *Toronto Star* on September 1, 1964, halfway through the flag debate. “Instead of a French-English confrontation, the great flag debate is turning into an old-fashioned wrangle between English Canadian

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<sup>146</sup> PIPS, “Minutes of the 1964 and 1965 Annual General Meetings”, (PIPS, LAC) MG 28 I 36 Box 1.

nationalists and British Imperialists.”<sup>147</sup> The relative absence of voices from French-speaking Canada in the 1964 debate represented a real change from the flag debate within the Liberal caucus in 1946. At that time there had been a fairly wide consensus in the English-speaking caucus and in English-speaking Canada that the Red Ensign should be Canada’s national flag. It was French-speaking Canadians and their MPs who refused to consider any new flag that would incorporate the old imperial symbols. Their opposition was so solid that King shut down the debate before the depth of the split could be played out in public. Inside the Conservative government of John Diefenbaker the debate continued to divide along cultural lines. Pierre Sévigny recalls that the demands of the French-speaking members of Cabinet were very modest: a distinctive national flag, ‘Oh Canada’ as the national anthem, a more bilingual public service and more French-speaking Canadians in senior posts in the federal administration. Even these wishes were unacceptable to the English-speaking majority in the Diefenbaker Cabinet.<sup>148</sup>

In 1964, opinion about the national flag in French-speaking Canada was largely unchanged. What made a difference was that significant segments of English-speaking Canada had come to agree with the position of most French-speaking Canadians. The urban, English-speaking elite, as represented by the liberal press, took the lead in supporting this change. The debate was emotional, public and very hard fought. C.P.

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<sup>147</sup> Peter C. Newman quoted in José Igartua, *The Other Quiet Revolution*, 178.

<sup>148</sup> Sévigny, *Le Grand Jeu de la Politique*, 229. In a poll Sévigny did in his own riding (Longueuil) it was the new flag that attracted the greatest interest and support.

Champion in *The Strange Demise of British Canada*, devotes Chapter Seven to the flag debate and rather extravagantly calls it “...a bloodless coup d'état by neo-nationalists overthrowing a symbolic order grounded in centuries of history”<sup>149</sup> This is no doubt an exaggeration but for defenders of the Red Ensign it may have felt like that. Supporters of the Red Ensign focused on the importance of a national symbol that recognised the origins and accomplishments of the country. They argued that Canadian Parliamentary democracy, Canadian culture and Canadian values were built on British traditions. They feared that if evidence of this tradition was removed from the most important national symbol Canadians would lose respect for the core values associated with the connection to Great Britain. They also used the debate as a pretext to attack French-Canada. The *Victoria Colonist* called it “Ottawa's pandering to French Canada”; the *Calgary Herald* called it “a concession of massive proportions”.<sup>150</sup> In part the flag debate became a sort of litmus test of English-speaking Canadians’ willingness to be open to a more balanced relationship with French-speaking Canada.

The flag debate dragged on for seven months. Jack Granatstein called it a debate of high principle and little substance.<sup>151</sup> The procedural delays and prolonged debate had an important impact on the final outcome. It led to the emergence of a different design for the new flag. It allowed defenders of the old flag to know that their

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<sup>149</sup> Champion, *The Strange Demise of British Canada*, 165.

<sup>150</sup> Saywell, *Canadian Annual Review 1964*, 23.

<sup>151</sup> Granatstein, *Canada 1957-67*, 202.

views had been heard and their position defended to the full extent possible under British parliamentary tradition. At one point Diefenbaker wanted to abandon that tradition and called for a national referendum on the flag question. James Stewart in the *Montreal Star* wrote that Diefenbaker could “build up Anglo-Saxon support” and force an election of the issue.<sup>152</sup> The *Montreal Gazette*, even though it was not generally a Liberal paper, took the opposite point of view arguing: “it is impossible to seek power by rallying the rest of the country against Quebec... To win such a victory now...would be a national disaster”.<sup>153</sup> Just before the end of the session the Government imposed closure and the new flag was adopted. It was no revolution, but it did represent the symbolic end of the British-Canada that had seemed to define much of English-speaking Canada up to that point. More than any other political fight in English-speaking Canada, the flag debate cleared the way for a new response to French-speaking Canada and to official bilingualism.

### **The Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism (RCBB)**

Into the collective disarray of English-speaking Canada was thrust the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism. It would play a key role in defining the nature of the crisis faced by Canada and it would spare no effort to make English-speaking Canadians aware of this crisis. The RCBB would point specifically at the need

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<sup>152</sup> James Stewart in the *Montreal Star*, November 5, 1964 quoted in Saywell, *Canadian Annual Review* 1964, 36.

<sup>153</sup> *Montreal Gazette*, Cited in Saywell, *Canadian Annual Review* 1964. 36.

for rapid and radical change in the public service and would help to create the support in English-speaking Canada necessary for the adoption of official bilingualism. It became in many ways a vast public relations effort in support of official bilingualism.

Prior to setting up the Royal Commission, Prime Minister Pearson sent a letter to all Premiers asking for their support in the work of the Commission. Only Premier Ernest Manning openly questioned the underlying premise upon which the Commission was based. He expressed doubt in his reply that the English-speaking Canadian public would accept a dual cultural identity for Canada and he insisted that any protections for the French language should not go beyond those explicitly guaranteed in the 1867 BNA Act. Manning would maintain this position throughout the 1960s.<sup>154</sup> Manning undoubtedly spoke for many English-speaking Canadians when he said officially what many others had been saying informally. The Government and the Royal Commission were determined to force these issues into the light of public debate. Canadians on all sides of the issue and all points of the spectrum would be encouraged to follow Manning's example and say what they thought. As Canadians listened to the public debate, they began to deepen their understanding of the Canadian cultural divide, and to craft different solutions.

The Royal Commission was created by Order-in-Council and its mandate and composition were announced on July 22, 1963. The mandate of the commission was "to

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<sup>154</sup> Daniel Bourgeois. *The Canadian Bilingual Districts*, 58.

report on the existing state of bilingualism and biculturalism in Canada” and “to recommend what steps should be taken to develop the Canadian Confederation on the basis of an equal partnership between the two founding races, taking into account the contribution made by the other ethnic groups to the cultural enrichment of Canada and the measures that should be taken to safeguard that contribution.”<sup>155</sup> More specifically the Commissioners were asked to examine the state of bilingualism and biculturalism in the federal administration and make recommendations to ensure that the federal administration, in its make-up and its operations, supported the cultural and linguistic duality of Canada.<sup>156</sup> The mandate alone was an education for most English-speaking Canadians many of whom had never thought of Canada as ‘an equal partnership between two founding races’ and who had never had to fight to receive service in their own language from their own government.

The Royal Commission was chaired by André Laurendeau, the editor of *Le Devoir* and Davidson Dunton, President of Carleton University. The Royal Commission was constructed in a way that symbolically echoed its mandate. In all, there were four English-speaking Commissioners and four French-speaking. Two other members were from different ethnic backgrounds, one Polish and one Ukrainian. All the Commissioners and most of the staff were able to work in French and in English. There was some

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<sup>155</sup> Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism. *Interim Report* (Ottawa: Queen’s Printer 1965), 151.

<sup>156</sup> *Ibid*, 151-2.

concern expressed by English-speaking Canadians that the membership of the Commission was slanted toward the views of French-speaking Canadians and francophiles.<sup>157</sup> C.P. Champion notes that following the expression of these concerns, André Laurendeau did accept an invitation to meet T.H.B. Symons, the President of Trent University and a well-known Anglophile, to hear from a moderate representative of the old British-Canada.<sup>158</sup>

The media across the country commented upon the creation of the Royal Commission, its mandate, its membership and its early activities. While most newspapers were cautiously supportive of the commission, many were uncertain or opposed to what they read in some aspects of its mandate. Bilingualism seemed to be easy to understand and to accept, although hard to achieve. The concept of biculturalism was seen as both confusing and dangerous, with many papers admitting that they did not know what it meant.<sup>159</sup> Papers in the east and centre of the country were more likely to be sympathetic to the Commission while western papers tended toward skepticism or opposition.<sup>160</sup> One thing was certain, newspapers in English-speaking Canada were talking more about Québec. In an internal report for the RCBB Jean Bruce reported that coverage of Québec

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<sup>157</sup> Saywell, *The Canadian Annual Review 1964*, 62.

<sup>158</sup> Champion, *The Strange Demise of British Canada*, 222.

<sup>159</sup> "What does biculturalism mean?" *Ottawa Journal*, November 8, 1963, 7.

<sup>160</sup> Igartua, *The Other Quiet Revolution*, 166.

issues in the English Canadian press has risen by 25% in the period 1960-1965.<sup>161</sup> Québec nationalism and the Royal Commission were helping to drive that rising interest.

In the summer of 1963, the commissioners began to discuss their objectives. Royce Frith of Toronto wrote to his colleagues expressing his concern that English-speaking Canadians might not pay enough attention to the work of the Royal Commission or the fundamental issue that it was addressing, “It is taken as an assumption that intensification of public interest in the work of the Commission is a requirement of its success ... the primary objective is stimulation rather than education.”<sup>162</sup> Prime Minister Pearson had launched the Royal Commission by calling on English-speaking Canadians to get involved in the development of a new and fairer relationship between the two founding cultures. Almost a year later Frith and his colleagues saw little evidence that English-speaking Canada was responding to this call. The emphasis on “stimulation” would be clearly illustrated in the approach that the Royal Commission took to its public consultations and its interim report. The commissioners did their best to ensure that every hearing would focus on the views of the public, hoping and expecting that this would be the best way to incite controversy and draw attention in English-speaking Canada.<sup>163</sup> As a result, their work was given extensive media coverage and many English-speaking

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<sup>161</sup> Jean Bruce, “A Content Analysis of Thirty Canadian Daily Newspapers” Internal Report for the RCBB LAC RG 33-80, Box 132.

<sup>162</sup> Royce Frith, “Memo to other Commissioners September 11, 1963,” RCBB Fonds RG33/80 Box 402.

<sup>163</sup> Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism. *Interim Report 1965* (Ottawa: Queen’s Printer 1965) The approach to the public consultations and the deliberate intention to promote debate and to garner media coverage is described on pages 155-159.

Canadians were drawn into the debate. As the commissioners noted in their interim report, the public consultations tended to be ‘self-correcting’. Extreme views were generally balanced by other members of audience. The commissioners rarely had to insist on moderation. It emerged as part of the process.<sup>164</sup>

The Royal Commission did not just focus on the broad public debate. It made special efforts to reach out to Canadian elites largely in urban Canada. The Royal Commission wanted to inform these leaders and to shape their views. They especially wanted to recruit these elites to support the eventual recommendations that the Commission would make. Peter Regenstrief, a pollster and political writer, well connected to the Liberal Party, was asked to survey Canadian elites about their views on bilingualism and biculturalism. In his report Regenstrief explained that he had been asked to focus on elites because “they are better informed than the public at large... they are the political opinion leaders.”<sup>165</sup> Regenstrief divided his research into four elite categories: political, bureaucratic, corporate, and media. He met a sample of both French-speaking elites (37) and English-speaking elites (67) mostly in Toronto and Montreal.<sup>166</sup> The commissioners also planned each regional hearing so that there would be a chance for a

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<sup>164</sup> Ibid, 158.

<sup>165</sup> Peter Regenstrief, “Elite Opinion on Bilingualism and Biculturalism”, 1.

<sup>166</sup> Ibid, 4.

smaller gathering of local elites, including business and media leaders, academics and politicians, to explore the issues in more detail.<sup>167</sup>

The strategy of focusing on elite group members especially in English-speaking Canada was logical and paid off for the Royal Commission. These groups had begun, in the decades before 1960, to explore the place of French Canada within Confederation and these were the groups most ready and able to support the vision of a bilingual and bicultural Canada. The work and the report of the Massey Commission had showed that the intellectual and cultural elite of Canada were thinking about ways to bring French-speaking and English-speaking Canadians into greater cultural understanding as a means of distinguishing Canadian from American culture. By attempting to recruit the members of these elites to the debate on Canada's two founding cultures the RCBB made sure that they were informed about the issues and prepared for the recommendations that the Commission would make.

Before planning their nationwide hearings, the Commissioners held two days of preliminary hearings in Ottawa on November 7 and 8, 1963. These hearings were focused on the mandate of the Commission.<sup>168</sup> The hearings took place in an atmosphere coloured by the rising concern in English-speaking Canada about Québec separatism and early

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<sup>167</sup> RCBB, *Interim Report 1965*, 157.

<sup>168</sup> The *Ottawa Citizen* and the *Ottawa Journal* November 7, 8 and 9, 1963. Both papers covered extensively the preliminary hearings of the Commission.

worries about the impact of bilingualism in the federal public service.<sup>169</sup> The broad intent of the RCBB mandate was largely supported by the participants and the press, but several concerns emerged immediately. Members of the Ottawa audience did not like the language of “two founding races”<sup>170</sup>. It smacked of the racism that Canada was attempting to weed out of its own society.<sup>171</sup> They wondered at the ultimate meaning of ‘equal partnership’ and how that could be translated into a political democracy based on ‘one man one vote’. Members of other cultural groups wanted to know how their contribution to Canada would fit in. Public servants expressed fears that English-speaking Canadians would suffer discrimination if bilingualism became a widespread requirement in the federal public service. One intervener questioned the whole premise of an equal partnership of two cultures and wondered if the Royal Commission would be ready to hear views that opposed the message underpinning their mandate. This led Don McGillivray, a popular communist in the *Ottawa Citizen* to write a column expressing his concern that English-speaking Canadians opposed to the equality of the two cultures might not come forward to the Commission<sup>172</sup> He need not have worried. With former Prime Minister John Diefenbaker leading the charge and newspapers like the *Hamilton Spectator*, *Toronto Telegram*, *Calgary Herald*, and *Vancouver Province* ready to report

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<sup>169</sup> “Separatism Main Topic in the Nation” *Ottawa Journal*, November 7, 1963, 1. This was the lead story on page one of the paper. It concluded that separatism was still rejected by most Québécois but that “cooperation and understanding by English-Canada was recommended”.

<sup>170</sup> “Biculturalism and its Definitions”, *Ottawa Citizen*, November 9, 1963, 8.

<sup>171</sup> Ibid.

<sup>172</sup> Don McGillivray, *Ottawa Citizen*, November 9, 1963, 9

and support their views these voices of an older British-Canada were well represented in the national debate.

