

I. Introduction

Fiscal year 1994-95 saw a number of significant changes that are having a major impact on the official-language minority communities. One of the key changes relates to an announcement made in August 1994 at the World Acadian Congress in Moncton by the Minister of Canadian Heritage whereby the federal government would undertake an important initiative to promote the participation of all federal institutions in the development of these communities, as stipulated in the *Official Languages Act*. The communities felt it was vital that the government adopt a concerted approach this initiative to implement sections 41 and 42 of the *Act* became reality. Details are provided in Section II under the heading "Special Initiative: Interdepartmental Coordination". A summary of the action plans submitted by the key federal institutions for the implementation of section 41 of the *Act* are contained in the *Supplement to the Annual Report*.

School management has always been a priority for the official-language minority communities, thus prompting the federal government to spare school management and post-secondary French-language education from planned budget cuts to show its commitment to support what the communities consider important to their development. A summary by province and territory on what has been accomplished during the year in the area of school management is presented under "Key Issues" in Section III.

The efforts of the Department of Canadian Heritage to establish a renewed cooperation framework with the minority communities to make more efficient use of federal resources (otherwise known as the "repositioning exercise") have resulted in remarkable progress in

the Department's relations with the minority communities. More detailed information on this important issue is provided in Section III under "Key Issues".

The 1994-95 annual report is taking on a new look with emphasis on the three key issues outlined above. A great deal of headway has also been made this year in the area of promoting our two official languages. Activities ranging from the production of publications and other promotional material to involvement in national and international projects, the Department has been busy communicating the advantages of living in a bilingual country. Key promotional activities that have taken place both nationally and in the regions are described in Section IV under "Highlights".

In order to provide the reader with the most up-to-date facts on the topics dealt with, we have included windows of information summarizing significant events that have taken place since March 31, 1995, but which do not fall within the time period covered by the report.

Information on federal-provincial/territorial cooperation (for both education and services) as well as on promotion and community development in the regions is found in Section IV under the heading "On the Regional Scene", while brief discussions on such topics as the conference, *Official Languages and the Economy: New Canadian Perspectives*, are provided in Section V under "Strategic Support Activities". Tables showing federal contributions for education and services in the official languages for each of the provinces and territories are provided in the Appendix under "Budget Data".