



BACKGROUND PAPER

**OFFICIAL LANGUAGES OR
NATIONAL LANGUAGES?
CANADA'S DECISION**

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Official Languages or National Languages? Canada's Decision
(Background Paper)

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2013–2014 and again since June 2020, some Canadian political figures have used the terms “national languages” and “official languages” interchangeably to refer to English and French when discussing the federal language regime.

However, these two terms are not equivalent. “Official” status requires the government to communicate with citizens and provide them with services in that language. In contrast, a “national” language is afforded some protection by the government that has so designated it, and some measures may be enacted to promote its use in society. However, its use in official communications is not prescribed by law.

Legally speaking, Canada does not have national languages. The Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism (1963–1969) deliberated on the kind of status it should recommend the federal government confer on English and French. The commissioners, advised by eminent professors of law and other legal experts, decided that section 133 of the *British North America Act* – which outlines the use of English and French in the parliaments of Canada and Quebec – already implicitly conferred “official” status on both those languages. It is, therefore, largely on that legal foundation that the commissioners based their recommendations to make English and French official languages.

Such was Canada’s decision in the 1960s. That said, Canada’s linguistic dynamic is continually changing. The Canadian linguistic landscape became even more complex with the adoption of the *Indigenous Languages Act* in 2019. It could be argued that this Act implicitly confers the status of national languages on Indigenous languages. Moreover, the issue of Indigenous languages has arisen in the context of the modernization of the *Official Languages Act*, a process undertaken by the federal government in 2018–2019.

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES OR NATIONAL LANGUAGES? CANADA'S DECISION

1 INTRODUCTION

In recent years, some federal parliamentarians have on occasion described English and French, which have official language status in Canada, as “national languages.” This background paper situates the use of the term “national languages” in Canada’s historic and linguistic landscape, beginning with a brief explanation of the difference between a “national language” and an “official language.” It then traces the decision to use the term “official languages” to describe English and French, as well as the recommendation to give them a legal foundation, two factors leading to the adoption of the *Official Languages Act* in 1969. Lastly, it addresses the recent usage of “national languages” to better explain what some parliamentarians mean by that term.

2 “OFFICIAL LANGUAGE” AND “NATIONAL LANGUAGE”

Are the terms “official language” and “national language” synonymous? Can we use them interchangeably when discussing the legal status of English and French in Canada?

The answer to both these questions appears to be “no” – that there is a difference between these two terms and that they reflect two separate approaches to language management. Giving legislative status to one language over another affects how that language is used in society and its relationship with the other languages spoken in the geographic area.¹ Several countries, including Switzerland,² have taken this distinction into account and have even decided to include in their constitutions the status of the languages spoken within their borders.

This section briefly explains what the two different statuses mean and the implications of each. The explanation is based mainly on the concepts put forward by the University of Ottawa’s Official Languages and Bilingualism Institute (OLBI) and the Commission of Inquiry on the Position of the French Language and on Language Rights in Quebec (Gendron Commission). The Commission’s 1972 report seems to be the first government document in Canada to make a specific distinction between “official languages” and “national languages.”³

2.1 OFFICIAL LANGUAGE

In the second volume of its report, the Gendron Commission stated that, of all the terms used to conceptualize language during its hearings, “only two can claim to have any currency as terms of art in constitutional law. These are the concepts of an ‘official language,’ and of a ‘national language.’”⁴

According to the Commission:

To speak of an *Official Language* means no more and no less than that the public authority – the State – has seen fit, in either constitutional or statutory form (usually the former), to place its power behind one or more languages as the public language or languages of the State.⁵

Various political scientists and sociolinguists agree that an “official language” is the language in which a government decides it will operate and, as indicated by the OLBI, recognizing a language as official in a legal document usually bestows language rights on citizens.⁶ Some experts believe that the status of “official language” is the highest recognition a country can give a language.⁷

2.2 NATIONAL LANGUAGE

Although a “national language” enjoys some form of government recognition, the government is not required to operate in that language.⁸

According to the OLBI, when a government declares a language to be national, it usually makes a commitment to protect and promote it so that citizens can use it more readily. The OLBI explains why a government would choose to grant a language “national” status rather than “official” status:

[G]overnments can opt for “national status” because it seems less binding than “official status,” which forces them to actually use the language in question.

What’s more, the approach recognizes that the linguistic group forms part of the country’s national heritage, and thus represents more than a simple minority. In principle, all of the languages spoken by a country’s inhabitants could qualify as national languages.⁹

The Gendron Commission further explained the consequences of such a decision:

A *National Language* may be viewed as being in a somewhat lesser legal category. To designate a language or languages, in either constitutional or statutory form, as National Languages, is simply to confer on them certain legal privileges as to user. They receive the *imprimatur* of the state in a purely facultative way, without

necessarily having the general resources of the state or its treasury brought to their aid. For example, to designate certain languages as National Languages, for a particular region or regions, would mean that there is a constitutional privilege to use those languages as the primary or even exclusive language of instruction in schools in that region or regions, without offending against the normal constitutional requirement of instruction only in the Official (state) Language or Languages. There would, however, be no concomitant obligation on the part of the state, (and conceivably perhaps, no legal power – in the absence, in any case, of an express legal stipulation to that effect), to aid such National Languages, either directly in the form of financial subventions, or indirectly in the form of the interposition of the state administrative apparatus.¹⁰

3 CANADA'S DECISION

The OLBI makes the following statement regarding language management in Canada:

In Canada, the two official languages – English and French – are also national languages, but the term carries no legal weight under Canada's current structure. The languages of Canada's Native Peoples could also qualify as national languages, but for various reasons, the country does not use the concept of *national languages* in its legislation.¹¹

This section explores certain stages in the process leading to this decision, which was made official with the adoption of the first *Official Languages Act* in 1969. The work of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism from 1963 to 1969 accounted for most of this process.