Newspapers and their editorial boards became involved in the debate surrounding the Royal Commission. Illustrative of the shift in attitudes among some influential leaders in English-speaking Canada was the evolution of the editorial stance of the *Globe and Mail*. In 1962, responding to the speech by Lester Pearson in the House of Commons on December 17, the paper did not support the idea of a broad national consultation on French-English relations, arguing that economic and social development in Québec was bound to lead to the growing use of English and the eventual assimilation of the French-speaking population.<sup>173</sup> In 1964 the paper recognised that relations between English-speaking and French-speaking Canada would have to change. By 1966 the paper defined a new stance on bilingualism arguing in its lead editorial on April 8, “It has always been unjust that French speaking citizens of Canada were frequently placed in the position of being unable to communicate in their own language—one of the two official Canadian languages—with officials and departments of the national Government.”<sup>174</sup> The transformation from assimilationist logic of 1962 to the notion of linguistic justice and the need to repair a history of discrimination was symptomatic of the shift in attitudes among English-speaking elites in Canada and in the public service.

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<sup>173</sup> “Patience and Understanding”, *The Globe and Mail*, December 20, 1962, 6.

<sup>174</sup> “Toward Bilingual Justice”, *The Globe and Mail*, April 8, 1966, 6.

T.H. Qualter on the research staff of the Royal Commission was asked to report on the press coverage given to the early activities of the Commission. His results for Ontario are particularly interesting. He surveyed six papers, one French paper (*Le Droit*) and five English (*Ottawa Journal*, *Ottawa Citizen*, *Globe and Mail*, *Toronto Star* and *Toronto Telegram*). He classified more than 300 stories and editorials from 1963-65 as either positive, negative or neutral. Not surprisingly *Le Droit* was the most positive (58 positive and 24 negative). Among English papers the most positive was the *Globe and Mail* (30 positive and 20 negative). The *Citizen*, *Star* and *Journal* almost evenly balanced between positive and negative stories. The *Telegram* was the most negative (17 positive, 31 negative).<sup>175</sup> Clearly, Canadians, at least in Ontario were getting the news about the Commission and they could find both support and criticism in their newspapers. It appears that the interest in bilingualism also reached beyond newspaper editors to touch parts of the broader English-speaking public. In the period 1963-4 demand for French language courses at Berlitz schools in Canada doubled.<sup>176</sup>

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<sup>175</sup> T.H. Qualter, "Analysis of Press Coverage at Regional Hearings" Internal report for the RCBB, RCBB Fonds LAC RG33-80, Box 402.

<sup>176</sup> RCBB, "Draft of Chapter One: Second Language Education", (Library and Archives Canada. RG33/80 Box 149), 8.

## **Early Reactions of the Public Service to Bilingualism**

The efforts to deal with the English-speaking dominance of the public service began as soon as the Liberal Government was elected in 1963. The rise of Québec nationalism, the presence of strong Québec voices in the Pearson Cabinet, the evidence supplied by Eugène Therrien, and the dramatic claims of Marcel Chaput made the public service a logical target. The evidence of problems was overwhelming and the federal government could act alone. Some changes could be made quickly and with relatively little expense. Moves such as bilingual signage had the advantage of being highly visible and easy to implement. To provide leadership and visibility to the issue Maurice Lamontagne, President of the Privy Council in Pearson's Government, announced in Parliament on June 12, 1963 that "...a special cabinet committee had been established to encourage bilingualism in the civil service..."<sup>177</sup> The Government would pay a bilingual bonus for the secretaries, clerks and administrative staff who had to work in both languages and who could show that they met basic qualifications. A targeted program of university recruitment was launched to draw bilingual Canadians, most of whom were French-speaking, into the administration, foreign service and management streams of the public service. The Public Service Commission was given the mandate to provide language training for employees of all departments and agencies. Departments were encouraged to give their employees language training, to enhance recruitment of French-

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<sup>177</sup> Saywell, *Canadian Annual Review 1963*, 60.

speakers, and to develop plans to become bilingual.<sup>178</sup> In spite of these earnest efforts of the Government to change the civil service, these reforms did not have an enormous impact.

The government had vastly underestimated the difficulties it faced in making such enormous change in the federal administration. Gordon Robertson admitted this difficulty in his memoirs. Language training was a key part of the program to implement official bilingualism, but nowhere in the federal government or in Canada did the expertise exist to deliver second-language training to adults and much less to create an atmosphere where newly acquired language skills could be maintained. It was a commentary on Canadian neglect of training for adults in French as a second language that Northern Affairs, the Department asked to take the lead on implementing language training, could only find the necessary courses in the Department of State of the United States.<sup>179</sup> This example is one clear indication of the lack of preparation and planning of the government when it made its commitment to official bilingualism. There were no models to emulate for this kind of cultural transformation. Other national governments like Belgium, Finland or Switzerland functioned in more than one language, as did the municipal government of Montréal, but none had gone through a recent transition from one language to bilingualism. Many of the early disappointments in the implementation of official bilingualism can be blamed on this lack of a plan or a model.

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<sup>178</sup> Hodgetts, *The Biography of an Institution*, 479.

<sup>179</sup> Gordon Robertson, *Memoirs of a Very Civil Servant*, 224.

Lack of progress toward effective bilingualism in the first half of the 1960s did not prevent expressions of concern from many English-speaking public servants about the new commitment to bilingualism. In September and October 1963 the debate about bilingualism in the federal public service was already in full swing. On September 26, 1963 while levels of French-speaking Canadians in the public service remained under 15%, the *Ottawa Journal* claimed that bilingualism was rampant in the public service. It noted that the government had apparently stated that “no important Civil Service appointments would be made in future without Canada’s bi-ethnic character being taken into account.” Later details in the story reveal that actually only one French-speaking senior manager seemed to have been hired under this new policy.<sup>180</sup> On October 26 the *Ottawa Citizen* noted that employees in the Department of Immigration were worried that bilingualism could undermine the merit principle.<sup>181</sup> At the public hearings of the Royal Commission in Ottawa the Civil Service Association noted that many of their members “feel that their chances of advancement will be hindered.” The Civil Service Association asked the Commissioners to assure English-speaking public servants that their faithful service would not be forgotten.<sup>182</sup> It would take many more years of government effort and finally the arrival of a much more credible separatist threat before the public service would accept that change was inevitable.

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<sup>180</sup> “Bilingualism Sweeps Ministry” *Ottawa Journal*, September 26, 1963, 8.

<sup>181</sup> “Merit system threatened?” *Ottawa Citizen*, October 26, 1963, 5.

<sup>182</sup> “Civil Service fears disadvantage in study of bilingualism”, *Ottawa Citizen*, November 8, 1963, 4.

## **The Work of the Royal Commission**

The Royal Commission was determined to do what it could to wake up Canadians to the danger facing their country. The first half of 1964 was devoted to regional consultations. Each public session would begin with a presentation of the mandate and approach by two of the commissioners. They would conclude by asking the audience to address three questions: “Can the English and French live together in Canada? What new conditions are required for this to happen? Are these new conditions acceptable?”<sup>183</sup> This would be followed by an open, ‘town hall style’ session where anyone present would be given the chance to state his or her views. Each of the public sessions was well attended. Although the Commissioners had feared that Canadians would be reticent to enter into this discussion, they discovered that, on the contrary, Canadians were eager to be heard and to hear each other. Sometimes the views were extreme, but the Commissioners were ready to hear any view as long as it was delivered with a minimum of decorum and rival viewpoints were given an equal hearing. Local media made sure that these views were communicated to citizen who followed the news.

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<sup>183</sup> RCBB, *Interim Report*, 155.

## “The Greatest Crisis in its History”

In 1964 the need to awaken English-speaking Canada to the looming crisis of national unity was the central preoccupation of the commissioners when they decided to take a break in their hearings and produce a preliminary report. The commissioners struggled to find the right balance in their report that would stimulate but not seem unduly alarmist. The first draft fell too far on the safe side for Léon Dion, Professor of Political Science at l’Université Laval and Special Consultant on Research to the Royal Commission. In a personal note to the Commissioners he suggested that the draft “ne produirait pas sur les Canadiens anglais le choc susceptible de les éveiller de leur torpeur.” He asked rhetorically if the problem in English-speaking Canada is one of awareness or one of attitude and he suggested that it is attitude which must be changed. He recommended increasing the shock value and the emotional weight of the text.<sup>184</sup> This is exactly the approach that the Commissioners would take in their *Interim Report*.

The *Interim Report of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism* was released in February, 1965. It received more media attention and more comment from opinion leaders than any other product of the Commission.<sup>185</sup> For the average person in English-speaking Canada this report was the first time that someone had held up a mirror, reflecting back to them their biases, concerns and hopes. The *Interim Report* deepened the

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<sup>184</sup> Léon Dion, “Commentaires sur un rapport préliminaire, August 1964”, RCBB Fonds, LAC, RG33/88 Box 130.

<sup>185</sup> Saywell, *Canadian Annual Review: 1965 and 1967*.

sense of crisis in Canada and strongly reinforced Pearson's message that English-speaking Canadians would have to make significant changes to their attitudes and practices if Canada was to remain united.

The *Interim Report* presented a largely unflattering portrait of English-speaking Canada. It was said to lack its own identity and to be ignorant of Québec and of the French-speaking minorities that live in other provinces.<sup>186</sup> They were told that their attachment to Canada was still closely linked to the old British-Canada. Canadians whose first language and culture were neither English nor French had appeared before the commission to claim their place in Canada, but the notion of a multicultural society had hardly begun to enter the consciousness of most English-speaking Canadians.<sup>187</sup> "A majority saw little or no need for any important changes in the relationship between themselves and their French-speaking compatriots."<sup>188</sup> The saving grace, as seen by the commissioners, in all of this misunderstanding was the fundamentally moderate nature of the English-speaking Canadian culture.<sup>189</sup> Every time that a voice had been raised in the public consultations against the French language and culture, other members of the public, the media and the elites had stepped in to balance those comments.

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<sup>186</sup> RCBB, *Interim Report*, 25.

<sup>187</sup> *Ibid*, 52.

<sup>188</sup> *Ibid*, 120.

<sup>189</sup> *Ibid*, 125.

French-speaking Canada was described in the *Interim Report* as a vibrant national culture, aware of itself, proud of its history, and ready to assume its future as a national state either inside or outside of Canada. This French-speaking society was portrayed as energized and angered by its sense of living as second-class citizens in its own land.<sup>190</sup> The status quo was no longer acceptable for Québécois. They wanted control over the economy of Québec and they were pursuing policies through the Québec government to achieve that. They wanted to be recognised as a French-speaking nation with all the political powers needed to protect their unique language and culture. Many Québécois had been saying the same things for years, but the fact that these sentiments were endorsed by the Royal Commission with its representatives of English-speaking and ethnic Canadians greatly increased its impact in English-speaking Canada.

The French-speaking minorities outside of Québec also were drawn into the light by the report of the Royal Commission. Their active presence in the consultations showed that they wanted their culture to survive and grow. Their English-speaking neighbours had generally been indifferent or hostile to their ambitions. By the early 1960s it was becoming clear that French-speaking minority communities were also being abandoned by their traditional allies in Québec who seemed ready to write them off as a lost cause.<sup>191</sup> These French-speaking minority communities were to emerge as major

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<sup>190</sup>Ibid. 109.

<sup>191</sup> Behiels. *Francophone Minority Communities*, xxiv-xxv.

allies of the federal government in the struggle for a new vision of pan-Canadian linguistic duality. While they doubted the depth of the new interest of English-speaking Canadians in linguistic duality, they were willing and able to organise and to fight to preserve their culture. In the end they (along with bilingual English-speaking Canadians) became one of the real winners in the federal public service where their education and their high levels of bilingualism allowed them to compete for jobs at all levels.

### **Attitudes of Canadians to Bilingualism**

In the early 1960s some English-speaking Canadians were starting to warm up to the French language and the idea of bilingualism. They were beginning to ask their local school boards and their provincial governments for better French second-language education. Provinces were beginning to provide more support to French-language schools for their French-speaking minorities. Bilingualism was no longer seen as a threat but perhaps as an advantage. Québécois members of the federal Liberal Party argued that a bilingual Canada and federal government would help to preserve the French language and culture in Québec. Maurice Lamontagne, and Guy Favreau were among the most important voices urging Pearson to act on the broad issue of English-French relations and they also took the lead in pushing Pearson toward the policy of bilingualism in the federal public service. Once Pierre Trudeau, Gérard Pelletier and Jean Marchand joined the Liberal government, they became ardent supporters of bilingualism. Paradoxically, this new openness to bilingualism happened just as some Québécois were becoming more

suspicious of it. The primary cultural preoccupation in Québec, for both nationalist and federalists, was to stop the erosion of the French language. Québécois nationalists feared that official bilingualism imposed by the federal government would just be another path to assimilation. Michel Brunet argued in his 1968 book *Québec Canada Anglais* that bilingualism had always been a strategy of the British governing class to dominate Québec society. “Ce bilinguisme des Anglo-Canadiens s’inspire d’un paternalisme lucide que la naïveté des Canadiens français a toujours rendu très rentable.”<sup>192</sup> At the same time that the government in Ottawa was trying to convince its public servants that bilingualism was necessary to secure national unity; those public servants were hearing that many Québécois wanted nothing to do with bilingualism. Marcel Chaput’s outright rejection of bilingualism was a clear illustration of the mixed messages reaching English-speaking Canadians. While French-speaking federalists in Québec supported bilingualism, Québec government were gradually adopting policies to make French the dominant language in that province. Public servants wondered how support for the policy of bilingualism that was opposed by so many Québécois could actually help to promote national unity.

### **The Public Service of Canada reacts to bilingualism**

One of the great battles in the campaign to implement official bilingualism in Canada occurred within and around the federal public service. This is not surprising.

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<sup>192</sup> Michel Brunet, *Québec Canada Anglais*, 186.

Language and language policy are tools in the struggle for organisational power. Shifts in language policy change the relative strength and career prospects of competing ethnic groups within an organisation. As Raymond and Albert Breton note, in the federal public service the introduction of official bilingualism was seen “as indicating that the acquisition of real organisational power in the federal establishment, with all that implies, has been removed from being an exclusive English Canadian prerogative to being one that has to be shared with French Canadians”.<sup>193</sup> Implementing this sharing of power would turn out to have very specific and negative impacts on the careers of many English-speaking public servants and would fuel their opposition to the policy. Dealing with the resistance to institutional bilingualism in a bureaucracy so long dominated by English-speaking Canadians and their culture would slow down and limit the ultimate shape and extent of Canadian official bilingualism.

When French-speaking Canadians looked at the federal administration in 1960 they saw that they had little presence and little opportunity in that institution. Beattie, Désy and Longstaff underline this concern in the report they did for the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism. “French Canadians are reluctant to come to Ottawa because of a disdain for the English atmosphere of the capital and a fear of losing their language and culture.”<sup>194</sup> Morris and Lanphier build upon the same theme in

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<sup>193</sup> Albert Breton and Raymond Breton, *Why Disunity?* 75.

