

GOVERNMENT OF NOVA SCOTIA POLICY STATEMENT ON THRONE SPEECH  
REFERENCE TO FRENCH

First I would like to refer you to Section 4 from the Speech from the Throne delivered at the opening of the Second Session of the Forty-ninth General Assembly of the Province of Nova Scotia on Thursday, February 22, 1968, which stated:

"4. The Federal-Provincial Conference agreed:

(a) that a Continuing Constitutional Conference be set up composed of the heads of the various governments or their delegates to supervise a continuing constitutional review;

(b) that a Continuing Committee of officials be established to assist the Constitutional Conference;

(c) upon certain terms of reference for the Constitutional Conference including the matter of regional disparity.

You will be asked to consider:

(a) the status of the French language in this House;

(b) facilities for teaching students whose mother tongue is French in areas where the number of French speaking people makes it appropriate to improve such facilities;

(c) improved facilities generally for the teaching of French as a second language."

I wish to draw your attention especially to paragraph 4 which I have just quoted. The responsibility for the carrying out of the Government's intention is contained in the last two sub-sections, (b) and (c). These responsibilities are quite properly that of the Department of Education. I would like, therefore, at this time to outline the Government's policy regarding the teaching of French in the schools of the Province of Nova Scotia.

The first has to do with providing facilities for teaching students whose mother tongue is French in areas where the number of French-speaking people makes it appropriate to approve such facilities. In regard to this we propose to authorize the school boards who have been given the statutory

responsibility for the operation of these schools to decide if all subjects should be and can be taught in the French language. The Federal Government, we are told, will accept financial responsibility for the program. The Department of Education will be ready to advise and assist the municipal boards in the carrying out of their duties as is the policy in regard to other subjects.

The second section has to do with the improved facilities generally for the teaching of French as a second language. Here it is our intention to take the following action:

1. Recruit and train more teachers who can speak French and are taught to use the oral method.

2. Make an effort to refine, improve and further develop our program for teacher training in the regular training institutions and in our Nova Scotia Summer School for teachers.

3. Instruct our French committees to review the methods and procedures now used in the teaching of French in the schools of the Province and then to recommend to the Department ways and means of improving our present program.

4. Continue to provide teachers with financial assistance to prepare themselves to teach French as we have done with other special subjects, and further subsidize training programs in accordance with the amount of financial assistance made available to us by the federal government.

5. Continue to provide instruction in French by television and radio. In addition we propose to experiment with radiovision which we are told is a fairly inexpensive and efficient way to teach languages. The lessons taught by radio will be supplemented by slides and other materials that can be used by the teachers in the classrooms to assist children to learn to speak the French language.

I want it clearly understood that the recommendations I have made to my Government which have been accepted by them came to me as recommendations from my staff and may or may not reflect my personal opinions regarding the matter. I wish to point out that I have been very careful to seek out and accept the best professional advice available before I made any recommendation to the Government.

Perhaps you will understand what I mean when I say that I would feel more comfortable in announcing the policy of the Government regarding the teaching of French in the schools of the Province of Nova Scotia if my name was Ferguson or Nicolson rather than Doucet.

I have carried out my responsibilities as Minister based on the best professional information available to me.