

CONFIDENTIAL

Document No. 270

August 14, 1970

CONSTITUTIONAL CONFERENCE

COMMITTEE OF MINISTERS ON OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

Meeting No. 3

May 25, 1970

PROGRESS REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE  
OF MINISTERS ON OFFICIAL LANGUAGES  
TO THE CONSTITUTIONAL CONFERENCE

CMOL/R/4

Committee of Ministers on Official Languages

PROGRESS REPORT

The Committee of Ministers on Official Languages met on May 25th, 1970.

The Committee considered proposals for a federal-provincial programme of cooperation with respect to bilingualism in the field of education. These proposals had been developed following bilateral consultations between the federal government and individual provincial governments. These consultations had proceeded in accordance with the conclusion of the Constitutional Conference in December 1969 that there should be bilateral consultations concerning the policy of the Government of Canada following upon the recommendations in Volume II of the Report of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism.

The Ministers agreed that the governments would want to meet the following objectives:

- to ensure, in so far as it is feasible, that all Canadians have the opportunity to educate their children in the official language of their choice;
- to ensure, in so far as it is feasible, that school children in Canada are given the opportunity to learn, as a second language, the other official language of Canada.

It was recognized that governments have already taken significant steps toward the achievement of these goals. At the same time, the Ministers supported the idea of federal financial assistance to facilitate further progress. It was understood that any action to be taken in providing financial assistance would not infringe the field of provincial jurisdiction in matters of education.

The Committee examined formulas which might be used for the distribution of the funds earmarked for the programme, and adopted the concept of full-time students or the equivalent for both minority- and second-language instruction.

The members of the Committee agreed that, for purposes of this programme, any student in elementary or primary school who receives 75% or more of his instruction in the minority language would be considered a full-time student. A student who receives 60% or more of his instruction in secondary and post-secondary institutions (other than universities) in the minority language would be equivalent to a full-time student. The percentages for each level would apply to all students in a province. A student receiving less than the relevant percentages of his instruction in the minority language would be considered as a fraction of a full-time student.<sup>1</sup> On the basis of this formula, the Federal Government would pay each province, for each full-time student equivalent, an amount equal to 9% of that province's average instruction cost per student. Furthermore, to help cover the additional administrative costs that minority language instruction would entail for the province, the Federal Government would pay an amount equal to 1½% of that province's average instruction cost per student. This sum would be calculated on the total number of students of the official-language minority, whether such students are already studying in their mother tongue or not. The formula also provides that the Federal Government would pay to each province, for second-language instruction, an amount equal to 5% of that province's average instruction cost per student; the number of students would be determined according to the "full-time student" formula explained above.

... 3

1. Therefore a student receiving 40% of his instruction in the minority language, is considered the equivalent of 4/10 of a full-time student.

It was agreed in principle, subject to further consultation on the detailed application of the programme, that such federal grants should apply to the following level of instructions:

- officially recognized and provincially supported teaching at the elementary and secondary levels;
- provincially recognized technical instruction at the secondary levels;
- credit courses for adults at the primary and secondary levels;
- correspondence courses recognized by Departments of Education;
- officially recognized specialized courses for the blind and the deaf;
- post-secondary education (other than university) diploma students (CEGEP, community colleges and technical institutes).

It was agreed, further, to recommend to governments that this formula should be adopted for a trial period of 18 months, after which it would be re-examined to assess its adequacy in the light of experience.

It was recognized that all the provinces would not be entering the programme at the same starting point and that funds would be needed to assist certain provinces to "catch up" with others. Consequently the Federal Government also declared its willingness to consider assisting special "catch-up" projects to the extent that these projects could be financed from the funds allocated for this programme.

The Committee agreed that there should be further discussions between the federal and provincial governments to work out the details of implementing the programme and applying the formula accepted by the various governments. Such consultations would also be concerned with developing the agreement in principle to use the services of the Dominion Bureau of Statistics for the collection of the information required for the smooth operation of the programme. One province suggested that these consultations could consider the collection of the required information in the manner used for the 1967 federal-provincial agreements on the financing of post-secondary education.

Subject to any direction from the Constitutional Conference, the Committee of Ministers would plan to meet again before the end of 1970, to review progress in the implementation of the new programme, to consider other recommendations of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, and to consider constitutional aspects of official languages.