<sup>194</sup> Christopher Beattie, Jacques Désy and Stephen Longstaff, *Senior Federal Civil Servants at mid-Career* (Ottawa: Information Canada 1972), 241.

their book *Three Scales of Inequality*. In the federal public service “the system functioned to train French speakers in Anglophone ways of working.”<sup>195</sup> Marcel Chaput expressed the outrage of many French-speaking Canadians when he outlined the obvious underrepresentation of French-speaking Canadians in the federal administration. “Out of seventeen directors of the Bank of Canada, one is French-Canadian, out of 17 Vice-Presidents of the C.N.R. none is French-Canadian. Out of seven top officials in the new Federal ministry of forests, none is French-Canadian, although Québec has 25% of Canada’s commercial forest area.”<sup>196</sup> Instead of being an important integrative factor in Canadian society the federal public service was a source of division. Three years before the creation of the Royal Commission that he was to chair, André Laurendeau commented in a speech that he made at Queen’s University, “The central government and its administration can be nice to French Canada, but when they think, talk and write as a government...they do it in English... The central government is an agent of assimilation.”<sup>197</sup> In 1963, the English-speaking leaders in the public service were reluctant to make the effort necessary to change this situation.

The Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism was asked to examine the federal public service in detail and to give specific recommendations to turn

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<sup>195</sup> Raymond Morris and Michael Lanphier, *Three Scales of Inequality: Perspectives on French-English Relations* (Toronto: Longmans 1977), 16.

<sup>196</sup> Marcel Chaput, *Why I am a Separatist*, 13.

<sup>197</sup> André Laurendeau, “The Development of Canadian Values and our Cultural Heritage,” an address to the Study Conference on National Issues at Queen’s University 6 September, 1960, in Cook and Behiels eds. *The Essential Laurendeau*, 243.

it into an institution in which the equal partnership between the two founding cultures would be manifest. This meant more than just providing services to Canadians in both official languages. It meant integrating English-speaking and French-speaking employees in all levels of the administration and enabling them to work together using their own language. The challenges in reform of the federal public service were more complex than Prime Minister Pearson and his Government originally imagined. The complexity began with agreeing upon simple definitions of terms. 'Bilingualism' could be personal and it could be institutional or it could be both. At the personal level it could mean simply a passive understanding of the second language, where a public servant would be expected to understand communications in the second language but would write and speak in his/her first language. At a more ambitious level, it would mean being able to work fully in both languages. As an institutional policy bilingualism could mean simply offering services to clients in the two official languages and/or it could mean providing a workplace in which individuals could carry out all of their daily activities in either official language. To define a bicultural organization was even more difficult, but it seemed to imply that the workplace would be structured so that both sets of life experiences and behaviours that make up a culture would be equally welcome. Throughout the 1960s, attempts were made to implement all of these possible aspects of a bilingual and bicultural public service. The changes made were significant but the progress was limited and the ultimate targets were lowered to take account of the very real barriers to reaching the ideal of full bilingualism and biculturalism.

One example of the difficulty in achieving a truly bilingual public service can be seen in a project described in a memo from the Department of Manpower and Immigration in 1966, found in the PIPS archival fonds.<sup>198</sup> While Jean Marchand was the Minister of Manpower and Immigration, that department launched a project “to advise the Department on the French equivalents to be used to describe services named in English.”<sup>199</sup> The project was led by the Departmental Secretary on Bilingualism and Biculturalism who was responsible to the Deputy Minister for the implementation of cultural equality in the Department. The project is described in some detail below because it reveals a great deal about the complexity, the expense and the sheer difficulty of the cultural change involved in the move to a bilingual and bicultural public service.

The leaders of the project very quickly realized that direct translation of English terms was not a sufficient solution. “It was hypothesized that equivalent but not translated terms would convey the concept of the services more effectively.”<sup>200</sup> They called this process ‘creative translation’ and they recognised that it was a departure from the traditions of the public service. Expert linguists from outside the department were hired to guide the process. Not only were the translations debated and altered, but in doing this it was sometimes discovered that the English term was inaccurate and then both had to be changed. The exercise became as much about interpreting the cultural value of

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<sup>198</sup> Department of Manpower and Immigration, “Project – Creative Translation, Summer 1966”, (PIPS, LAC), RG33/80 Box 149

<sup>199</sup> Ibid, 1

<sup>200</sup> Ibid.

titles in each linguistic milieu as it was about translation. The debates about the position titles became debates about the content and importance of the jobs themselves.

“Operational staff working in French-speaking areas are enthusiastic about having equivalent terminology arrived at through the French conceptualization process. The same is true for staff working in English-speaking areas.”<sup>201</sup> They may have been enthusiastic about the process but neither group was satisfied by the results. The report finally notes that the best way to facilitate the creative naming of services in both languages is to develop “management staff efficient in reading skills in both languages.” The report seems to tell the tale of honest effort and disappointing results. It showed that the implementation of official bilingualism in an organisation that had been unilingual for so long would not be done easily or quickly.

J.E. Hodgetts concludes his history of the Public Service Commission of Canada with comments on bilingualism and biculturalism that would echo the experience in the Department of Manpower and Immigration. He noted the British bias within the public service and the wilful blindness which had produced such an English culture. The place of French-speaking Canadians in the civil service “did not rest on positively discriminating rules but rather on the failure to recognize the social and cultural content of the supposedly neutral structure of the merit system.”<sup>202</sup> The heavy cultural bias found in the use of position titles in Manpower and Immigration was just another example of this

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<sup>201</sup> Ibid, 7.

<sup>202</sup> Hodgetts, *The Biography of an Institution*, 481.

not so subtle discrimination. In the next decade not only would policies have to be changed but the underlying cultural assumptions within the public service would have to be analysed and actions taken to make sure that the new policies were not suffocated by the old culture.

### **The Role of PIPS in the Bilingualism Debate**

The Professional Institute of the Public Service played an early and important role in the crafting of the policies and programs of official bilingualism. PIPS The position of PIPS was always nuanced. There is an important distinction that was often made by PIPS between the ‘external’ and ‘internal’ aspects of the official bilingualism policy of the federal government.<sup>203</sup> The external aspects of the policy relate largely to the provision of services to Canadians in both official languages. This involves bilingual signage, production of documents in both official languages, the equal offer in both official languages of all government services, from receptionist to policy consultation. Generally these external aspects were supported by PIPS. The internal aspects relate to the creation of a bilingual workplace where all bureaucratic activities can be carried out in either official language. This means that internal papers can be in either language, managers should deal with employees in the official language of the employee’s choice,

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<sup>203</sup> J.E. Fordyce, “Internal Report of the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages, May, 1970”, COL Fonds LAC RG122. Fordyce notes this distinction in his analysis of the mandate of the Commissioner of Official Languages that is clearly expected to examine and report to Parliament on the ‘external’ aspects of bilingualism, but does not seem to have an explicit mandate to look at the ‘internal’ aspects.

and meetings and training can be carried out in either or both official languages. The implementation of this internal bilingualism was much more contested by PIPS, and it has generally been much less successful. It is this aspect of the policy that most threatened unilingual employees because everyone who aspired to a position of management at higher levels had to have at least a strong ability to understand both official languages. As PIPS would point out any professional employee anywhere in Canada who aspired to become an executive would have to become bilingual.

The members of PIPS felt particularly vulnerable to the policies of official bilingualism. The professional and scientific employees of the public service who made up the membership of PIPS were largely English-speaking. Even at the end of the sixties the government target for French-speaking employees in the professional, scientific and technical fields was only set at only 15%. But PIPS was no more ready than the rest of the public service to deal with the arrival of official bilingualism. In 1964, PIPS tried to develop a position on bilingualism and biculturalism to present to the RCBB. At the 1964 PIPS Annual General Meeting, the Sub-committee on Bilingualism in the Public Service reported that it could not “recommend a general policy or prepare a brief to present to the Royal Commission”<sup>204</sup> It recommended the creation of a Special Committee to undertake this delicate task. Eventually the policy was developed through a wide consultation with all its members. Out of about 7,000 members 3000 responded to a questionnaire on the topic. The resulting official PIPS position on bilingualism focused on a support for

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<sup>204</sup> PIPS, “Minutes of the 1964 Annual General Meeting, 1964”, PIPS Fonds, LAC MG 28 I 36 Box 1.

expanding service to Canadians in both official languages, but was less supportive of French as a language of work in the public service. PIPS advised the Royal Commission that any policy to foster and encourage bilingualism in the public service should be implemented gradually with no injustice to present members; that the merit system should be the overriding factor in the advancement of public servants, and the government to should offer language training for all affected employees.<sup>205</sup>

Defence of the merit system and suspicion about attempts to increase the representation of French-speaking Canadians in the civil service were to live hand in hand in PIPS policies and positions. In the 1960s PIPS actively opposed efforts to improve recruitment of French-speaking Canadians that resembled very closely the old veterans' preference. PIPS complained that "bilingual applicants with the merest pass standards in terms of academic and technical qualifications can rank ahead of unilingual applicants with decidedly higher professional qualifications."<sup>206</sup> Leslie Barnes accused the Government of putting "its political objective of altering the linguistic composition of the capital area's population" ahead of fair treatment of English-speaking public servants.<sup>207</sup> Only when the consideration of bilingualism as an element of merit was limited to selected positions would PIPS recognise its legitimacy.

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<sup>205</sup> Swettenham and Kealy, *Serving the State*, 148.

<sup>206</sup> *Ibid.*, 151.

<sup>207</sup> *Ibid.*

## **The First Wave of Public Service Programs in Support of Official Languages**

From 1963 to 1966 much was done but little was achieved on either bilingualism or biculturalism in the federal public service. Bilingual signage, bilingual bonuses, efforts to increase hiring of French-speaking Canadians, the creation of a Cabinet Committee to lead the charge, a shadow committee of Deputy Ministers to follow through on new policies, the first attempts at language training and the effort to expand the capacity of the translation service collectively produced little real or apparent change. This first wave of decisions by the government of Lester Pearson to make the public service more bilingual did provide PIPS with its first specific disagreement with the government. PIPS argued that bilingual bonuses should be paid to their members in the professions as well as to clerks, secretaries and administrative staff. For PIPS and its members it was an issue of logic and principal. If bilingualism provided an additional benefit to the employer it should be compensated.<sup>208</sup> If some employees were getting such a bonus then all should. PIPS lobbied for this change throughout the 1960s but the government never granted their wish and the issue remained an irritant that would weaken other attempts to gain the active cooperation of PIPS members. The failure to accept the request of PIPS also meant that the government lost a useful means of signalling the importance it placed on bilingualism. At the relatively small cost of the bilingual bonus the government would have showed that was serious in wanting as many public servants as possible to become bilingual.

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<sup>208</sup> Ibid, 149.

Early in the Pearson mandate some of his French-speaking Ministers set out to explain to Canadians the need for bilingualism in the Public Service of Canada. Maurice Lamontagne, President of the Privy Council, and Guy Favreau, Minister of Justice, played lead roles in the public efforts to explain the need for change in the English-speaking culture of the civil service. They were new Ministers in the Pearson Government and both of them had worked at senior levels in the federal public service before being elected. Strangely no English-speaking Ministers beyond the Prime Minister seem to have been given any special role to market this policy in English-speaking Canada. On December 19, 1963, one year after Lester Pearson had promised to change English-French relations in Canada, Guy Favreau was quoted in the *Ottawa Journal* attacking the inertia in the federal public service regarding bilingualism.<sup>209</sup> But even slow change was too much for some English-speaking public servants. Three weeks later, on January 7, 1964, Lloyd Francis, Liberal MP for the Ottawa area riding of Carleton-West and a former President of PIPS, reported that he was receiving complaints about the rapid implementation of bilingualism in the federal administration.<sup>210</sup> Lloyd Francis was well placed to hear about the fears of English-speaking civil servants. As the 1960s progressed he became one of the prime spokesmen in the Liberal caucus for the dissatisfaction of English-speaking public servants about the implementation of official bilingualism.

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<sup>209</sup> “Inertia in the Civil Service” *Ottawa Journal*, December 19, 1963, 6.

<sup>210</sup> *Ottawa Citizen*, January 7, 1964, 4.

Peter Regenstreif in his interviews for the RCBB with elite members of the federal public service explored the question of bilingualism in the public service. He reported that both English-speaking and French-speaking leaders in the public service expressed a commitment to bilingualism, but that their levels of commitment were not the same. “English Canadians wanted a policy of favoring in some way a bilingual civil service but were opposed to any rigid set of rules. In contrast French Canadians were far more disposed in favour of a specific standard...”<sup>211</sup> He also reported that while top level English-speaking civil servants said that they supported bilingualism they claimed that the rank and file would never accept it. He also found an underlying fear among the most senior public servants that the natural dominance of the English language and culture might be threatened by bilingualism. “Some Ottawa civil servants interviewed felt that there could be a development in which French Canadians could come to dominate the federal civil service if bilingualism became the most important criterion for advancement.”<sup>212</sup> Clearly, the most senior English-speaking public servants were less than fully supportive of official bilingualism at least in the early years.

The RCBB examined very closely the early efforts made in the federal administration to implement bilingualism and drew some conclusions from that frustrating experience. Michel Chevalier and James Taylor of the research staff of the RCBB prepared a detailed analysis of the actions and results of official languages

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<sup>211</sup> Peter Regenstreif, *Elite Opinion on Bilingualism and Biculturalism*, 62.

<sup>212</sup> *Ibid*, 63.

program in nine departments during the period 1963-66. Their report was eventually published in 1971 by Information Canada under the somewhat coy title, *Dynamics of Adaptation in the Federal Public Service*. They had been asked to focus their report on how to make the public service “bilingual and basically bicultural” and to examine the “capacity and willingness of the Public Service to effect changes.”<sup>213</sup> It reads like a prolonged episode of *Yes Minister*, a BBC comedy about the capacity of public servants to thwart the will of Ministers. Committees were created. Plans were made. Coordinators of bilingualism were put in place. Very little was changed. The general conclusions of Chevalier and Taylor underlined the great difficulty in changing the culture of a large, old and proud institution. “During the period of observation the public service was not moving in the direction of bilingualism and biculturalism.”<sup>214</sup> They advanced several reasons for the failure to make progress. Most importantly they noted that central direction was weak and inconsistent. Departments were reluctant to spend additional funds. Pressures to increase efficiency and restrain costs were deemed to undercut the needed expenditures for bilingualism and biculturalism. Even the expense of translation services were difficult to accommodate within existing budgets.<sup>215</sup> More resources, more time and stronger leadership would be required if the public service was to become bilingual.

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<sup>213</sup> Chevalier and Taylor, *Dynamics of Adaptation in the Federal Public Service*, 1.

<sup>214</sup> *Ibid*, 36.

<sup>215</sup> *Ibid*, 15-19.

