


II. Special Initiative: Interdepartmental Coordination

August 16, 1994, was a red-letter day for official-language minority communities. On that day, the Prime Minister of Canada, the Right Honourable Jean Chrétien, announced at the World Acadian Congress in Moncton that Cabinet had two weeks earlier adopted a series of measures. The measures, long awaited by Canada's English and French minority communities, conveyed the federal government's desire to speed up the implementation of sections 41 and 42 of the *Official Languages Act* and thus strengthen the foundation of Canada's linguistic duality.

 *The governments of which I have been a member have always made it a point of honour to protect official-language minorities everywhere in Canada - Francophones outside Quebec and Anglophones in Quebec. I recently had the opportunity to meet with representatives of more than one million francophones living outside Quebec and I reiterated the federal government's commitment to continue defending and promoting the rights of official-language minorities across Canada."*

**Prime Minister Jean Chrétien,
at the installation ceremony of
Governor General Roméo Leblanc,
February 8, 1995**

Section 41, of course, sets out the government's commitment to enhancing the vitality and supporting and assisting the development of official-language minority communities and promoting the official languages in Canadian society. Under section 42, the Secretary of State (now the Minister of Canadian Heritage) is responsible for encouraging and promoting a coordinated approach to official languages by the federal government.

This initiative is a general policy coupled with a work plan that calls on federal departments and agencies to become involved in promoting the official languages and to contribute to the development of minority English and French communities in Canada.

Sections 41 and 42 are the result of an important change in Canadian official languages policy. The various parts of the *Official Languages Act* show how such a policy helps guide interaction between the federal government and Canadian society. The 1969 *Act* initially focused on service to the public in both official languages. A 1973 resolution by Parliament that was later entrenched in the 1988 *Act* broadened the objective to include equitable participation of Anglophones and Francophones in federal institutions and the use of English and French as languages of work in those institutions. The annual report of the President of Treasury Board on the situation of official languages in the federal government describes the progress that has been made in these areas (Parts IV, V and VI of the *Act*).

Since March 31, 1995


The Minister of Canadian Heritage will be working closely with the President of the Treasury Board to emphasize the importance that the government places on its obligations with regard to the development of official-language minority communities, the promotion of linguistic duality in Canada and the availability of federal services in the minority language.

Sections 41 and 42 of Part VII add a dimension to public access to federal institutions by taking into account the varied and specific needs of official-language communities. As a complement to Part IV of the *Official Languages Act*, which pertains to communications with and services to the public, Part VII, in particular the measures for implementing sections 41 and 42, represents a master plan that the federal government can use to support and assist the development and enhance the vitality of official-language minority communities.

Content of the Government's Initiative

The aim of the measures announced by the government is to broaden the promotion of the official languages in Canadian society as a whole. The measures are also designed to make the programs and services of federal departments and agencies fully accessible to minority official-language communities. To meet these goals, Cabinet has agreed to put in place an accountability framework that comprises five main elements:

- Measures which target key departments and agencies and areas of intervention which are vital to the minority-language communities and which have the greatest impact. These areas are economic, human resources and cultural development.
- Each key department and agency develops an annual or a multi-year action plan for implementing section 41 which takes into account the specific needs of the communities concerned.
- The action plans are developed following consultations with the communities concerned to identify their needs and enable the departments and agencies to consider those needs in planning their activities.
- The key departments and agencies submit their plans to the Minister of Canadian Heritage and report annually on the results.
- The Minister of Canadian Heritage, in his or her annual report on official languages, reports to Parliament on implementation of the government's commitment. The annual report describes each key federal institution's action plan and gives an account of the results attained during the previous year.

 *Support for the development of the official-language minority communities should not be the responsibility of the Department of Canadian Heritage alone. The Department of Human Resources Development, like any other federal institution, should be sensitive to the specific needs of these communities and seek ways to support their development within the framework of its programs.”*

**The Honourable Lloyd Axworthy,
Minister of Human Resources
Development, at the signature of the
Canada-community agreement with the
Franco-Manitoban community,
June 27, 1994**

Cabinet's decision applies to the entire government, but especially to the key departments and agencies listed below.

- Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency
- Business Development Bank of Canada
- Canada Council
- Canada Post Corporation
- Canadian Broadcasting Corporation
- Canadian International Development Agency
- Cape Breton Development Corporation
- Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade
- Department of Agriculture and Agri-Food
- Department of Canadian Heritage
- Department of Citizenship and Immigration
- Department of Health
- Department of Human Resources Development
- Department of Industry
- Department of Justice
- Department of Western Economic Diversification

- Federal Office of Regional Development (Quebec)
- International Development Research Centre
- National Arts Centre
- National Capital Commission
- National Film Board
- Public Works and Government Services
- Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council
- Statistics Canada
- Status of Women Canada
- Telefilm Canada
- Treasury Board

Implementation of the New Measures

The Department of Canadian Heritage has a mandate to coordinate the implementation of the new measures. The task of overseeing the application of the Cabinet directives in cooperation with the Department's regional offices has been given to the Interdepartmental Coordination Directorate of the Official Languages Support Programs Branch. The main activities of the first phase of implementation of the measures announced in August 1994 are outlined in the following paragraphs.

Awareness Awareness among ministers, deputy ministers and heads of the departments and agencies targeted by the initiative. Establishment of a network of national coordinators and resource people in federal departments and agencies in the regions. Promotion of the initiative and preparation of tools for officers responsible for the delivery of official languages support programs, national coordinators in designated departments and agencies, and staff in the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages. Preparation of various reference documents.

Training Organization of one-day sessions to discuss community development. Training for national and regional officers with the Department of Canadian Heritage.

Coordination Planning of consultations in the spring of 1995 in all provinces and at the national level with the designated departments and agencies in order to prepare the first action plans. Regular planning and coordination meetings with the national coordinators.

Submission of Action Plans

In the summer of 1995, on schedule, the Minister of Canadian Heritage received action plans from the key departments and agencies targeted by the government's initiative. The supplement to this report gives a summary of the measures contained in each action plan for 1995-96. The plans include a number of projects that will serve to promote Canada's linguistic duality and foster the development and enhanced vitality of official-language minority communities.

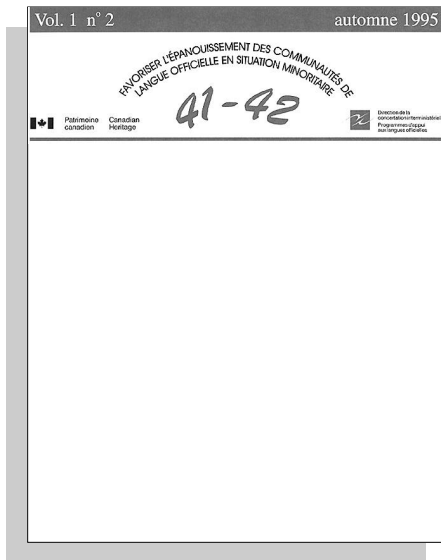
The Department of Canadian Heritage also submitted its own action plan within the proper time frame. The plan, which covers the 1995-96 fiscal year, addresses a number of the communities' specific needs. It focuses on culture, education, economic development, community development and information technology. The key measures in the plan are outlined in the supplement to this report.

Steering Committee

The Department of Canadian Heritage has set up a Steering Committee comprising eight high-profile representatives of official-language minority communities and seven senior officials of the departments and agencies targeted by the August 1994 Cabinet decision. The Committee's role is to advise the Department on ways to implement the government's initiative. The Committee plans to meet at least twice a year.

A Tool for Coordination: the Newsletter 41-42

To foster the development of lasting ties between federal departments and agencies, official-language minority communities and



the Department of Canadian Heritage, the Interdepartmental Coordination Directorate has undertaken to publish a liaison newsletter four times a year. The first issue of 41-42, as the newsletter is called, came out in the summer of 1995. The purpose of the publication is to report on what is happening both in the regions and at head-

quarters; articles are supplied by the three parties involved in the government's initiative. The newsletter has a circulation of 1,800 and is distributed within associations representing the communities and the key federal departments and agencies.

The Next Step

In 1995-96, the Interdepartmental Coordination Directorate hopes to encourage the key departments and agencies to include longer-term community development activities in their next annual or multi-year action plans. These activities would also give a higher profile to regional measures. The Directorate plans to help the departments and agencies work together to carry out projects that are considered priorities by the communities.

