



Canadian
Heritage

Patrimoine
canadien

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

ANNUAL REPORT
1998-99

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Canada 

THE 1988 ACT: TEN YEARS OF ACHIEVEMENT

- 1988 Adoption of the new *Official Languages Act*.
- 1990 Mahé Case: the Supreme Court rules that official-language minorities have the constitutional right to participate actively, in all provinces, in the governance and control of their children's education and the educational institutions their children attend.
- 1993 The federal government invests \$112 million over six years to assist in establishing Francophone school governance and support for post-secondary education in French.
- Renewal, for five years, of the Official Languages in Education Program, including the national language exchange programs (Official-Language Monitor Program and Summer Language Bursary Program).
- Renewal of the *Memorandum of Understanding on Minority-Language Education and Second-Language Instruction* signed with the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada.
- 1994 *Congrès mondial acadien*: Prime Minister Chrétien announced the adoption of "an overall policy on the participation of federal institutions in community development" that requires federal institutions to produce action plans under Part VII of the *Official Languages Act*.
- From 1994 to 1996, signing of Canada-community agreements with each of the provincial and territorial communities and with the national Francophone organizations.
- 1996 Symposium on The Canadian Experience in the Teaching of Official Languages.
- Census: the level of bilingualism among young people, aged 15 to 24, is higher than 24%, making this the most bilingual generation in Canada's history.
- 1997 Memorandum of Understanding between Canadian Heritage and the Treasury Board Secretariat on making departments accountable with regard to official-language minority communities.
- 25th anniversary of the Official-Language Monitor Program and the Summer Language Bursary Program.
- 1998 Renewal, for five years, of the Official Languages in Education Program, including the national language exchange programs (Official-Language Monitor Program and Summer Language Bursary Program).
- National Symposium on Canada's Official Languages.
- Agreements on services in the minority language in force in virtually every province and territory.
- 1999 The federal government invests an additional \$70 million each year in the Official Languages Support Programs; the Interdepartmental Partnership for Official-Language Communities is established.
- Launch of the Year of *La Francophonie* in Canada (March 1999 to March 2000).



MINISTER'S FOREWORD

As Minister of Canadian Heritage, I am pleased to present the official languages annual report for 1998-99.

As the XXI century dawns, the Government of Canada will focus on the diversity which has shaped our country and on the fundamental values which are shared by Canada's citizens to create a true synergy within our society. The Official Languages Support Programs now play a greater role than ever before in this respect. The Government would like everyone to be able to participate fully in Canadian life and society: by investing in our minority-language communities, they are assured of a better quality of life which contributes to their strength and dynamism. The Government wants to invest in youth where the future of our country rests: official languages education is an ideal way to give young people the chance to study in their mother tongue and learn their second language. The Government wishes to give our society the tools necessary to take advantage of its diversity: the appreciation and enhanced value of linguistic duality reinforces Canadian unity.



This has been a special year from many standpoints. First of all, this year marks the 30th anniversary of the very first *Official Languages Act*, and the 10th anniversary of the 1988 *Official Languages Act*. Much progress has been achieved since then, particularly in the last ten years. I invite you to have a look at the section entitled "The 1988 Act: Ten Years of Achievement" to read about what we have accomplished with our major partners: the official-language minority communities, provincial and territorial governments, second-language organizations, as well as other federal departments and agencies.

The federal government's commitment to enhance the vitality of the official-language minority communities and promote the use of French and English in Canadian society has not wavered over the years. There was certainly a need to contribute to the restoration of the Government's financial health; but this year marked a turning point, with the announcement in March 1999 of a major reinvestment in the Official Languages Support Programs. The \$70 million in new funds, which will be invested annually in the teaching of the official languages, in services in the minority language and in support to official-language minority communities, will allow us to continue to build on sound foundations.

In conjunction with the VIII *Sommet de la Francophonie*, which was held in September 1999 in Moncton, and the upcoming IV Games of *La Francophonie*, which will be held in the Ottawa-Hull region in 2001, the Government of Canada set an objective of celebrating not only the international *Francophonie*, but also the Canadian *Francophonie*. The Year of *La Francophonie* in Canada, which was also announced in March, is unquestionably bound to be full of all sorts of activities that will bring together Francophones and Francophiles all across the country and it will be a source of pride for all Canadians.

In conclusion, join me in a tour of 1998-99. You will agree, I think, that this last year was a wonderful ending to a decade of major achievements and that it bodes well for the future of the official languages in Canada.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sheila Copps". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Sheila Copps

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