From 1963 to 1966 federal public servants were also realising that personal bilingualism was difficult to achieve, particularly for mid-career public servants. Language training was seen by most English-speaking public servants as their way to contribute to the new culture, and their only guarantee that their careers would not suffer. However, even in 1965, evidence was beginning to mount that language training was in difficulty. Not only was it hard to get spaces in training programs, those programs were not producing the expected results. Chevalier and Taylor noted that by 1966 there had been considerable experience in trying to provide basic second language skills to mid and upper level public servants. In almost all cases this training was being provided to English-speaking public servants trying to learn French. The training provided “was criticized as leading to frustration and disappointment”<sup>216</sup> Many trainees were not passing the tests to qualify for ‘bilingual status’ and those who did pass were likely to lose their skills when they returned to an essentially unilingual work place. “If learning French was thought to be one way to reduce feelings of insecurity, the language courses proved to be a disillusionment...most public servants came away without having remotely mastered the language.”<sup>217</sup> The obstacles to official bilingualism were not limited to resistance and poor attitudes. Culture change was proving to be very difficult and no magic solution to make individuals bilingual had been discovered.

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<sup>216</sup> Chevalier and Taylor, *Dynamics of Adaptation in the Federal Public Service*, 15.

<sup>217</sup> *Ibid*, 46.

By 1965 French-speaking public servants were expressing frustration about the lack of progress toward real bilingualism. L'Association des fonctionnaires fédéraux d'expression française wrote to the Royal Commission on March 1, 1965 to express their concern. They conceded that their views were somewhat radical but claimed that dramatic action would be required to alter the predominantly English atmosphere of Ottawa and the ostracism felt by French-speaking civil servants.<sup>218</sup> They went on to request that Parliament pass legislation to implement bilingualism within the federal civil service. They insisted on the need to establish numerical quotas at all levels to ensure appropriate representation of French-speaking Canadians even at the risk of hindering the promotion of capable English-speaking Canadians for a certain period of time.<sup>219</sup> This was anathema to PIPS and its members who would consistently oppose any program that could damage the future prospects of English-speaking public servants. The federal government found itself caught between French-speaking civil servants asking for stronger action to make up for past injustices and English-speaking civil servants who wanted guarantees that their careers would not be harmed.

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<sup>218</sup> “Soumission de l'Association des fonctionnaires fédéraux d'expression française”, RCCB Fonds LAC, *RG33/88 Box 130*.

<sup>219</sup> *Ibid.*

## **The Pearson Policy on Bilingualism and Biculturalism in the Public Service**

It was in this atmosphere of confusion and frustration that Prime Minister Pearson decided in 1966 to make a broad statement of the Government's policy on bilingualism and biculturalism in the public service. The Cabinet Committee on Bilingualism, made up mostly of French-speaking Ministers, was pushing for the rapid implementation of bilingualism and the recruitment of many more French-speaking Canadians to the federal public service. The Senior Interdepartmental Committee on Bilingualism and Biculturalism made up of top public servants (mostly English-speaking) wanted a much more cautious approach. It advised "the problem of bilingualism and biculturalism is at once ill-defined and threatening...because of its potential career consequences ... It is seen as changing the rules in the middle of the game."<sup>220</sup> As he developed his policy statement it seems that Pearson wanted to allay the fears of current unilingual public servants with regard to their careers, while at the same time to set objectives for rapid change that would satisfy French-speaking Canada. He could either have explained to French-speaking Canadians that change was coming but that it would be slow, or to say to English-speaking public servants that best efforts would be made to protect their careers but that the achievement of rapid progress toward a bilingual and bicultural public service would take precedence. Unfortunately, Pearson's policy tried to meet both sets of expectations with very unhappy results.

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<sup>220</sup> Chevalier and Taylor, *Dynamics of Adaptation in the Federal Public Service*, 46.

Prime Minister Pearson met with Leslie Barnes, Executive Director of PIPS, as part of his consultations leading up to the announcement of his policy. The PIPS *Aide Memoire* of March 23, 1966 prepared for the meeting with Pearson is the clearest enunciation of the PIPS position on the introduction of official bilingualism.<sup>221</sup> In other forums PIPS had expressed its general support for improved bilingual services for Canadians, but in his brief to the Prime Minister, Barnes moved straight to the concerns of PIPS members. First, he warned the Prime Minister of the dangers of going too far, “reward for a qualification (bilingualism) which is without significant relevance to the true requirements of the position would be incompatible with the basic concepts of the merit system.”<sup>222</sup> He went on to lay out the dire consequences of bilingualism if it was to be stressed beyond the actual job requirements. He said that it would lead to an aggravation of the shortage of professional staff within the public service, the discouragement of applications from well-qualified unilinguals, the loss of more professionals to jobs in the United States, and the danger that “irrelevant language qualifications would be used to compensate for weakness in relevant professional qualifications.” He noted that unilingual English-speaking members of PIPS had shown high interest (82%) in receiving second language training, “under appropriate

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<sup>221</sup> “Aide Memoire for Leslie Barnes in preparation for his meeting with Pearson, March 23, 1966,” PIPS Fonds, LAC MG 28 I 36 Box 1.

<sup>222</sup> *Ibid*, 1.

conditions”.<sup>223</sup> He concluded by outlining nine recommendations, “if the Federal Government adopts the policy of fostering and encouraging bilingualism within the Public Service”.<sup>224</sup>

1. Implementation should be gradual and without force or coercion;
2. Competence and experience should continue to be the overriding factors in appointments;
3. The policy should be implemented without creating a feeling of injustice amongst those in the Public Service who are now unilingual;
4. Second language training should be provided at the government’s expense.
5. Financial assistance in second language training should cover all costs;
6. The implementation of bilingualism should not be allowed to impair the efficiency of the Public Service;
7. The ground rules with respect to promotion should not be changed in mid-stream for those employees who have been engaged up to now on the basis of their skill and training alone. A high order of competence in the second language should not be required as a sine qua non to further advancement;

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<sup>223</sup> Ibid, 2. He noted that only 69% of French-speaking members had indicated an interest in language training without noting that many of them were probably already bilingual to some extent.

<sup>224</sup> Ibid,3-4 The wording here is a paraphrasing of the words in the PIPS *Aide Memoire*

8. Training should only be provided where opportunity exists to retain the second language skills in the work place;
9. The Federal Government should encourage more frequent transfers between French-speaking and English-speaking areas where practical.

Of these nine recommendations most reflect a deep suspicion that the new bilingualism policy would hurt the existing members of PIPS. In spite of, or perhaps because of the negative tone of the PIPS advice it appears to have had a marked impact on the policy announced by Prime Minister Pearson. When the Pearson Government introduced its first bilingualism policy for the public service, professional, technical and scientific workers were specifically exempted, and guarantees were offered to protect the careers of existing employees.<sup>225</sup>

### **The Pearson Pledge**

Prime Minister Pearson announced the Government's "Policy Respecting Bilingualism" on April 5, 1966 in the House of Commons.<sup>226</sup> He began by outlining the broad principles and objectives of the policy. Communications with the public would normally be in the official language of the client. Public servants would be able to communicate within the

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<sup>225</sup> Lester Pearson, "Statement of Policy Respecting Bilingualism: April 5 1966" An annotated transcript of Pearson's address to the House of Commons on April 5, 1966, found in LAC RG33/80 Box 149. 149. (It is identical to the contained in the Debates of the House of Commons.) The annotations are useful to show the reaction of some RCBB staff to the statement.

<sup>226</sup> Ibid.

public service in either official language. The linguistic and cultural values of both official language communities would be reflected in public service recruitment and training. Both cultural groups would work together “using their own language and applying their respective cultural values, but each fully understanding and appreciating those of the other.”<sup>227</sup> He set out several principles designed to reassure long term public servants. Bilingualism should be considered an element of the merit system “which must remain unimpaired”. Implementation should be gradual as part of a long term program under which civil servants and recruits will have adequate time to meet the language requirements. He then made the specific commitment that often came back to haunt the government: “...the careers of civil servants who are not bilingual and who have devoted many years of their lives to service to their country must not be prejudiced in any way by measures to develop bilingualism.”<sup>228</sup> It was an impossible promise to keep while making rapid progress on organisational bilingualism and it seemed unduly generous toward unilingual, English-speaking public servants in the eyes of French-speaking Canadians who had so long suffered from systemic discrimination in the federal public service. The anonymous reader at the Royal Commission noted in the margins of Pearson’s statement “Je suis d’accord qu’on ne doit pas créer d’injustice mais, il n’est pas d’injustice en avantageant ceux qui sont bilingues.” This was an argument that more English-speaking

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<sup>227</sup> Ibid, 1.

<sup>228</sup> Ibid, 2.

members of the Cabinet and Parliament should have been making to Canadians to help them accept the need for strong new measures.

Having provided all this reassurance, the Prime Minister laid out the implementation plan. Starting in 1967, recruits to the administrative trainee program would have to be bilingual or willing to become so. By 1970 for external recruits, and by 1975 for internal appointments, proficiency in both official languages, or the willingness to acquire it, would be required for executive and administrative positions “in those centres where a need exists”. A special recruitment pool would be established in the national capital to facilitate hiring of candidates proficient in both languages. Special training programs were announced to help the most senior civil servants to become bilingual. Bilingual bonuses were confirmed for clerical and secretarial staff but not for professional or management staff. As PIPS had hoped, technical, professional and scientific positions were exempted from the policy “at this time”. Finally, Pearson announced that a secretariat on bilingualism would be created in the Privy Council Office under the direction of the Prime Minister and the Clerk of the Privy Council, responsible for “ensuring the coordinated and progressive implementation of the government’s policy...” He concluded by underlining the importance of this policy and program “to the promotion of national unity and to a great and strong Canada.” The unknown reader in the Royal Commission wrote beside this stirring conclusion “OK in the 1950s”, implying that

the new policy did not go far enough or fast enough to meet the expectations of French-speaking Canadians in 1966.<sup>229</sup>

Prime Minister Pearson's policy was an important step in making the public service more bilingual but it was far from an adequate plan to deliver the vision he had presented in his introduction. The action plan was very vague. The blanket reassurance that it offered to unilingual public servants was inconsistent with the nature and pace of change implied by the objectives. English-speaking public servants could see that their careers would be affected. The rules of the game had changed. There was already some evidence that acquisition of a new language in mid-life would not be easily accomplished. Pearson's promise could not bridge the gap between the new definition of merit and the capacity of many existing civil servants to meet the new requirements. Over the next six years, as programs were put in place to support bilingualism in the public service, opposition by English-speaking public servants would rise and the programs to implement official bilingualism would be watered down but anger from English-speaking public servants would continue to grow. In the 1972 federal election it would exact a political price from the Liberal Party and lead to a revised and less aggressive program of implementation.

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<sup>229</sup> Ibid, 3.

## **The Stage is set**

By 1966 the first steps had been taken to enshrine bilingualism as a core commitment of English-speaking Canada in the growing battle for national unity. The decline in the old presumption of English-speaking dominance had prepared the way for a new view of Canada. The Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism seeded the concept of a bilingual Canada as an essential step in responding to the historic injustices shown to French-speaking Canadians. The rise of nationalism and the independence movement in Québec drove this message home. The public service was the obvious starting point for the new commitment to bilingualism. Prime Minister Pearson's policy for a bilingual public service and its contradictory pledge to unilingual public servants set out the often confused road that Canadians would follow toward official bilingualism.

### **Chapter Three:**

#### **Stumbling Toward Official Bilingualism**

This chapter shows how in the second half of the 1960s most English-speaking Canadians came to accept bilingualism as a necessary part of the Canadian identity, and accepted the notion that the federal public service should lead the way in the use of both official languages.<sup>230</sup> It will show that the federal government toughened its commitment to official bilingualism through the Official Languages Act and through its negotiations with the provinces on funding for education in both official languages across the country. It will focus on the often inept approaches used to implement official languages in the federal public service and compromises in the federal public service shaped in part the national patterns of bilingualism.

At some point in 1967-68 English-speaking Canada sloughed off “the fatigue that comes from being Canadian” which Laurendeau had observed in his diary in 1964.<sup>231</sup> Their spirits were lifted and their view of French-speaking Canada was expanded by Expo’67. Canadians flocked to Expo as it became one of the most successful International Expositions in history. They were impressed by the international pavilions, but they were swept away by Québec. Jack Granatstein says near the end of his book on the decade in

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<sup>230</sup> George Perlin, “Anglophone Attitudes to Official Bilingualism”, in Daniel Bonin, *Toward Reconciliation?* Perlin provides polling results which show that support for official bilingualism among Canadian Anglophones reached 70% in 1970 and never fell below 50% in the decades that followed.

<sup>231</sup> André Laurendeau, *The Diary of André Laurendeau*, 49.

Canada 1957-67, during Expo “We all wished we could live in Montreal.”<sup>232</sup> Nick Gwyn, a journalist, more given to criticism than praise, was deeply impressed by Expo and the courage needed to bring it about, “We risked national humiliation (because we accepted the mandate late and the construction challenge was enormous), and we brought off an international sensation. We listened to *chansoniers* at the Quebec *boite*, we learned about our regional differences, and we began to treasure them.”<sup>233</sup> When searching for reasons for the relatively calm reaction of English-speaking Canadians to the final report (Volume One) of the Royal Commission, Harris Cole wrote in the *Canadian Forum* “Expo has made English-Canadians more aware of the existence and vigour of French-Canada and of the potential for cooperation with it.”<sup>234</sup>

At the same moment that Canadians were basking in the euphoria of Expo’67, Charles de Gaulle stunned English-speaking Canada with his public support for Québec independence. English speaking Canadians were outraged. Québécois nationalists were ecstatic and moderates were more amused than offended. Prime Minister Pearson cancelled the rest of de Gaulle’s visit. The juxtaposition of Expo’67 and de Gaulle illustrated to perfection the yin and yang of the changing attitudes of English-speaking Canadians. René Levesques’ announcement in November of Expo year, that he was

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<sup>232</sup> Jack Granatstein, *Canada 1957-1967*, 304.

<sup>233</sup> Nick Gwynn, *The Northern Magus, Pierre Trudeau and Canadians* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1980.), 61.

<sup>234</sup> Harris Cole, “The B&B Report, Volume One”, *Canadian Forum*, February 1968, 250.

forming *Le Mouvement souveraineté association*, added to fears in English-speaking Canada that the pro-independence forces in Québec were no longer on the margins of politics. A newfound respect for French culture in Canada, visible in the reaction of English-speaking Canadians to Expo'67, and a growing fear for the survival of Canada were starting to animate a will to evolve and to survive in English-speaking Canadians. Official bilingualism was seen by the leaders of English-speaking Canada as one of the paths to that survival.

In October 1967, the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism produced Volume One of its final report which outlined a framework for bilingualism in Canada.<sup>235</sup> Among its recommendations it called for action by the provinces on minority-language education. It asked that the federal Parliament pass legislation to make all government activities officially bilingual and that formal bilingual districts be established in the country. It recommended that the National Capital become officially bilingual at all levels of government and in the private sector. It called upon the federal government to create a Commissioner of Official Languages responsible to Parliament to monitor and report on progress in meeting the specific requirements of official bilingualism.

