



Bulletin Infoaction

February 2007

Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages

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New Commissioner Wants to Promote a Constructive Dialogue



Graham Fraser
Commissioner of Official Languages

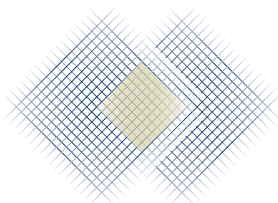
I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself and outline my vision of the role of Commissioner of Official Languages. As a journalist, I have had the rare privilege of closely observing and reporting on relations between Canada's two language communities and seeing first-hand the extent to which bilingualism is ingrained in the Canadian identity. I accepted the position of Commissioner because I strongly believe

in the concept of linguistic duality—one of Canada's defining characteristics.

As Canada becomes more culturally diverse, linguistic duality becomes increasingly important since these elements are closely intertwined. A bilingual environment is more receptive to multiculturalism. Without recognition of Canada's two language communities, the concept of multiculturalism would be harder to promote. Furthermore, people exposed to a second language and culture generally tend to be more open to other cultures.

Throughout my mandate, I will work to promote Canada's two official languages as a vital element of leadership and front-line service in both the public and private sectors. I will also work to ensure the federal public service sets the standard in this regard.

Canada's linguistic duality depends on the vitality of its two official language communities, and I will devote my mandate



The Social Fabric of Canada

A fabric is woven of many threads. Those of us who speak English and those of us who speak French — ourselves made up of many different elements — have joined together to weave a social fabric called Canada. The golden fabric at the centre symbolizes the meeting place of our two linguistic communities and the richness of the dialogue between them.

to promoting and strengthening this vitality. I want to be a bridge-builder and, to this end, will use every available tool to foster a dialogue between Canada's official language communities, federal institutions and new Canadians.

I will work to promote our two official languages and protect the language rights of minority communities. I will ensure the federal government respects its commitments under the *Official Languages Act*, especially those set out in the recently amended Part VII. All federal institutions are now legally required to adopt positive measures to ensure English and French have equal status in Canadian society.

In the longer term, I would like to see a review of our approach to language instruction. In my opinion, our current approach is the reason the federal

government cannot hire enough fluently bilingual staff. While there is clear interest in bilingualism (i.e. some 300,000 young Canadians are enrolled in immersion programs), most English-language universities treat French as a foreign language. If engineering schools told students they didn't need to learn computers because their future employers would teach them, businesses would immediately protest. While the federal government provides language training to many of its employees, it would make more sense—and be less costly for tax payers—to teach the second language at a younger age.

Since education is a provincial responsibility, I plan to work closely with all governments to advance the issue of official language instruction. I feel I can be a bridge-builder in this regard, and would like to promote and encourage partnerships. I also want to help Canadians understand the benefits of speaking a second language, since people who speak both official languages have a better knowledge and understanding of members of the other community.

I look forward to engaging in a constructive dialogue with all Canadians—Anglophones and Francophones, newcomers and native-born—to help strengthen Canada's linguistic duality.

The French language belongs to all Canadians, just as English belongs to all Canadians. It's a part of our heritage — and one of our greatest assets.

Graham Fraser, House of Commons Standing Committee on Official Languages, September 28, 2006.

Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages

ISSN: 1203-0996

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Graham Fraser Is No Stranger to Language Issues

Graham Fraser is a respected journalist and author who has taken an interest in linguistic duality all throughout his career.

Born in Ottawa, he has also lived and worked in Toronto, Montréal, Québec and Washington. Mr. Fraser was educated at the University of Toronto, where he earned a Bachelor of Arts degree and a Master of Arts degree in History.

Before becoming Commissioner, Mr. Fraser worked as a journalist for the *Toronto Star*, where he was the newspaper's national affairs writer. He also worked for *Maclean's*, *The Montreal Gazette* and *The Globe and Mail*. He was a weekly columnist for *Le Devoir* from 1995 to 2000 and has been a regular commentator on *Panorama*, a public affairs program on TFO.

