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OPENING STATEMENT OF THE GOVERNOR OF THE BANK OF CANADA  
TO THE  
SPECIAL JOINT COMMITTEE OF THE SENATE AND OF  
THE HOUSE OF COMMONS ON OFFICIAL LANGUAGES  
DECEMBER 15, 1981

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The Bank of Canada is firmly committed to achieving full institutional bilingualism. Our objective is the creation of an environment in which all employees can communicate and work in their preferred language, in which they have equal opportunities for a successful and rewarding career whether their first official language is English or French and in which the availability of service to the public in both languages is assured. To that end we have programs and practices in place that are well-suited to our circumstances and I am pleased to be able to say that we have made, and are continuing to make, good progress towards our language objectives.

The Bank has been active in promoting bilingualism among its staff and in its operations for more than a decade. It was clear that if a truly bilingual operation was to be brought about it was essential to improve the language skills of Bank employees. To this end the Bank has for many years maintained extensive in-house language teaching facilities in our Ottawa Head Office and a variety of language learning opportunities have been developed at Agency points. These facilities were initially directed mainly towards the development of bilingual capability at the more senior levels in the Bank but they are being increasingly used for all supervisory levels.

To encourage the participation of francophones in the work of the Bank employment opportunities are at least as well publicized in French-speaking parts of the country as elsewhere. We have worked steadily at attracting French-speaking university graduates through annual visits to the campuses of French-speaking universities. We have been relatively successful in this effort, but have not been able to hold as many university graduates whose first language is French as we would have liked. The main reason for this is that the demand from the private sector and from government for French-speaking people with experience in economics and finance is very strong.

With regard to career advancement at the Bank both French and English speaking employees are kept well informed of career opportunities through our posting of vacant positions. Proficiency in the second official language is treated as an important asset in filling supervisory positions. All staff development courses and seminars offered to our staff are available in both official languages.

The Bank's policy is that all internal services should be available in both official languages. Our staff services are bilingual and we have made major progress in ensuring that internal work instruments are available in both French and English. All new and newly revised work instruments are now made bilingual as a matter of routine and a substantial translation effort is being made to turn the remaining unilingual ones into bilingual form.

The execution within the Bank of the Bank's policy in respect of bilingualism is the responsibility of the Department of Personnel Administration. Within that Department there is an Adviser on Bilingualism whose duties include maintaining close contact with the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages and others outside the Bank who are engaged in similar pursuits. To assist the Department of Personnel Administration in respect of bilingualism there is in the Bank an Advisory Committee on Bilingualism which is composed of three senior members of the Bank's Management Committee and which reports to me and to the Senior Deputy Governor. The Bank produces an annual report entitled "Bilingualism in the Bank of Canada" which is distributed to all our employees to keep them informed of activities in this regard.

Because of its relatively small and relatively concentrated staff the Bank has been able to administer its language policies in an informal and flexible manner. I am very encouraged by the positive way the Bank's staff has responded to and has co-operated in this approach.

The ultimate test of the success of these various initiatives is the extent to which either official language can readily be used in the work place. We have in fact established a climate that has given rise to substantial and growing bilingual exchange. The daily meeting of our Management Committee is now routinely a bilingual meeting. Strong encouragement has been given to analysts to write in their first official

language and they are responding. There has also been a significant increase in the use of French in both formal and informal interchanges between English and French speaking employees.

In summary the Bank has made major progress in the area of bilingualism and it is a very different place today in this regard than it was ten or even five years ago. There is much further progress yet to be made but the appropriate base and momentum have been well established. The Bank will continue to give priority to doing what is required to enable it to move steadily and surely towards full institutional bilingualism.