At approximately the same time provincial leaders in English-speaking Canada were also seen to be opening the door to French-language education in their own

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<sup>235</sup> Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, *The Official Languages* (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1967)

provinces.<sup>236</sup> This became particularly evident in December of 1967 at the Confederation of Tomorrow Conference in Toronto. Chaired by John Robarts, the Premier of Ontario, the conference brought together all of the provincial Premiers (the federal government only sent observers) to explore many of the issues confronting the Canadian Confederation, including what historian Daniel Bourgeois calls “six key sociolinguistic reforms: a charter of language rights, French schools, bilingual court services, coast-to-coast radio and television service for minority French-speaking communities, a bilingual national capital, and bilingual public services.”<sup>237</sup> Premier Robarts had announced a few months earlier “that Ontario had forever abandoned the old 1912 policy of restricting the use of French in provincial schools”<sup>238</sup> He appealed to English-speaking Canadians to “attempt to understand the feelings of French Canada and French Canadians”<sup>239</sup>. He was ready to urge his provincial colleagues to do as much as they could in their jurisdictions. Although Ernest Manning of Alberta still warned about expanding the French language rights, Premier Daniel Johnson of Québec was able to conclude, “English Canadians have learned to be less afraid of equality”<sup>240</sup>. The *Globe and Mail* saw in the Conference a new effort to create a more positive relationship between English-speaking and French-

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<sup>236</sup> Saywell, *Canadian Annual Review 1967*, 91.

<sup>237</sup> Daniel Bourgeois, *The Canadian Bilingual Districts, From Cornerstone to Tombstone*, 17.

<sup>238</sup> A.K.McDougall, *John Robarts: His Life and Government*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1986) 198.

<sup>239</sup> *Ibid*, 199

<sup>240</sup> *Ibid*.

speaking Canadians and an “Emerging will to unity”.<sup>241</sup> The fact that the conference was televised live for all Canadians to follow may have been just as important as its content. It put the Premiers on the national stage and it seemed to favour a constructive engagement on the key issues. The format was so successful that the federal government adopted it for the February 1968 Federal-Provincial Conference on the constitution.

Also during 1967 the federal government began to take more concrete steps to implement bilingualism in the public service. The Cabinet Secretariat was in place and driving change. The Secretary to the Cabinet, Gordon Robertson took several months to live in Québec City to learn French. For him it was both a practical and symbolic commitment.<sup>242</sup> In three months he developed a minimal capacity to converse in French but concluded that he needed more time and that he had started too late. “Fifty is no age to start to learn a language.” Yet this was just what was being asked of many mid-career public servants.

The members of PIPS were finding out that in spite of the exemption for their members announced as part of Prime Minister Pearson’s policy, the new regulations from Treasury Board did not include this exemption. The professional employees were given lower targets to achieve but they were not exempt. In the Report of the Executive Director of PIPS to the Annual General Meeting in November 1967, Leslie Barnes makes his anger

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<sup>241</sup> “Emerging will to unity”, *Globe and Mail*, December 15, 1967, 6.

<sup>242</sup> Gordon Robertson, *Memoirs of a Very Civil Servant*, 236.

about the way that official bilingualism was being implemented very apparent. “It is hard to imagine any policy which would dilute technical and academic quality of the professional public service more rapidly than one which encouraged something akin to mass patronage based on the possession of qualifications largely irrelevant to the tasks to be performed.”<sup>243</sup> In the next five years PIPS would often lead the charge in criticising the implementation of official languages policies.

### **Pierre Trudeau and the Official Languages Act**

In 1968, both English-speaking and French-speaking Canadians were looking for a leader who could square the circle of Canadian unity. The selection of Pierre Trudeau as head of the Liberal Party and Prime Minister was instrumental in the shifting identity of English-speaking Canada. He provided many of the thoughts and words that would express the new Canada. He seemed to be an example of what Canada could be. He arrived in power just when the English-speaking urban elites of Canada were looking for ways to respond to Québec without greatly weakening the federation. Trudeau had entered Parliament in 1965. On the day of his nomination as the Liberal candidate in Mount Royal, he called on Québec to accept “the challenge of living in a pluralistic

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<sup>243</sup> Leslie Barnes, “Executive Director’s Report to the 1967 Annual General Meeting”, November 1, 1967, PIPS Fonds, LAC, MG 28 I 36 Volume 27.

society.”<sup>244</sup> He was known to the intellectual and political elites of English-speaking Canada as a fierce opponent of Québec nationalism and a defender of federalism.

In 1968 a collection of Trudeau’s most important articles on federalism was published in English.<sup>245</sup> It showed that Trudeau believed in a balanced federalism where each level of power stayed out of the areas assigned to the other level. In his 1957 article “Federal Grants to Universities” Trudeau attacked the federal government when it stepped into a field of provincial power.<sup>246</sup> He took on the new Québécois nationalism in his article “The New Treason of the Intellectuals” in 1962.<sup>247</sup> In his 1964 paper presented to the Canadian Political Science Association, “Federalism, Nationalism and Reason” he set out his views of Canadian federalism, praising the rationality of the 1867 constitution, attacking both English-Canadian and French-Canadian brands of ethnic nationalism.<sup>248</sup> Thus, he arrived in power already acknowledged by informed Canadians as a champion of federalism, pluralism and democracy. Before he became Prime Minister in 1968, the Canadian public had the opportunity to watch him defend Canadian federalism and confront Daniel Johnson the Premier of Québec at the February 1968 federal-provincial conference on the constitution. George Radwanski, journalist and biographer of Trudeau,

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<sup>244</sup> Pierre Trudeau quoted in Saywell, *Canadian Annual Review 1965*, 82.

<sup>245</sup> Pierre Trudeau, *Federalism and the French Canadians* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1968)

<sup>246</sup> Ibid, “Federal Grants to Universities”, 79.

<sup>247</sup> Ibid, “New Treason of the Intellectuals” 151.

<sup>248</sup> Ibid, “Federalism, Nationalism, and Reason” 182.

commented that the conference “showcased Trudeau's toughness and eloquence as he clashed with Québec Premier Daniel Johnson over special status for Quebec and the need for a constitutional bill of rights.”<sup>249</sup>

In the general election of 1968 the Liberals ran on the issues of national unity and the constitution but they campaigned on the popularity of Pierre Trudeau. They won 155 out of 264 seats. Except in the Atlantic Provinces, where native son Robert Stanfield led the Progressive Conservatives to large majorities, and in the three Prairie Provinces, Trudeau and the Liberals won big: 56 out of 74 in Québec, 64 out of 87 in Ontario, and 16 out of 26 in British Columbia. It was a victory built on urban voters where the Liberal vote reached 53%, upper and middle income voters (50%) and University graduates (60%).<sup>250</sup> Among French-speaking voters the Liberals won 53% of the vote more than twice the level of their closest rivals. Among English-speaking voters they received 46% of the voters as opposed to 33% for their closest rivals the PCs. It was a mandate that was shaped by the new urban elites of English-speaking Canada who were ready to support a more open, diverse, bilingual and multicultural Canada.

For English-speaking Canadians Trudeau seemed to offer an answer to the unity crisis. He was for bilingualism everywhere in Canada and against any form of special status for Québec. He had great respect for individual liberty and argued convincingly that

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<sup>249</sup> George Radwanski, *Trudeau*, (Toronto: Macmillan 1978), 100.

<sup>250</sup> Saywell, *Canadian Annual Review 1968*, 63-65.

the Constitution of Canada should become the ultimate bulwark in the defence of individual rights by the incorporation a Charter of Rights and Freedoms in the Canadian constitution. In Trudeau's positions and the manner in which he argued them, many English-speaking Canadians saw a way out of the endless debate about what Québec wanted and toward a more open and generous view of Canada. As Kenneth McRoberts argues in his book, *English Canada and Quebec*, English-speaking Canadians were led by Pierre Trudeau to reject any concept of a Canada divided on linguistic lines. Instead they bought into a vision of Canada based on four principles: official bilingualism, a Charter of Rights, multiculturalism and the equality of the provinces. "Trudeau closed the door on any plan for Canada that would acknowledge a distinct place for Québec in the constitutional framework."<sup>251</sup> He also convinced many English-speaking Canadians and most provincial premiers that official bilingualism at least at the federal level would be worth the cost.

By the end of the 1960s in all regions of English-speaking Canada there was growing support for French-language education. The old concern that learning a second language might delay other educational achievements was replaced by the idea that bilingualism would enhance overall learning and provide new opportunities.<sup>252</sup> Many

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<sup>251</sup> Kenneth McRoberts, *English Canada and Quebec: Avoiding the Issue* (Toronto: Robarts Centre for Canadian Studies, 1991).

<sup>252</sup>RCBB, "Draft of Chapter One: Second Language Education", RCBB Fonds, LAC, RG33/80 Box 149, 6-8. Concerns about the harmful impacts of bilingualism on learning were still heard by the Royal Commission during its hearings in 1964-65. Bilingualism was cited as a cause of personality disorder. It was claimed that "no bilingual state ever became great" and that the learning of French would "increase the

English-speaking Canadians were lobbying their provincial governments for more and better French second-language courses in public schools.

Matthew Hayday in *Bilingual Today, United Tomorrow* describes both the process of change by which Canada arrived at official language education rights for all Canadians and the key contribution that this change had in the Canadian unity debate.<sup>253</sup> By the 1970s the educated, middle-class urban elites in English-speaking Canada demanded more and better French second-language schooling for their children. They lined up to enroll their children in French immersion which Matthew Hayday identifies as perhaps the most popular (program funded in part by the federal government) and with the most impressive growth rates.<sup>254</sup> He says, “English speakers seem to take it for granted that knowing the second language would both destroy prejudice and pay a compliment...”<sup>255</sup> It was also a way to ensure that their children could still have access to the bilingual jobs in the federal public service. In this way the policy of official bilingualism in the federal civil service supported the general acceptance of bilingual

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effectiveness of Roman Catholic propaganda”. Happily these views were balanced by other Canadians at the hearings.

<sup>253</sup> Matthew Hayday, *Bilingual Today, United Tomorrow*.

<sup>254</sup> *Ibid*, 147. By the 1980s the ongoing support of concerned parents in English-speaking Canada had transformed immersion education into an elite education system that further expanded its popularity.

<sup>255</sup> RCBB, “Draft Chapter One on Second Language Education”, (Library and Archives Canada RG33/80 Box 149), 2.

among English-speaking Canadians by providing a clear economic motive to learn French.<sup>256</sup>

At the same time, French-speaking minority communities were starting to realise that ‘bilingual schools’ did not meet their needs. They increasingly insisted that only French-language schools would allow them to survive and grow as French-speaking communities. The federal government began to provide financial assistance to provinces to expand schools for minority language students. Although it required another decade to guarantee the right of minorities to education in French and English across Canada in the Constitution, by 1970 the conceptual framework for the solution was in place and largely accepted by the leaders of English-speaking Canada. For example, in Ontario, where some opposition to French-language education for minorities had persisted throughout the 1960s, the issue was largely resolved by 1972. In that year, Tom Symons (the same man described in Chapter Two who had been chosen in 1964 to help André Laurendeau understand the perspective of British Canada), as the sole Commissioner asked to advise the Ontario Ministry of Education on French Language Secondary Education, could write without controversy in his report, “...it is the view of the Commission that there is now general acceptance amongst Ontarians of the principle that English-speaking and French-

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<sup>256</sup> There are few clear ways to gauge the motivations of English-speaking Canadians that drove the popularity of French Immersion. In 1993, James Shea, the Executive Director of Canadian Parents for French (CPF) reported on a survey conducted by the polling firm Compas Canada for CPF on the reasons for choosing French Immersion. Thirty-six percent said it was because Canada was a bilingual country and twenty-six percent said it would improve employment prospects. James Shea, “Canada’s Education Revolution in its Second Generation: French-Second-Language Education on the 40th anniversary of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism.” Internal publication of Canadian Parents for French-Ottawa. 2003.

speaking Canadians have a right to education in their own tongue.”<sup>257</sup> These were not ephemeral changes. The challenge of Québécois nationalism, the passing of the old British-Canadian model and successive Liberal Governments’ vision of a bilingual and multicultural Canada gave English-speaking Canada both the impetus and the direction for change. French language education for minority communities was accepted as right, just and reasonable. French-second language education for the children of English-speaking Canadians was a way to contribute to Canadian unity and to have better access to jobs in the federal public service.

If advances of French in the education system were encouraging to the development of widely based bilingualism in Canada, some other factors indicated that resistance still remained in many quarters. At the February 1968 Federal-Provincial Conference on the Constitution, Premier Robarts of Ontario seemed to commit his province to bilingualism in the provincial legislature. There was a very negative reaction in many parts of Ontario and Robarts was forced to back down.<sup>258</sup> In Moncton the rise of a French language university and the growing importance of French-speaking Acadians in the economy and politics of the city produced a defiant reaction from Mayor Leonard Jones and the English-speaking community who resisted all attempts to make the City of Moncton bilingual. The City of Ottawa refused to endorse official bilingualism and took

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<sup>257</sup> T.H.B. Symons, *The Ministerial Commission on French Language Secondary Education*, (Toronto: The Queen’s Printer 1972) 3.

<sup>258</sup> Saywell, *Canadian Annual Review 1968*, 116.

until 1970 to produce its first policy on service in French. Clearly, bilingualism was still contested in parts of English-speaking Canada. The same was increasingly true in Québec where measures were already being proposed to limit the access of French-speaking Québécois to bilingual or English language education.

### **The Official Languages Act**

The implementation of bilingualism in the public service accelerated under the Liberal Government of Pierre Trudeau. Gordon Robertson notes in his memoirs that Trudeau had been offended by the English-language dominance in the federal administration when he first worked in the Privy Council Office in 1949, and that he found the situation almost unchanged when he became Prime Minister in 1968.<sup>259</sup> Robertson then notes the personal role played by the Trudeau in developing “a text that would eventually become the Official Languages Act, and would produce a veritable revolution within the federal public service”.<sup>260</sup> Gérard Pelletier, Secretary of State in the Trudeau Government was charged with the drafting of the Act. He expected that it would provoke strong opposition, “Nous savions aussi que le texte juridique à produire, ..., provoquerait fatalement à travers le pays, surtout chez les politiciens, des résistances

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<sup>259</sup> Robertson, *Memoirs of a Very Civil Servant*, 259.