Mr. Fraser reported in both official languages on cultural and foreign policy, constitutional debates and national, provincial and international politics. He has spoken on official languages issues to minority organizations in Quebec, New Brunswick and Ontario, as well as national minority language organizations. He has also given talks on language policy as an adjunct professor at Carleton University and at other universities.

Mr. Fraser has written several books, including *Sorry, I Don't Speak French*, published in March 2006. The book helped renew public discussion of language policy in Canada. He is also the author of *PQ: René Lévesque and the Parti Québécois in Power*, which dealt with Quebec language policy and which was nominated for a Governor General's Award for Non-Fiction in 1984.

In 1979, he helped found the Centre for Investigative Journalism, the bilingual precursor of the Canadian Association of Journalists, and served on the Centre's board for two terms. Mr. Fraser is the first recipient of the Public Policy Forum's Hyman Solomon Award for Excellence in Public Policy Journalism.

Bilingualism and the Vancouver 2010 Olympic Games

In 2010, athletes from around the world will gather in Vancouver for the Olympic Winter Games. The Commissioner of Official Languages, Graham Fraser, will be closely following the preparations for the event. He explained to the Senate Standing Committee on Official Languages that "At the 2006 Olympic Winter Games in Turin, English was predominant, while French was used only at the opening and closing ceremonies, even though it is an official language at the Olympics. In Vancouver, we will need to do much better with respect to language.

One of the early issues of concern is television broadcasting: the English-language rights are held by CTV, while the French-language rights are shared by TQS and RDS. This will put Francophones in Canada at a disadvantage since, for most residents living outside Quebec, these channels are only accessible through digital cable or satellite subscription. In addition, CTV plans to devote twice as much air time to the Games as both French-language networks.

The Commissioner is asking organizers to ensure that Canadians receive an equal quality of coverage of the Olympic Games and sports commentary in both official languages.

Up Close and Bilingual: The New Commissioner Lays Out his Priorities

Graham Fraser took some time out recently to talk to *Infoaction* about himself and his vision for the future. Born in Ottawa and educated in Toronto, Mr. Fraser worked for many years as a journalist in Quebec and has written extensively about language issues over the years. He brings his own unique perspective to the position, which he took up on October 17, 2006.

How did you become bilingual?

When I was a student at the University of Toronto in 1965, a classmate told me about an opportunity to work on an archaeology project in Quebec. There ended up being a group of 20 of us – half Anglophone, half Francophone – working on a dig at Fort Lennox. I discovered I was much more fascinated by Quebec and what was going on there than I was by archaeology. For the next two summers, I worked on a mental health project at a psychiatric hospital in east-end Montréal. Those three summers in Quebec improved my knowledge of French, which was very limited at first. My progress stemmed largely from my interest in French-speaking Quebec society.

You were sent to Quebec as a reporter in 1976 and ended up living in the City of Québec for seven years. How was that?

After seven years in Toronto, I had lost some of my French, so I had some learning to do.

One of the first times I went to the City of Québec was in 1976 for a political convention. I looked out the window to the hills around the city, with the houses all lit up, and said to myself: “All those people speak French!”

Living in Québec was real immersion! There’s no simultaneous translation in the Quebec National Assembly. There were all these expressions used by politicians that were completely foreign to me. One expression that I couldn’t figure out at all was “en bonne et due forme.” I heard it as “en bonnet du forme.” It didn’t mean anything to me!

I always felt very welcome in the City of Québec. My family and I very much enjoyed our seven years there and we look back fondly on that part of our lives.

How did the experience of living in the City of Québec as part of the English-speaking minority influence your perception of language minorities?

I learned what it takes to foster vitality in a minority community. I now believe that you’ve got to make a distinction between the services that are essential for travellers and those that are needed for a minority community’s vitality. They’re not necessarily the same! A minority community’s vitality hinges on, for example, having access to its own institutions and being able to fully participate in the larger community.