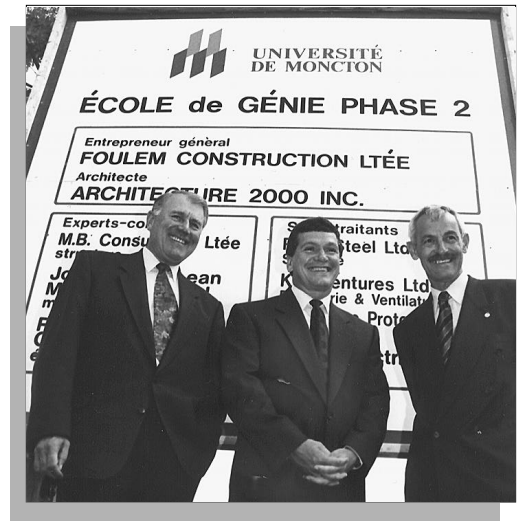
Achievements

The new accountability framework was introduced at the same time as a number of projects were being carried out. In most cases, the Department of Canadian Heritage provided technical and financial assistance, as did the provincial governments concerned. The following are some of the main achievements.

National Activities

- Continuation of the activities of the *Comité d'adaptation des ressources humaines de la francophonie canadienne*. Support from Human Resources Development Canada.
- *Semaine nationale de la francophonie* held from March 20 to 26, 1995. Organizer: *Association canadienne d'éducation de langue française*. Support from Industry Canada, the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, the Canadian International Development Agency, Human Resources Development Canada, Treasury Board and the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation.
- Participation by the *Fédération des communautés francophones et acadienne du Canada* at a fall 1994 conference of international non-governmental organizations staged by the *Agence de coopération culturelle et technique* in Paris. Support from the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade.
- Development of a francization program for young children by the *Commission nationale des parents francophones*. Support from Health Canada.

- Study on equity in physical education through partnership and the creation of a non-sexist environment for young Francophones conducted by the *Réseau national d'Action Éducation Femmes*. Support from Human Resources Development Canada and Health Canada (Fitness).
- Gatherings of the *Association nationale des théâtres francophones hors Québec* held in the spring of 1995. Support from the National Arts Centre and the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation.



Premier Frank McKenna flanked by Raymond Frenette, New Brunswick's Minister of Justice, and Fernand Robichaud, federal Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs, in front of the École de Génie of the Université de Moncton.

Regional Activities

Atlantic

- Preparation of a project to implement the economic development plan for the Francophone community on the Port-au-Port Peninsula. Support from the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency.
- Construction of *La Picasse* multiservice centre in Île Madame, Nova Scotia. Support from Human Resources Development Canada and the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency.
- Creation of a provincial adult training centre (*Collège de l'Acadie*) in Prince Edward Island. Support from the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Human Resources Development Canada, the Government of Nova Scotia and Maritime Tel & Tel.
- Announcement of financing for the construction of the electrical engineering school at the *Université de Moncton*. Support from Human Resources Development Canada.

- World Acadian Congress held in New Brunswick in August 1994. Support from Human Resources Development Canada and the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency.

Quebec

- Completion of Phase II of a joint initiative by the Department of Canadian Heritage and Human Resources Development Canada to improve the employability of young Quebec Anglophones in Quebec's mostly French labour market. Several projects were carried out: a study to determine the needs of employers (Quebec City and Gaspé), research on future labour force training needs (Eastern Townships), and the opening of an employment assistance service centre (Montreal).

- Promotion of farm management among members of the Quebec Farmers' Association: publication of 13 articles in the Quebec Farmer's Advocate between January 1994 and March 1995; "kitchen-table meetings" held to discuss the advantages of farm management unions. Support from Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada.
- Establishment of a community program for children and single mothers in rural areas of Manitoba. Support from Health Canada.
- Training sessions for Francophone senior citizens in Saskatchewan. Support from Health Canada (Healthy Aging).

Ontario

- Production of a series of 13 television programs on owning your own business. Support from Human Resources Development Canada and Industry Canada.
- Technical support for the *Association canadienne-française de l'Ontario* to move its head office to Toronto. Participation by Public Works and Government Services Canada.
- Establishment of the community component of the school/community centres in Prince Albert and Regina (Phase I). Support from Human Resources Development Canada.
- Training sessions for Francophone senior citizens throughout Alberta. Support from Health Canada (Healthy Aging).
- Establishment of a Francophone job search club in Vancouver. Support from Human Resources Development Canada.
- Implementation of a cultural tourism pilot project in the Niagara region: a cultural centre called *Le Griffon*. Cooperation from Human Resources Development Canada.
- Launch of a project under which the 11 tenants of the *Maison de la francophonie* in Vancouver will share photocopying services. Support from Human Resources Development Canada.

West

- Economic symposium organized by the Manitoba Association of Bilingual Municipalities with support from Human Resources Development Canada.
- Implementation of the *Jeunes en plein soleil* project, the aim of which is to improve spoken and written French among young Francophones in the Northwest Territories. Support from Health Canada.