<sup>260</sup> Ibid.

féroces.”<sup>261</sup> As he drafted the legislation Pelletier came face to face with the essential dilemma that had led Pearson to his unfortunate pledge. “Tout en rendant aux francophones la place qui leur revenait, il ne fallait en rien réduire celles des Anglophones qui avaient occupé jusqu’alors la quasi totalité du terrain. On n’était pas loin de la quadrature du cercle.”<sup>262</sup> Pelletier crafted the new Act to take account of the reality in the public service but he was unwilling to compromise on the need to put English-speaking and French-speaking Canadians on an equal footing both as recipients of government services and as employees in the federal government. His success in developing the Official Languages Act would be revealed in the generally positive reception the Act received as it passed through Parliament.

The Official Languages Act repeated much of the bilingualism policy of the Pearson government but gave it the power and the prestige of Parliamentary approval. It specified that all Canadians would be served by the Government of Canada in the official language of their choice and that both languages could be used equally in the internal affairs of all federal institutions. Federal signage, letterhead and publications would be in both official languages. Federal court decisions would be published in both official languages.

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<sup>261</sup> Gérard Pelletier, *L’Aventure du Pouvoir* (Montréal: Stanké, 1992.), 63.

<sup>262</sup> *Ibid*, 66.

In several places the Act went beyond the Pearson policy, picking up recommendations from the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism. The Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages was created as an independent officer of Parliament to ensure that the law would be applied as intended and to receive and act upon any complaints from the public about the application of the law. The Act also adopted the principle of bilingual districts across the country and a process was put in place to determine the boundaries of these districts along the lines recommended by the RCBB. Unfortunately, the concept very quickly fell prey to the impossible task of drawing lines between ‘bilingual districts’ and their unilingual neighbours. This was the principal part of the Act that was attacked by the official opposition in the debate in the House of Commons.<sup>263</sup> In fact Pelletier had anticipated these objections and had offered to drop the idea of bilingual districts from the Act in his opening speech in the House, if the opposition could come up with a better idea.<sup>264</sup> The concept of bilingual districts, as proposed by the RCBB, depended upon Federal-Provincial agreement on the determination of the boundaries of these districts. From the outset many provinces and many Canadians opposed this idea. Without provincial support and facing its own internal debates about the boundaries of bilingual districts the federal government eventually abandoned this approach for a much more fluid commitment to provide bilingual services wherever numbers justified it. In the end the absence of the bilingual districts projected a

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<sup>263</sup> Bourgeois, *The Canadian Bilingual Districts*, 32.

<sup>264</sup> *Ibid*, 67.

vision of a Canada where citizens could be served in the official language of their choice anywhere in the country. It may be, as Michael Behiels suggested, no accident that this model was much more consistent with Pierre Trudeau's reluctance to associate language communities and specific territorial boundaries.<sup>265</sup>

The Official Languages Act was broadly welcomed by all political parties in Ottawa. Canadian public opinion as measured in a Gallop poll showed that 70% of Canadians were in favour of the legislation although English-speaking Canada was more evenly split.<sup>266</sup> Under Robert Stanfield the Progressive Conservative Party had dropped its opposition to bilingualism and Stanfield managed to quell any latent opposition that probably still existed in the Tory backbenches. As Gordon Robertson recalled, "There was none of the emotional or strident opposition to it that had characterised the debate over the Canadian flag."<sup>267</sup> The emergence of this new national consensus around bilingualism would affect not only the general public, but also the debate within the public service. By 1968 there were no responsible voices in Parliament or the public service saying that English should be the only working language in the federal public service. But there still were vitriolic voices of dissent in the general public. Judge Thorton, a former Liberal MP and Cabinet Minister organised the Single Canada League in 1969 and made a tour of Canada opposing the Official Languages Act. People sympathetic to his views were

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<sup>265</sup> Behiels, "Contested Ground", 65.

<sup>266</sup> Bourgeois, *Canadian Bilingual Districts*. 69.

<sup>267</sup> Robertson, *Memoirs of a Very Civil Servant*, 260.

encouraged to write to their MPs and many did, but the moderate leadership of Robert Stanfield and pressing arguments of national unity were enough to outweigh these negative views for most MPs.<sup>268</sup> In the end, a large majority (197) of MPs from all parties voted for the Act; only a handful (17) voted against it.

To support such a major program of cultural change the government should have mounted a sustained public relations and information effort to inform the public and the public service about its plans and their expected impacts. During the debate on the Official Languages Act, Tommy Douglas, the leader of the New Democratic Party, had expressed concern about the failure of the Government to explain its new law to the Canadian public. “In many areas of the country this legislation (The Official Languages Act) is misunderstood and unfortunately in some cases misrepresented. The Government ought to be trying to do a selling job. There has been a breakdown in communications between the government and the people...”<sup>269</sup> The most obvious and persistent misunderstanding held that the Official Languages Act would oblige every Canadian to become bilingual. Trudeau and Pelletier tried to deny this claim but no English-speaking Ministers managed to deliver this message in a convincing way. The law was opposed by several strong voices outside Parliament. Premier Manning of Alberta worried that “The Canadian public service will be turned over, primarily to the French Canadian

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<sup>268</sup> Marcel Martel and Martin Pâquet, *Speaking Up, A History of Language and Politics in Canada and Québec* (Toronto: Between the Lines Press, 2012.), 150.

<sup>269</sup> T.C. Douglas, *Commons Debates 28<sup>th</sup> Parliament 1<sup>st</sup> Session Volume X July 4, 1969* (Ottawa: Queen's Printer 1969), 10849.

minority.”<sup>270</sup> The Professional Institute expressed its concern that there would be a presumptive preference for bilingualism over other qualifications.<sup>271</sup> At times the concerns within the public service were echoed, even amplified, in the media. On November 16, 1968 just as the debate over the Official Languages Act was beginning, *The Hamilton Spectator*, which had often spoken out against the dangers of bilingualism, published a long article which was clipped and stored in the PIPS files. The article claimed that “bilingualism begins to haunt the civil service”. It noted that many key people were away on language training, often against their will; the programs in support of bilingualism are enormously expensive; training is successful in less than 10% of the cases; merit is being sacrificed, and “the careers of English-speaking public servants are suffering.”<sup>272</sup> In the face of these expressions of concern the government should have sent out its English-speaking Ministers to explain and defend the act. There is no evidence that they did this in a systematic way. Only John Turner, Minister of Justice and an MP for an Ottawa area riding, seems to have spoken out. It was as though the government was hoping that the Royal Commission would handle the public relations for the policy.

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<sup>270</sup> Ibid, *The Canadian Annual Review 1968*, 84.

<sup>271</sup> Ibid.

<sup>272</sup> *The Hamilton Spectator*; November 16, 1968, PIPS Fonds, LAC, MG28 I 36 Box 2.

### **Volume Three of the Royal Commission Report**

In 1969, the Royal Commission tabled Volume Three of its final report with 41 recommendations concerning bilingualism and biculturalism in the federal administration, including the public service, Crown Corporations and the military.<sup>273</sup> The analysis exposed again the remarkable English-speaking bias in the federal administration and pointed out that it had continued even during the early reforms of the Pearson Government. “Everywhere in the Public Service there is great concern for recruiting Francophones, but the desire seems to be for men that fit easily into the existing structure.”<sup>274</sup> The RCBB recommendations touched almost every aspect of organization and staffing in the Public Service. The Commission recommended creating French Language Units and clusters in every department. It recommended that senior posts be balanced between French and English. It called for all task forces to have balanced French and English representation, and for all official communications from management to employees be in both languages. It asked that second-language training be accelerated and focused on ‘receptive knowledge’ (that is the ability to understand the second language in written and spoken form). It recommended that Departments stop the routine practice of translating into English every communication received in French. Other recommendations touched on creating a bilingual glossary of key terms, enhancing recruitment from other French-speaking countries, the rotation of employees to enhance their language skills and

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<sup>273</sup> Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, *The Work World* (Ottawa: Queen’s Printer, 1969).

<sup>274</sup> *Ibid*, 259.

the creation of a Public Service Language Authority and a Commissioner of Official Languages to report to Parliament on the implementation of the Act. This scattering of recommendations not only arrived after the government had made most of its policy decisions about how it would implement official languages policy, it failed to reflect any deep knowledge of how cultural change occurs in large organisations.

On June 23, Prime Minister Trudeau responded in the House of Commons to Volume Three of the RCBB report with a restatement of the bilingualism policy of the Government<sup>275</sup> In his speech the Prime Minister noted that the Official Languages Act had already responded to many of the recommendations of the Royal Commission and he confirmed the determination of his Government to meet the bilingualism targets first set by Prime Minister Pearson in 1966.<sup>276</sup> He made it clear that the government wanted more rapid progress in the implementation of official bilingualism. The Prime Minister set out a plan to accelerate the process by announcing a trial program of French Language Units in several departments as had been proposed by the Royal Commission. French Language Units were to be staffed fully by French-speaking and bilingual employees and were expected to conduct all of their work in French. They were in direct reaction to the commonplace observation that even when only a few unilingual English-speaking employees remained in a work unit, the language and culture of that group continued to

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<sup>275</sup> Pierre Trudeau, *Commons Debates 28<sup>th</sup> Parliament 2<sup>nd</sup> Session Volume VIII, June 23, 1970* (Ottawa: Queen's Printer 1970) 8487-95.

<sup>276</sup> *Ibid*, 8487.

be English. Mr. Trudeau set out four objectives for the French Language Units: to reinforce French as a language of work, to help in the recruitment of French-speaking staff, to support English-speaking public servants who have become bilingual and to make possible a greater level of individual bilingualism at senior levels. Treasury Board was named to coordinate this project and departments were asked to identify at least one work group that could be converted to a French Language Unit. In his response to Trudeau's statement Robert Stanfield expressed general support for the policies and the new French Language Units but warned that the real challenges lay in the way the initiatives were implemented.<sup>277</sup> Staff associations were consulted in advance on this project and PIPS offered conditional support for a few French Language Units, as long as there would be a careful evaluation of the total impact of the experiment before any large scale policy was adopted.<sup>278</sup>

From the beginning, the French Language Units were a cause of concern to some. *The Globe and Mail* called them "a foolish retreat into unilingualism" and claimed that they would undermine the growing sympathy in English-speaking Canada for bilingualism.<sup>279</sup> In the end the experiment was not popular with either French-speaking or English-speaking public servants and the government ended the experiment after a couple of years. However, the French Language Units did help departments to pursue their own

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<sup>277</sup> Robert Stanfield, *Commons Debates 28<sup>th</sup> Parliament 2<sup>nd</sup> Session Volume VII, June 23, 1970* (Ottawa: Queen's Printer 1970), 8492-3.

<sup>278</sup> PIPS, "Institute Briefings, July 1970," PIPS Fonds, LAC, MG28 I 36 Volume 22.

<sup>279</sup> "French Language Units", *Globe and Mail*, December 18, 1969, 5.

initiatives to become more receptive to French-speaking employees and their culture. In a much more informal way, certain departments and branches within departments gradually tended to become predominantly French-speaking. The Department of the Secretary of State, CIDA, and parts of External Affairs became places where French was the first language of work. DND and the Armed Forces made remarkable progress in this time toward real bilingualism. This progress coincided with the presence of Paul Hellyer as Minister of National Defense and the nomination of J.V. Allard, the first French-speaking officer to become Chief of Defense Staff. As Pariseau and Bernier document in their history of bilingualism in the Canadian Armed Forces this was a time of great change: “Un Canadien français, le général Jean V. Allard, accede au poste de Chef de l’état-major de la Défense en 1966. Jusqu’à son départ en 1969, il fera de la question francophone un dossier prioritaire, avançant sur tout les fronts..”<sup>280</sup> The success in these few areas illustrates how progress continued throughout the 1960s even in the face of some resistance and setbacks.

Prime Minister Trudeau's statement to the House in June 1970 was a rather low key and technical response to the recommendations in the Royal Commission Report. Nowhere did the Prime Minister discuss the success of measures taken to date or the concerns that were arising, both from French-speaking Canadians who found the

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<sup>280</sup> Pariseau et Bernier, *Les canadiens français et le bilinguisme dans les Forces armées canadienne Tome II, 1969-1987*, 5.

implementation far too slow and from English-speaking public servants alarmed about impacts on their careers. From 1968 to 1972 the government tried to accelerate the transition to a bilingual public service. In a 1968 article in *Canadian Public Service*, Sylvain Cloutier, Deputy Secretary of the Treasury Board, outlined the ongoing pressure to implement bilingualism in the public service. He explained that there was still a long way to go. Only 15% of Senior Executives were French-speaking. Most English-speaking public servants had no capacity in French.<sup>281</sup> He argued that the public service needed to go beyond proportional representation to reach a point where both cultures would function equally in the public service. “Bilingualism is a prerequisite but it is not enough.”<sup>282</sup> To meet these expectations language training was expanded, translation services were improved, the application of bilingual qualifications to the merit system was refined, special recruitment of bilingual staff was accelerated and the number of classified bilingual positions was expanded.

### **The Professional Institute Stiffens its Opposition**

Throughout this period the Professional Institute of the Public Service maintained that it supported official bilingualism in principle but objected with increasing frequency to the way that the policy was being interpreted and implemented. PIPS’

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<sup>281</sup> Sylvain Cloutier, “Bilingualism biculturalism and Senior Public Servants,” in W.D.K. Kernaghan ed. *Bureaucracy in Canada* (Toronto: Methuen 1969), 39.

<sup>282</sup> Ibid, 34.

Executive Director lobbied both the government and the opposition against elements of the official languages program inside the public service. On January 19, 1968 he wrote to Robert Stanfield, the Leader of the Opposition, to outline two broad failures of the government. It was not protecting the careers of English-speaking public servants, and no special arrangements had been made for the technical, professional and scientific professional within the public service.<sup>283</sup> PIPS also attacked publicly the approach taken by the Public Service Commission (PSC) in applying bilingualism to the merit principle.<sup>284</sup>

As part of the Pearson policies to implement official bilingualism the PSC had decided that bilingualism was a quality that conferred a benefit to the public service as a whole and that 10 points out of 100 would be accorded to proven bilingual candidates for any competition within the National Capital Region, whether or not the specific position they were competing for required the use of both official languages. In practical terms this gave an advantage to French-speaking Canadians who made up the bulk of the bilingual population. The government defended the approach for several years but never enunciated a clear reason why bilingualism should be a factor in appointments to unilingual positions. PIPS took a lead role in opposing this policy.<sup>285</sup> It pointed out that even if the practice targeted only positions in Ottawa, it affected employees everywhere in the

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<sup>283</sup> Leslie Barnes, "Letter to the Honourable Robert Stanfield", January 14, 1969, PIPS Fonds , LAC, MG28 I 36, Box 1.

<sup>284</sup> PIPS, "News Bulletin Number 4, October 16, 1969," PIPS Fonds, LAC, MG28 I 36 Volume 22.