How did becoming bilingual define your view of bilingualism?

I think language is “relationship-based” that is, tied to the relationships we have with individual people. When public service employees make greater use of their skills in their second language on the job, they slowly change how they relate to the people around them. Simply taking a course in French doesn’t mean that you can suddenly interact effectively with colleagues in the other language. It’s a task you have to work at—practice makes perfect.

We also need to remember that the goal of the official languages policy is not to force everyone to learn both languages. It exists for two fundamental reasons: to protect the rights of unilingual people by ensuring citizens can receive services in their language of choice, and to safeguard and promote the development of minority language communities.

How do you view your mandate?

In the short term, I think the big challenge for the Office of the Commissioner, and for me, is to ensure that the recent amendments to the *Official Languages Act* concerning minority community development are applied properly and efficiently.

We’re in a period of adjustment right now. This poses a challenge both for minority communities and the public service, because they need to begin a

dialogue and set priorities about the positive measures they can take together to help minority communities flourish.

Also, the implementation of new technology is leading to important changes in service delivery. We must examine how this affects minority communities.

How do you see yourself contributing to the application of the amendments to the *Official Languages Act*?

I think I can play an important role as a bridge-builder between minority communities, the government and the public service to foster a dialogue that will help establish positive measures, make the public service aware of its new responsibilities under the Act, and allow minority communities to identify, as specifically as possible, the positive measures that can be the most helpful. We're only just starting to examine what the term "positive measures" means on a practical level, and I'd like to help the process along.

Is there a specific issue that you will be focussing on?

I've identified a flaw in Canada's language landscape. Despite the strong interest in French immersion, there remain problems with access to instruction in French. With a few noble exceptions, English-language universities continue by and large to treat French as a foreign language rather than a Canadian one, which is one of the reasons the federal government has trouble hiring graduates who can work easily in both official languages.

What does that mean for the public service?

A remedial language training system was created in the 1970s to increase the number of bilingual public service employees. However, because of a flaw in the education system, this catch-up system,

which was supposed to be temporary, has become a permanent part of the way we train managers in the public service. The cost of teaching a second language to people who are 47, 52 or 55 years old is excessively high. They are often well advanced in their careers and already earning high salaries, and, since older adults learn at a slower pace, it costs a great deal to employ replacement workers while we train them.

What do you think about language training for public service employees?

I find it absurd that schools of public administration in Canada do not include mastery of both official languages among what they consider key leadership skills. This is the heart of the issue: our public service needs to play a leadership role by providing excellent bilingual service, by ensuring that employees can work in French or English, and by serving ministers in their preferred language. I don't know how anyone can hope to understand Canada in all its complexity without understanding its four million unilingual Francophones.

What have been some of the Government of Canada's achievements in terms of bilingualism?

The federal government has managed to offer services in both official languages, though not in every case and not always smoothly. Nonetheless, it has achieved many of its goals in this area.

Some 300,000 children in Canada are enrolled in French immersion programs. I find it encouraging that more and more Canadians—especially young people—consider mastery of both official languages to be part of the Canadian identity. I was moved to see young medal winners at the Turin Winter Games, still panting from exertion, able to give fluent and articulate interviews in both English and French.

There are also success stories within the country's political leadership. Prime Minister Stephen Harper speaks both official languages with impeccable precision. He has set a personal example and a very high standard for the use of both official languages. Our two most recent Governors General, Adrienne Clarkson and Michaëlle Jean, have come from immigrant minority communities. Each came to Canada at an early age, integrated into one official language community and then decided that, to become full participants in the life of the country, they would learn the other language as well. The quiet example set by these women sends a powerful message that cultural diversity, rather than weakening linguistic duality, complements and strengthens it.

While there are still problems, we can take pride in the progress we have made in many areas. I am confident that I can count on the commitment of federal institutions to do more in the future. I know also that when I report to Parliament on implementation of the Act, I can count on the active support of the members of the Senate and House of Commons committees on official languages.