<sup>285</sup> Ibid.

country who might like to apply for the positions in question. Leslie Barnes recounted how a unilingual scientist in Calgary competing for a promotion in Ottawa could lose out to someone with less professional expertise and experience if the points awarded for bilingualism were enough to overcome an advantage in professional skill and experience. He also noted that the scientist in Calgary would be doubly penalized because it was very unlikely that he could get access to adequate language training in his home location. Barnes also took his views to scientific audiences outside of the public service. In an interview reported in *Chemistry in Canada* Barnes again attacked this practice, “To camouflage this procedure under the name of the merit system strains the accepted meaning of this term beyond the limits of credibility.”<sup>286</sup>

In October 1969 the government gave in to the concerns of English-speaking public servants and stopped awarding points for bilingualism in competitions for unilingual positions. PIPS issued a news bulletin on October 16 welcoming the new rules and reiterating its general support for bilingualism. “The new approach will enhance the career potential for professional employees while at the same time enabling public servants to serve the citizens of Canada in both languages.”<sup>287</sup> The *Ottawa Citizen* also

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<sup>286</sup> Leslie Barnes. “Interview in *Chemistry in Canada*”, PIPS Fonds, LAC, MG28 I36 Box 1.

<sup>287</sup> PIPS, “Press Release, October 9, 1969”, PIPS Fonds, LAC, MG28 I36 Box 1.

welcomed the changes. “Bilingualism is not, as it often seemed in the past, to be the only key to promotion and success. Merit and achievement have been restored.”<sup>288</sup>

The outcome of this contest of wills in which PIPS and other staff associations managed to get the government to back down was a turning point in the way that official bilingualism would be shaped in the public service. The government did have a logical argument behind the priority it gave to awarding merit points for bilingualism on every competition. It sent a clear message that the public service as a whole would benefit from the effort to increase bilingualism and it sent a message to all young Canadians that bilingualism would be considered an asset in seeking any job in the federal public service. By giving it up, the government was tacitly accepting a case by case approach to bilingualism where the need for competency in both languages would have to be demonstrated every time a position was classified. At the very least this slowed down the progress of bilingualism, at worst it ghettoised it.

As the federal public service struggled to implement bilingualism, the City of Ottawa was under pressure to play its part in making the national capital more welcoming to French-speaking Canadians. John Turner, the Minister of Justice, spoke to the Kiwanis Club of Ottawa on December 13, 1968 about the role of the nation’s capital in the bilingualism agenda and more specifically about bilingualism in the federal public service. Turner touched on the reasons why the capital should be bilingual, and the need

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<sup>288</sup> *Ottawa Citizen*, October 10, 1969 Editorial (PIPS, LAC), MG28 I36 Box 1. The selection of articles by PIPS is in itself interesting and confirms that the bilingualism file was being followed closely.

for vigorous programs to enhance bilingualism in the public service. In one sentence he managed to threaten both the City and the public service about the consequences if bilingualism did not succeed. “The proposition can be brutally stated. No bilingualism-no country; no country-no capital; no capital-no Ottawa.”<sup>289</sup> Although the speech seemed to acknowledge the difficulty for mid-career public servants to acquire a second language it offered only more training as a solution. Turner did suggest that the bilingualism targets for 1970 and 1975 might be unattainable but he reassured his audience that individual public servants would be given every chance to become bilingual “there is no question here of imposing a process without due regard for the opportunities available and the problems involved in acquiring such proficiency.” He then emphasized the promise of gradual implementation, but said that this did not mean backing off from the objective. The policy he said “will be pursued vigorously.”<sup>290</sup> At least Turner tried to face the issues and to ‘sell’ the policy. For the most part the Government made its statements in the House and failed to go out to the country to explain and defend its approach.

### **Growing Political Opposition to the Implementation of Bilingualism**

From 1968 to 1972, the opposition to bilingualism in the public service became more politicized, especially in the National Capital Region. PIPS and other organizations

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<sup>289</sup> John Turner, “Ottawa-Example for a Nation, December 13, 1968,” Text of speech to the Ottawa Kiwanis Club, PIPS Fonds, LAC, MG28 I36 Box 1, 5.

<sup>290</sup> Ibid, 9.

representing public servants worked directly with local MPs who were ready to make the case for English-speaking public servants who felt wronged. Several Ottawa area MPs played a lead role on the issue. One of the most outspoken was Almonte Alkenbrack, Progressive Conservative MP for Frontenac-Lennox and Addington. Gordon Blair, Liberal MP for Grenville-Carleton an Ottawa area riding, worked closely with the English-speaking public servants to understand their concerns as did Lloyd Francis the Liberal MP for Ottawa West.

Former Prime Minister Pearson spoke again on the topic of official bilingualism in 1969, about a year after his retirement. In a speech to the Public Service Alliance of Canada he repeated his promise to incumbent public servants in even clearer terms. They “should not have their careers prejudiced in any way... That would be unfair and inadmissible”<sup>291</sup> Such a promise may have been understandable in 1966 but by 1969 it was obvious that the effort required to introduce bilingualism in the National Capital Region over ten years would sometimes have to hurt some unilingual public servants. Training would succeed for some of the affected staff, but for many it would be both hard to access and nearly impossible to complete. The government tended to stand behind the Pearson Pledge even when it knew that it was unrealistic. C.M. Drury, President of the Treasury Board, adopted a more aggressive tone in a presentation on official languages to the House Estimates Committee on March 9, 1971. He reaffirmed the Pearson policy,

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<sup>291</sup> Lester Pearson, “Address to the Public Service Alliance of Canada, January 3, 1969”, PIPS Fonds, LAC, MG28 I36 Box 1.

including the guarantees of protection for unilingual incumbents, but he noted that progress toward bilingualism was much too slow. Then he announced new, more specific and more aggressive targets for the program. By 1975 60% of Executive positions in the public service should be bilingual, 50% of the Administrative and Foreign Service category, 35% of support positions and 15% of the scientific and professional categories. Although this target for the professional public servants appears modest, it still represented a significant change in the English-language dominated fields of science, technology and the professions. Drury concluded that “alarmist rumours about ill considered, premature implementation of bilingualism should be put to rest once and for all”<sup>292</sup>, but his speech only poured oil onto the flames of frustrated English-speaking employees.

In 1970, John Carson, the Chairman of the Public Service Commission, emerged as the leading spokesperson within the public service for the new official languages regime. In a speech to the staffing branch of his own organization, he reminded the audience of the poor record of the federal public service in recruiting and retaining French-speaking staff. He noted that language training can help to answer the need for bilingualism “but only hiring can move the public service toward biculturalism.”<sup>293</sup> To the Federal Institute of Management, Carson reported some “progress toward fulfilling

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<sup>292</sup> Charles M. Drury, Statement to House Committee on Government Operations March 9, 1971. Found in the PIPS Fonds, LAC, MG28 I36 Box 1.

<sup>293</sup> John Carson, “Speech given March 9, 1970 to PSC employees”, PIPS Fonds, LAC, MG28 I36 Box 1.

the objective of creating a functionally bilingual public service by the year 1975” but then he went on to attack those who were criticizing the special program to attract French-speaking university graduates to the federal public service.<sup>294</sup> Two hundred and seventy-six positions in the Administrative Trainee Program were earmarked for the targeted recruitment of French-speaking graduates of Canadian universities. It was a small number related to the overall hiring of the public service but it had been attacked as an outright violation of the merit principle. Carson responded to these attackers, “I am disheartened that there are those, whether motivated by prejudice or expediency, who would use gross misrepresentations of fact in order to discredit what has been a measurably successful program”.<sup>295</sup> He went on to defend the targeted recruitment as a necessary and small step to help French-speaking Canadians to catch up after decades of discrimination. In June 1972, Carson returned to the same theme before a larger audience, the Public Personnel Association. This time he responded directly to public service complaints that French-speaking Canadians were being favoured unduly under the new language policies. He pointed to the traditional under-representation of French-speaking Canadians in the Public Service of Canada and noted that, even in 1971 under the new rules, most appointments still went to positions identified as ‘English-essential’. Out of 66,000 appointments by the PSC in 1971, 8% were for French-essential positions, 9% for bilingual positions and 83%

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<sup>294</sup> John Carson, “Speech given January 25, 1972 to FIM”, PIPS Fonds, LAC, MG28 I36 Box 1.

<sup>295</sup> Ibid.

for English-essential positions. It was, he said, “not good enough”.<sup>296</sup> Carson was never shy to remind English-speaking Canadians and public servants of the generations of French-speaking Canadians who had been essentially excluded from the public service of their own government. He made it clear in his speeches that the public service had systemically discriminated against French-speaking Canadians. “Anglophones became a disproportionate majority because the selection process was primarily designed, and carried out according to the language and cultural values of English-speaking Canadians.”<sup>297</sup> He defended the new policies as the best means “to help redress what we believe has been a longstanding weakness in the application of the merit system.”<sup>298</sup> Carson may have been right, but lecturing public servants about the errors of the past gave little comfort to those who felt wronged in the present. Neither Carson nor leading members of the Government ever acknowledged the legitimate pain and frustration felt by many English-speaking public servants. In fact, Carson was once quoted in the *Globe and Mail* as saying “Many individuals are using bilingualism to hide their own inadequacies or to explain away their own failures.”<sup>299</sup> This was probably true in some cases but it hardly helped public servants to believe that their concerns would be heard fairly by the Public Service Commission that was the body responsible for all hiring decisions in the federal government.

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<sup>296</sup> John Carson, “Speech given June 1, 1972 to PPA”, PIPS Fonds, LAC, MG28 I36 Box 1.

<sup>297</sup> John Carson, “Statement Released, March 22, 1971”, PIPS Fonds, LAC, MG28 I36 Box 1.

<sup>298</sup> Ibid.

<sup>299</sup> *Globe and Mail*, July 5, 1969, PIPS Fonds, LAC, MG28 I 36 Box 2.

John Carson was willing to go beyond the argument of national unity to justify the policy. He was talked about past unfairness to justify special measures to recruit French-speaking graduates into the federal public service. He explained how and why earlier generations of leaders in the public service had not acted in a way that would have produced cultural equity in the public service. The government does not seem to have picked up these arguments. When the Prime Minister or Ministers spoke on this file they generally ignored these arguments and moved straight to the big stick of national unity. It was, in one way, an effective approach in rallying political support for official bilingualism, but it left no sustaining motivation when the unity crisis seemed to recede from the front pages of the national media.

The actual results of the new programs cited by John Carson may not have been good enough for him or the Trudeau Government but they were too much for many English-speaking public servants and their staff associations. Almonte Alkenbrack, Conservative MP from Frontenac-Lennox and Addington, west of Ottawa, continued to be outspoken in his criticisms of the way the bilingualism policy was being implemented. In February of 1972, with the House of Commons in a pre-electoral mood, he summed up the case of the disgruntled English-speaking Canadians in the public service. He cloaked his statement in the language of concern for Canada “because I am afraid for the future of Canada. I do not want the backlash from English Canada to cancel the progress made

over the past 100 years in furthering French-English relations in our country.”<sup>300</sup> Then he set out a striking polemic about current injustices to English-speaking employees in the public service. He said that the Secretary of State (Gérard Pelletier) and the President of the Public Service Commission (John Carson) “are destroying the morale and efficiency of the public service --- careers were being ruined in spite of the Pearson Pledge”. He claimed that personnel departments are “packed with French Canadians”. Official bilingualism has become nothing but “outright French-Canadianism”.<sup>301</sup> His views reflected the fears and concerns of many public servants who had accepted bilingualism based on the “Pearson Pledge” and now found that their careers were being affected.

In 1969 the government had appointed the first Commissioner of Official Languages, Keith Spicer. He had begun to organise his office and to reach out to Canadians to inform them about their right to be served in either official language. He made a major effort to convince English-speaking Canadians that official bilingualism in the federal government was a worthy investment. Unfortunately, he did not focus his attention on the issues surrounding the ‘internal’ aspects of making the public service effectively bilingual. In fact the Department of the Secretary of State resisted any attempt by Spicer to go in this direction. In 1970 J.E Fordyce, one of Spicer’s senior advisors noted that Max Yalden, Assistant-undersecretary of State and responsible for managing the government wide programs that implemented official bilingualism, “a exprimé des

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<sup>300</sup> Almonte Alkenbrack, *Commons Debates 28<sup>th</sup> Parliament 4<sup>th</sup> Session Vol 1*, February 28, 1972. 317-21.

<sup>301</sup> Ibid.

doutes au sujet de notre mandat sur le bilinguisme interne de la fonction publique” and Fordyce recommended that at least for the time being the Commissioner not look at this aspect of the Official Languages Act.<sup>302</sup> As a result, during a critical period in the implementation of official bilingualism inside the public service Parliament received no independent advice of the work of the government.

The tone of the debate in the public service was noted by the *Toronto Star* on February 13, 1971. “The Francophobes are all over the capital --- in Parliament, in the public service unions, scattered through the management levels of the public service --- and their efforts have assured that progress has been painfully slow.”<sup>303</sup> Not surprisingly this opposition to bilingualism provoked a response from French-speaking MPs. Gaston Labelle, MP for Hull called the opponents of bilingualism anti-French bigots, “an especially virulent strain of that bigotry appears to flourish in the Ottawa Valley.”<sup>304</sup> In January 1972, John Turner jumped back into the debate to defend the bilingualism program. He denied that the public service had become a haven for French-speaking Canadians citing the fact that more than 85% of executives in the public service were still English-speaking. “The facts do not bear out the fears.” Then he returned to a more

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<sup>302</sup> J.E. Fordyce, “Internal Report of the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages, May, 1970”. LAC RG122.

<sup>303</sup> *Toronto Star*, February 13, 1971, PIPS Fonds, LAC, MG28 I 36 Box 2.

<sup>304</sup> *Ibid.*

lecturing tone: “the establishment of bilingualism, especially in the national capital area must be accepted by Canadians as an option for unity.”<sup>305</sup>

In the Liberal caucus, concern was growing about the way in which official bilingualism was being perceived and presented within the public service. In July 1970, Lloyd Francis asked publicly for the government to protect the careers of English-speaking public servants. He was quoted expressing his concern in the *Ottawa Citizen* “...it appeared that many English-speaking persons were being harmed by implementation of the Official Languages Act.”<sup>306</sup> Just a few months before Gordon Blair, Liberal MP for Grenville-Carleton, spoke in the House about the position of English-speaking public servants on the issue of bilingualism. He was encouraged by the fact that there no longer seemed to be any formal opposition to the principle of bilingualism but he was disturbed by the new, “reasoned concerns about the failure to respect the Pearson Pledge”<sup>307</sup> By May 1971, Blair felt that his warnings to the government were not being heard so he took the rather unusual step of issuing a press release to underline his concerns. He said that there was still widespread support for the principle of a bilingual public service but that he was concerned that the government was not responding to fears and concerns of public servants and the public about how the program was being rolled

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<sup>305</sup> *Ottawa Citizen*, January 27, 1972, PIPS Fonds, LAC, MG28 I 36 Box 2.