What challenges does the public service face in terms of official languages?

On a priority basis, it's ensuring that newly-minted changes to the Act concerning official language minority community development are implemented. Obviously, this does not mean that Part IV and Part V of the Act, which deal with the delivery of bilingual services and the right to use English and French at work, should be neglected. At a human level, the challenge is to create a work environment where all employees know they can use the official language of their choice and be understood, and have the necessary skills to perform their duties where language criteria are applicable.

I think the key word is "respect." The challenge for the public service is to promote a healthy work environment that demonstrates respect for both official languages.

I suspect that people often file a complaint with the Office of the Commissioner because they feel they have been treated with contempt and want to be respected. In my opinion, the greatest challenge for the public service is to ensure that citizens and employees are treated respectfully when it comes to their official language.

I'm also anxious to know more about the public service language instruction process. I want to ensure official languages policy in the public service becomes a matter of communication with the public, which means offering services in both official languages rather than passing a simple test.

How do you ensure people view the learning of a second language as normal? Is this part of your role?

Yes, it is part of my role. In my speeches, I've described my role as that of cheerleader or nag, but I could just as well have used the words "promoter" and "protector." These two roles reinforce each other.

Take promotion, for example. A vital role of the Office of the Commissioner is to help Canadians understand that knowing both official languages is a major asset. Canada has two extraordinarily vital and rich cultures. Our films are nominated for Oscars, our authors win international literary awards, and two Quebec novels were recently nominated for the Giller Prize.

In both language communities, there's a growing awareness that interesting things are happening on the other side of the fence. I can't imagine how someone who doesn't speak both languages can claim to understand the country as a whole. Each community is too culturally rich. How can people claim to understand Canada's national dialogue if they only know half of it?

What are the obstacles to learning a second language?

In 1967, then Justice Minister Pierre Trudeau said language rights consisted of two basic components: the right to learn, and the right to use. The entire edifice of language rights rests on these two pillars, and the structure we have built over the last 40 years comes down to these two rights.

There's no lack of desire to learn. The demand for French immersion is a clear indication of that. The problem is that there are serious flaws in the system. To a large extent, our collective level of bilingualism, the product of a range of individual decisions, rests on the shoulders of 14-year-olds deciding which second-language courses they will take or drop in high school – assuming they are even available. And they often are not.

We need to ensure people are aware that these choices are important for their future as for Canada's.

Mr. Fraser has a clear vision of the significance of linguistic duality as a core Canadian value, and understands how Canada's French-speaking and Acadian communities embody that value.

Jean-Guy Rioux, *L'Express*, September 2006
 President, Fédération des communautés francophones et acadienne.

Consulting Official Language Communities



Meeting of the Executive Committee of the Community Table of the National Resources Committee for the English Linguistic Table, Montréal, November 2006. From left to right: John Buck, JoAnn Fandrich, Eva Ludvig, Graham Fraser, Elizabeth Kater and Ivan Harding

A few weeks after assuming his duties, Graham Fraser toured the country to meet with different organizations such as university representatives, the organizing committee of the 2010 Olympics and representatives of official language communities. The goal of his tour, which included stops in Vancouver, Toronto, Montréal, Halifax and Charlottetown, was to establish a dialogue and better understand the needs of these communities.

Mr. Fraser wants to work closely with communities, among others, both to address their concerns and ensure that the amendments to Part VII of the *Official Languages Act* are implemented. There are common problems as well as specific situations that vary from province to province. “We need to work together to find tailor-made solutions,” he said.

Demographic Changes

In Anglophone communities in Quebec and Francophone communities in Atlantic Canada and Northern Ontario, there is an exodus of young people in

search of work toward Western Canada and major urban centres. Unfortunately, this trend threatens the vitality of the communities they leave behind. We also need to examine how we can better integrate new French-speaking immigrants, especially in Ontario’s urban areas.

Budget Cuts

Education, early childhood services, health care, and access to service in their language are key issues. Communities across Canada have raised concerns with the Commissioner about federal budget cuts to programs for women, youth and literacy, and to the Court Challenges Program. The Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages has launched an investigation into this matter.

Our Office has received more than a hundred complaints concerning the cancellation of the Court Challenges Program and the Commissioner intends to be very vigilant in exercising his ombudsman role. “This issue is a priority for me and my team,” he said.

Education: A Key Issue

Since schools are essential to their vitality, official language minority communities all face similar challenges in the area of education. They need to resolve problems such as the integration of students from a variety of backgrounds (i.e. Anglophone/Francophone) or from immigrant families, school closures, inadequate or outdated school infrastructure, and full participation of all eligible children.

The Quebec English School Boards Association is an excellent example of a community that has taken charge of its development. It set up a stakeholders’ advisory board to review issues, make recommendations, and establish a dialogue between majority and minority language communities. The board issued its report in October 2006. “I concur with the advisory board’s recommendations that we recognize schools as community resources, and that we need to find ways to build bridges between Quebec’s official language majority and minority communities so we can identify mutual benefits,” said Mr. Fraser. He added that forming and encouraging such relationships and dialogue will go a long way in helping to promote Canada’s linguistic duality: “Linguistic and cultural exchanges between students and teachers from English and French schools are an excellent opportunity to learn the second official language and discover another culture. I want to create opportunities for communication and exchange between language majorities and minorities throughout Canada.”

Implementing Part VII: Achieving Concrete Results

Part VII of the *Official Languages Act*, recently amended and improved, is an extremely useful tool for Canada's language communities. However, its implementation will require considerable openness and commitment to change. First, language communities and federal departments and agencies must understand the amendments. Second, the federal government and language communities must form partnerships based on an understanding of each community's unique characteristics.

Industry Canada's Community Access Program is a case in point. It provides Canadians with affordable access to the Internet via schools, community centres, libraries, etc. A few years ago, Industry Canada adjusted its selection criteria to enable minority language communities to have better Internet access in their own language. Today, there are more than 100 networks across the country serving most official language minority communities. (Visit the Web site: cap.ic.gc.ca/pub/index.html?iin.lang=en)

This is one concrete example of the benefits that result from effective implementation of the 1988 amendments to Part VII of the *Official Languages Act*. It sets out the Government of Canada's commitment to ensuring that English and French have equal status in Canadian society, and that Anglophone and Francophone communities across Canada can develop and thrive. As a result of the November 2005 amendments—which received the

support of Conservative, Liberal and New Democrat MPs—all federal institutions are now legally required to adopt positive measures to meet this commitment.

While each institution must decide, in accordance with its mandate, what “positive measures” it could take, the measures adopted must be proactive, systematic, geared toward concrete and measurable results, and adapted to meet specific needs of the communities. These measures should also help strengthen the social and community institutions at the heart of everyday life (i.e. schools, health care facilities, business development centres, arts and culture centres, etc.).

To more fully understand the concept of “positive measure,” the Office of the Commissioner consulted communities, senior public service employees and political leaders. The possibilities are endless. For example, in 2004, Parks Canada marked the 400th anniversary of the arrival of French settlers in North America by developing, as part of its educational program, a lesson plan to help high school students improve their knowledge of the history of French in Canada.

The amendments to Part VII also allow minority language communities to seek legal redress if their rights are not

Wording of the legislative changes to Part VII of the *Official Language Act* in bold

41. (1) The Government of Canada is committed to (a) enhancing the vitality of the English and French linguistic minority communities in Canada and supporting and assisting their development; and (b) fostering the full recognition and use of both English and French in Canadian society.

(2) Every federal institution has the duty to ensure that positive measures are taken for the implementation of the commitments under subsection (1). For greater certainty, this implementation shall be carried out while respecting the jurisdiction and powers of the provinces.