<sup>306</sup> *Ottawa Citizen*, July 17, 1970, PIPS Fonds, LAC, MG28 I 36 Box 2.

<sup>307</sup> Gordon Blair, *Commons Debates 28<sup>th</sup> Parliament 1<sup>st</sup> Session Volume X*, July 4, 1969. 10857.

out.<sup>308</sup> Soon after that, Blair began to work with Leslie Barnes of PIPS to gain a better understanding of the impact of the policy on English-speaking public servants. He wanted to get specific evidence that careers of public servants were being damaged so that he could try to convince the government to modify its implementation approach. Barnes asked his members to provide the needed evidence. He sent some of his results to Blair in a letter on January 13, 1972. He first explained how hard it was to demonstrate conclusively that a candidate has been hurt by his language qualifications, but he presented two recent cases where “the careers of two professional public servants were adversely affected by the unilateral introduction of a bilingual requirement into a key position in their normal promotional path.”<sup>309</sup> This is a surprisingly small number and was hardly a surprising impact given the degree of cultural change that the government was attempting to implement in the public service. It was natural that established careers, built around a certain set of expectations, would be affected when those expectations were changed. The real problems were the promise that the Government had made to protect those established public servants and the failure to acknowledge that such adverse effects were being felt by many English-speaking public servants.

Although the government made minor adjustments to its bilingualism program in 1971 and 1972, it essentially stuck to its plans. It had been warned by the Ottawa area MPs that voters in their ridings were very unhappy about the program, but the

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<sup>308</sup> Gordon Blair, “Text of Press Release, May 21, 1971”, PIPS Fonds, LAC, MG28 I36 Box 1.

<sup>309</sup> Leslie Barnes, “Letter to Gordon Blair, January 13, 1972,” PIPS Fonds, LAC, MG28 I36 Box 1.

government continued to insist that national unity depended on the successful and vigorous implementation of bilingualism in the public service, especially in the National Capital Region. In the October 1972 general election the voters in the Ottawa area sent a signal of their dissatisfaction to the Government. In his analysis of the election results in the *Canadian Annual Review 1972* John Saywell suggested that most of the swing away from the Liberal Party could be accounted for by the general dissatisfaction with the government, but in Ottawa he noted that “Conservative victories in two heavily civil service constituencies in the Ottawa area confirmed the unease with the government’s bilingualism program.”<sup>310</sup> In the aftermath of the election, which left the Liberal Party with a minority government, it was clear that the government shared this view. By the end of the year it had moved to water down the implementation plans for the bilingualism policy. C.M. Drury, President of the Treasury Board, announced several changes to the plans on December 15, 1972. The target date for implementation would be pushed back three years to 1978, civil servants with ten years’ experience would be allowed access to competitions for bilingual posts, but “there was no backing away from the Official Languages Act which Mr. Trudeau described as ‘something absolutely fundamental to our approach to national unity’”<sup>311</sup>

In the 1960s the Public Service of Canada became the main focus of government action to establish bilingualism as a practical reality in Canada. The

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<sup>310</sup> Saywell, *Canadian Annual Review 1972*, 74.

<sup>311</sup> *Ibid*, 83.

government was driven by the national unity crisis and it accepted the message clearly underlined by the research for the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism that generations of French-speaking Canadians had been discriminated against by their own national government. The government set a very tight time frame for change while making impossible promises to English-speaking public servants to protect their careers.

Real progress toward bilingualism was made in the public service in the 1960s. Service to the public in both official languages began to be the norm. The face of the government as seen in federal buildings, letterhead, and publications became balanced in French and English. Thousands of public servants were given language training and some of them emerged with an effective bilingual capacity. The federal public service did hire more French-speaking university graduates, especially those from the minority French-speaking communities.<sup>312</sup> Merit was redefined to include the capacity to work in both official languages, at least in cases where positions were classified as bilingual. More importantly, the old perception of the public service as an English-speaking institution was eroded, even though the dominance of the English language persisted.

Public servants were divided by the implementation of official bilingualism. Almost all accepted the need to enhance service to French-speaking Canadians in their

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<sup>312</sup> Beattie; Désy and Longstaff, *Senior Federal Civil Servants at mid-Career* (Ottawa: Information Canada, 1972). 156. It was noted that even in the mid-1960s the number of Franco-Ontarians in the federal public was about 40% higher than their proportion of the Canadian French-speaking population would warrant.

own language, but many questioned the need to create a culture within the public service where employees could work in the official language of their choice. French-speaking public servants, most of whom were already bilingual, logically supported the changes. Unilingual, English-speaking public servants felt that their careers were threatened by the requirement for bilingualism. The attempts to use training to make mid-career English-speaking public servants bilingual had only very limited success. Some careers were affected, as any reasonable person would have expected, but the Government maintained the pretense of the Pearson Pledge and closed its eyes to the impacts on many individuals. English-speaking public servants resisted the changes. The Professional Institute of the Public Service often led this resistance. In 1972 it was becoming clear that the Public Service would generally meet its requirement to serve the public well in both official languages but that internal management of the public service would be much harder to change.

## **Conclusion**

Bilingualism, as a national policy, was not a significant issue in Canada in 1960. English-speaking Canada thought little about the French-speaking majority in Québec or the French-speaking minority communities scattered across the country. When they did think of them, most English-speaking Canadians would have felt that these communities would just naturally and gradually assimilate into the English-speaking society around them. Where bilingualism did exist, it was largely French-speaking Canadians who learned English. English-speaking Canadians were preoccupied by the decline of the old British-Canada and the threat of Americanisation. Very few English-speaking Canadians had absorbed the notion that closer ties to the French language and culture of Canada might be an effective defense against American cultural dominance. Meanwhile, French-speaking Québécois were starting to question the value of bilingualism. For most ardent nationalists, protection of the French language took precedence over attempts to learn English. For them bilingualism was just another path to assimilation and a federalist strategy to undermine nationalist sentiment in Québec.

One decade later the portrait was vastly changed. The Canadian Government was dedicated to official bilingualism. The Official Languages Act had been passed. French-speaking Canadians were beginning to be able to be served in the official language of their choice by all the departments and agencies of the federal government. More French-speaking Canadians were being hired into the federal administration and firm targets had been set to raise the proportion of French-speaking Canadians in the

public service to the same level that they represented in the total population. Official bilingualism had become a key tool in the efforts to maintain national unity. Most English-speaking Canadians supported this policy.

This change was neither easy, nor complete. It had to begin with deep questioning on the part of English-speaking Canadians about their responsibility for the poor relations with French-speaking Canada. Prime Minister Pearson launched this reflection in December 1962 when he committed his party to improving French-English relations and informed English-speaking Canadians that they bore the brunt of the responsibility for the present problems and would have to make the greatest effort to find a solution. It would take years of debate and a serious national unity crisis before English-speaking Canadians and their leaders would formulate a response to the demand for equality between Canada's two founding cultures.

English-speaking Canada and French-speaking Canada, led by Québec, were on very different trajectories in the first half of the 1960s. Québec was galvanised by a new sense of direction and a new confidence in its capacity to control its own destiny. Québec undertook a rapid and widespread series of reforms that improved education, supported the French language and gave French-speaking Québécois control over large parts of their economy for the first time. These new forces in Québec knew what they wanted and how to get it. They only disagreed on whether or not this could be achieved within Canadian Confederation. Already in 1960 there were outliers in the Québec nationalist movement

who were calling for full independence. By 1970 this position had become a credible, mainstream threat to Canadian unity.

Meanwhile English-speaking Canada was torn ineffectively between the old British tradition, represented by the Progressive Conservative Party and the slow emergence of a new, civic nationalism less attached to British traditions and more open to diversity, represented by the Liberal Party. As the 1960s opened these forces seemed evenly divided. It was only after the flag debate in 1964 that many English-speaking Canadians reluctantly let go of the British tradition and began to accept a new form of national identity. The Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism and the rising demands from Québec forced English-speaking Canadians to focus on the relationship with French-speaking Canadians. In the second half of the 1960s official bilingualism for Canada and particularly for the federal administration would become a key plank in the national unity strategy. At the same time, Canadians of other ethnic backgrounds were insisting that they deserved a respectful place in the cultural portrait of Canada. The Liberal government of Pierre Trudeau would quickly learn to channel this demand into a policy of multiculturalism that would both enhance the pluralism of Canada and undermine the proponents of a bi-national vision of Canada.

There was no plan, no template for the rapid transition to official bilingualism in the federal government. If it is compared to Medicare another great social innovation of the 1960s, Canada had already seen Saskatchewan work out most of the details of that policy before Ottawa or the other provinces had to implement it. No such model existed

for the implementation of official bilingualism. The Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism would eventually provide its recommendations, but well in advance of that the federal government would launch extensive reforms in the federal public service. The attempts to make that institution really bilingual would pit large parts of the public service against the government. At the centre of this struggle was the Professional Institute of the Public Service. PIPS and other staff associations would succeed in getting the government to modify its official languages programs in important ways.

The government had great difficulty finding a way to balance fairness to French-speaking Canadians who had long been denied equal access to the federal administration and fairness to unilingual English-speaking public servants who were threatened by the new demand for bilingualism. The government promised rapid change to meet the expectations of French-speaking Canadians and promised that no English-speaking employees would be hurt by this change. The two promises were not consistent and the government was never able to fully sort them out. In the early 1970s this led to a slowdown in the implementation of official bilingualism and greater protection for English-speaking employees. It contributed to the demise of the notion of bilingual districts and the failure of the attempt to create French Language Units in the public service. Most importantly, it forced the Government to adopt a piecemeal approach to bilingualism inside the public service that greatly limited the shift to full bilingualism.

By the 1980s the federal administration did become much more bilingual. Service to Canadians in both official languages was available everywhere in the country.

The publications and internal management documents of the public service were generally prepared in French and in English. Language schools were expanded and pedagogy was improved. Although the success of training never met the initial expectations, many unilingual public servants developed at least a capacity to read and understand conversation in their second language. English remained the language of work and management in most departments but in several places French became the dominant language. More French-speaking Canadians were recruited into the federal public service to the point that by the mid-1980s they nearly attained their proportion in the population at large. It became common for French-speaking Canadians to rise to the top levels of the public service.

The way that bilingualism evolved in the public service of Canada was closely linked to issues in the broader spheres of culture and politics in Canada. Official bilingualism would never have been possible if English-speaking Canada had not dropped its expectation that English was the natural dominant language. The demise of the old British Canada and the rise of a Canada based on ethnic pluralism were necessary to the acceptance of bilingualism. Without the demands from Québec for more power over its own culture and the national unity crisis that came with this, there would have been no energy to drive the difficult changes required to implement bilingualism, particularly in the public service. Fear of the separation of Québec was the social force that overcame the resistance to change. The removal of the federal administration as a source of frustration and insult for many French-speaking Canadians in turn helped to make the federalist option more acceptable for many Québécois.

The way official bilingualism in the federal sphere was implemented also shaped the larger national scene. The perception that jobs in the federal administration would go to those people who mastered both official languages helped to motivate the enrolment in French language courses in English-speaking Canada. The perception that the careers of English-speaking employees in the federal public service had suffered because of bilingualism caused employees in other provincial and municipal governments to increase their resistance to official bilingualism.

The implementation of official bilingualism in the federal public service also served as a template for some of the myths about bilingualism in Canada. The decision in the public service not to identify bilingual districts in the country led to the somewhat artificial pretense of pan-Canadian bilingualism. It is true that the public can be served in either official language in most parts of the country, but it is equally clear that within the public service work is carried out almost exclusively in English in most provinces and almost exclusively in French in Québec. The rest of society follows a similar territorial pattern. While French-speaking and English-speaking Canadians can now send their children to school in their own language almost anywhere in Canada, the language of work, commerce and government is divided between French in Québec and English elsewhere. New Brunswick is an exception where the whole province is officially bilingual but even there the implementation of full bilingualism is far from complete.

Official bilingualism in Canada and in the public service is still a patchwork of sometimes contradictory policies and programs, but it is now anchored as a part of the

national identity. On September 27, 2012 the *Globe and Mail* editors wrote. “Any Canadian family who wants to enroll their children in French immersion should not be turned away.”---“Official bilingualism is an important part of Canadian public policy”---“French is a requirement for anyone who wants a career in politics, diplomacy, international business and numerous other fields.”<sup>313</sup> Most English-speaking Canadians agree with this viewpoint while still failing to put it into practice.

Forty years after the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism began its work in 1963 the interest in the French language and bilingualism in English speaking Canada remained strong. In 2003, on the fortieth anniversary of the creation of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, the Executive Director of Canadian Parents for French (CPF) claimed that “One of the great success stories of the last generation has been the enthusiastic response of Canadians from coast to coast to the learning of a second official language.”<sup>314</sup> He backed up this claim with statistics on the rates of enrollment by the children of English-speaking Canadians in French immersion classes that have risen from a few thousand in 1970 to 286,000 in 2001.

Unfortunately the bilingual ambitions of English-speaking Canadians still exceed their achievements. In spite of the good intentions represented by the success of immersion, the number of English-speaking Canadians bilingual in the French language

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<sup>313</sup> *Globe and Mail*, “French is no lottery”, September 27, 2012

<sup>314</sup> James Shea, “Canada’s Education Revolution in its Second Generation: French-Second-Language Education on the 40th anniversary of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism.” Internal publication of Canadian Parents for French-Ottawa. 2003

has remained stubbornly low. Writing in again on this topic in 2013 the *Globe and Mail* praises bilingualism yet regrets the low levels of bilingualism among English-speaking Canadians. “The ability to speak French, English – as well as Spanish or Mandarin – should be seen as a source of pride and as an investment in the future that will yield dividends over a person’s lifetime. Canadians should feel blessed – not cursed – to be home to two of the world’s great languages.”<sup>315</sup>

The real but incomplete progress of bilingualism in Canada was seeded in some of the decisions of the federal government in the way that it laid out the implementation of official bilingualism in the public service in the 1960s. It made great promises but sometimes backed away from them in the face of determined resistance from English-speaking public servants. When it agreed to consider bilingual competence as an element of merit only for positions that were classified formally as bilingual, it gave up on the vision that bilingualism would be strength and a hallmark of the whole public service. The resulting situation today is inconsistent. The federal public service is very successful in dealing with Canadians in the official language of their choice. French-speaking Canadians now know that their federal government respects and supports their language. Inside the public service the situation is improved. There are almost as many French-speaking Canadians in the federal public service as their proportion in the Canadian population would warrant. But the dominant language of work remains English, especially at higher levels. The onus is still on French-speaking public servants to become

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<sup>315</sup> *The Globe and Mail*, “Bilingualism success or failure” January 12, 2013

effective in English if they wish to rise to the top of their career. Another great push is needed to make French and English nearly equal in the public service workforce. In the past the force for change has come from the threat of Québec independence. Is another unity crisis required to complete the implementation of official bilingualism in the federal public service?

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