(3) The Governor in Council may make regulations in respect of federal institutions, other than the Senate, House of Commons, Library of Parliament, office of the Senate Ethics Officer or office of the Ethics Commissioner, prescribing the manner in which any duties of those institutions under this Part are to be carried out.

77. (1) Any person who has made a complaint to the Commissioner in respect of a right or duty under sections 4 to 7, sections 10 to 13 or Part IV, V or VII, or in respect of section 91, may apply to the Court for a remedy under this Part.

respected. “We are very pleased that these measures have been passed,” declared Martin Murphy, president of the Quebec Community Groups Network. However, he added that he hoped the Government of Canada would comply with its own Act, and that minority communities would never have to go to court to assert their rights.

Graham Fraser stressed that the government must respect the terms of the *Official Languages Act*, especially the commitments set out in Part VII. “One of my priorities will be to ensure the Act is effective,” Mr. Fraser said, adding that all federal government initiatives must now take the interests of minority communities into account. He said that good intentions are no longer enough and that we must now see concrete results. “As Commissioner, I will promote a constructive approach toward relations with federal institutions to ensure they understand their obligations and develop

the ‘Part VII reflex’, namely, the instinctive integration of positive measures into their policies and programs.”

Having lived seven years in the City of Québec as a member of its English-speaking minority, Mr. Fraser understands what a minority community needs to preserve its vitality. “People most need services in their language when they’re in trouble. In day-to-day situations, most minorities have a certain level of bilingualism. But when there’s a crisis—a health crisis, a legal crisis—that’s when you really need to be served in your language. We know that minority communities are working hard to create the institutions and environment they need to preserve their vitality, and federal institutions must work closely with them to help ensure their development.”

Communities also want to work in partnership with institutions, and the Commissioner wants to facilitate communication between all parties.

Mr. Fraser says we need to change the way we think and act: “We’re in a period of adjustment right now. This poses a challenge both for minority communities and the public service because they need to set priorities and begin a dialogue about the positive measures they can each take to help minority communities flourish.”

They have made a wise and well-judged choice by appointing Graham Fraser. Mr. Fraser speaks French eloquently. He lived in Quebec for several years and is personally convinced that being able to speak our country's two official languages presents an undeniable advantage. As far as he's concerned, forcing Canadians to become bilingual is not an option he's even willing to consider; he would rather use the power of persuasion than compulsion. [...] His views on the country's socio-cultural dynamics, his analytical skills, and his language proficiency will allow us to draw on his eloquent, well-documented and, if not powerful, most likely very relevant reports.

Jean Saint-Cyr, *L'Acadie nouvelle*, October 2006.

Martin Murphy, president of the Quebec Community Groups Network, welcomed Fraser's appointment, saying he hopes to work with him on addressing a number of concerns to Quebec's English community, including rumours of threats to the federal Court Challenges Program and access to justice in English.

The Gazette, September 14, 2006.

Strong Support for Linguistic Duality

For decades, the vast majority of the population has supported the fundamental principles of linguistic duality in Canada. Does this support reflect a superficial interest in the country's bilingual nature or is it a manifestation of strong support for linguistic duality? A public opinion survey published by the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages in September 2006 seems to indicate that Canadians are truly committed to both official languages.

A solid majority of survey respondents—72%—indicated that they are in favour of bilingualism in Canada. This is a marked increase from the results obtained for the same question in previous years.

Much more specific questions, requiring respondents to clarify their commitment, yielded very significant data. Not only did respondents indicate that they want to learn the other official language, if there were more opportunity to do so, but they also agree that more financial resources are required for education in the minority language to improve the quality of education offered.

Questions asked to respondents (sample)

Would agree to more funding for minority language schools so they could offer the same quality of education as majority language schools.	77%
Would be more likely to take courses in the second official language if courses were more accessible.	62%
Are in favour of bilingualism in their province.	70%
People who speak both English and French have a better chance of finding a good job.	84%
Learning a second language is one of the most fulfilling things that you can do for yourself.	84%
Having two official languages has made Canada a more welcoming place for immigrants.	73%
Linguistic duality is one of the things that really defines what it means to be Canadian.	69%

The Evolution of Public Opinion on Official Languages in Canada,
Decima Research, September 2006.

If your children were to learn another language, which language would be most important for them to learn?

British Columbia French: 44%
Chinese: 13%
Spanish: 7%

Alberta French: 57%
Spanish: 15%
Chinese: 6%

Manitoba and Saskatchewan French: 64%
Spanish: 6%
Chinese: 5%

Ontario French: 71%
Chinese: 7%
Spanish: 5%

Quebec English: 88%
Spanish: 7%

Atlantic Canada French: 90%
English: 3%

The Evolution of Public Opinion on Official Languages in Canada,
Decima Research, September 2006.

Official languages come first

Considering the increasing diversity of Canada's population, you might think that Canadians are interested in a wide variety of cultures and in languages other than English and French, and you would be right; however, learning the two official languages remains a priority.

The benefits of being bilingual

For many Canadians, being bilingual opens doors for them on a professional level. Many Canadians also realize that knowing both official languages enriches their lives in other ways as well.

Methodology

Decima Research included nine questions on behalf of the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages, when it polled 2,000 Canadians 18 years of age and older by telephone between February 2 and 13, 2006.

A sample size of 2,000 people is considered accurate to within plus or minus 2.2%, 19 times out of 20. A smaller sample size of 1,000 people is considered accurate to within plus or minus 3.1%, 19 times out of 20. The margin of error for smaller sub-samples is larger.

For more information, visit our Web site
www.ocol-clo.gc.ca/archives/op_ap/stat/epon_e.htm

www.ocol-clo.gc.ca

>>> Keep checking the **Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages' Web site**. We are in the process of redesigning our site so that it projects a more dynamic image of official languages to the country. By updating and improving our site, we hope to create an official languages and linguistic duality reference tool.

We value your comments and suggestions. Please feel free to forward us any relevant links that we could include on our Web site. You can reach us at webmaster-webmestre@ocol-clo.gc.ca.

Air Canada's Language Requirements

In response to the restructuring of Air Canada completed in 2004, the federal government tabled a new bill last October to ensure that Air Canada's former internal divisions be subject to the *Official Languages Act*, thereby maintaining the language rights of the travelling public and Air Canada employees.

At first glance, Bill C-29 addresses issues raised by the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages. The new Commissioner of Official Languages, Graham Fraser, says he is pleased that the amendments contained in the bill will clarify which entities will be subject to the *Official Languages Act*.

However, in an appearance before the House of Commons Standing Committee on Official Languages, Mr. Fraser said he was concerned that, while Jazz will have to respect the language rights of the travelling public, it will have no such obligation towards its employees.

Nonetheless, since the restructuring, Jazz has assumed service responsibilities for a growing number of routes that used to be operated by Air Canada, and a substantial number of Air Canada employees now work for Jazz, which enables the company to offer the new routes.

"It is important to remember that, while Air Canada is now a private company, it was built with public funds and Canadians have high expectations of it," he explained.

"Air Canada is a Canadian symbol and, as such, must represent the people it serves, especially in terms of linguistic duality—a vital part of our identity."

"While waiting for the new regulations to come into force, my office will continue to address public complaints and investigate the quality of services in both official languages, and Air Canada is continuing to work with us in this regard."

There are four million unilingual French-speaking Canadians and somebody has got to be able to talk to them and they have to be able to feel that their federal government can serve them as effectively and efficiently as it can serve the 20 million unilingual English-speaking Canadians. The law is not there to make everybody learn another language. The law is there to guarantee that you don't have to learn another official language to be a Canadian. And I think that is what people tend to miss in this. This is about protecting people's rights to be served by their government in either English or French.

Graham Fraser, *Sounds Like Canada* (CBC-Radio), October 24, 2006.