3.1 THE ROYAL COMMISSION ON BILINGUALISM AND BICULTURALISM

The Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism (also known as the Laurendeau-Dunton Commission) was established in 1963 by the government of Lester B. Pearson and given this mandate:

[T]o inquire into and report upon the existing state of bilingualism and biculturalism in Canada and to recommend what steps should be taken to develop the Canadian Confederation on the basis of an equal partnership between the two founding races, taking into account the contribution made by the other ethnic groups to the cultural enrichment of Canada and the measures that should be taken to safeguard that contribution.¹²

The Commission was essentially an extensive six-year public inquiry (1963–1969). It generated a significant amount of testimony and a large number of briefs and administrative documents, as well as scholarly research. A look through the Commission's vast archives shows that it examined the difference between a “national language” and an “official language” during its mandate. Archival documents also provide insight into the decision to opt for “official language” status.

3.1.1 The Difference Between a “National Language” and an “Official Language”

3.1.1.1 The Contribution of Commissioner Rudnyckyj

The archival holdings of one of the members of the Commission, Jaroslav Rudnyckyj – a respected professor and linguist – show that there was at least one public discussion on the difference between a “national language” and an “official language.” This discussion took place between Rudnyckyj and Louis Kos Rabcewicz Zubkowski, Secretary General of the Polish Institute of Arts and Sciences of America, who appeared before the Commission on the second day of preliminary hearings on 8 November 1963.¹³

On the subject of bilingualism, Zubkowski stated that it seemed as if everyone was in agreement on the position of a national language, this position being reserved solely for English and French. Although he emphasized the importance of allowing other languages to flourish in Canada, he emphasized that he would not go so far as to say that a distinction could be established between a national language and official languages, as Switzerland had done. He also stated that French should have the same position in Canada as English.¹⁴

Having an interest in questions of language policy, Rudnyckyj asked Zubkowski whether he thought the distinction made in Switzerland between a “national language” and an “official language” was applicable in Canada. Zubkowski stated that he was not able to give an opinion but that he would very much like this issue to be studied. Rudnyckyj rephrased the question and asked whether Zubkowski thought “Eskimo” and “Indian” were Canadian languages, but the witness simply stated that these peoples had the right to use their language.¹⁵

The issue of the different status given to languages arises again in Rudnyckyj's archival papers. In a 1965 document, the Commissioner mentions having attended the conference entitled, Two Nation Theory of Canada and its Particular Relevance to the Prairie Provinces, held at St. Paul College in Manitoba from 12 to 13 February 1965. During the conference, a speaker suggested that there be a “division of languages in Canada between ‘official’ and ‘national’ ones.”¹⁶

These two examples of public discussions show that, as early as 1963, both those in academic circles and those involved in the Laurendeau-Dunton Commission were considering the difference between a “national language” and an “official language” and about the status to be given to English and French.

3.1.1.2 Study Group “C”

The minutes of the Commission’s Study Group “C,” responsible for examining the technicalities of constitutional change,¹⁷ confirm that researchers and members of the Commission certainly discussed the distinction between an “official language” and a “national language.”

On 1 April 1966, the group began a comparative study of the language frameworks in South Africa, Switzerland and Finland, assisted by three experts in the field, Messrs. Heard, Welsh and Miljan.¹⁸ By examining the constitutions of various countries, the study group members likely gained insight into the various types of status a state could confer on a language.

At the next meeting on 25 April 1966, the study group discussed the difference between a national language and an official language.¹⁹ The report from the meeting shows that a discussion took place, but gives no specifics.²⁰ It simply states that members:

[c]onsidered the Constitutional provisions for unofficial languages in the context of the Swiss pattern distinguishing “official” and “national” languages. ... There was then some discussion about “official” languages versus “national” language.²¹

At the 51st meeting of the Commission in February 1967, co-chair Davidson Dunton reminded the commissioners that the Commission “had not accepted the terms ‘national’ or ‘regional’ for languages.”²² This indicates that a discussion had taken place.

3.1.2 The Decision: Two Official Languages

In Book I of its final report, which focused on official languages and was published in 1967, the Laurendeau-Dunton Commission made the following recommendations:

- that English and French be officially declared the “official languages of the Parliament of Canada, of the federal courts, of the federal government, and of the federal administration”;
- that section 133 of the *British North America Act* (BNA Act) be reworded so that the first paragraph confirmed that “English and French are the two official languages of Canada”; and

- that “the federal Parliament adopt a federal Official Languages Act” and that “the Governor in Council appoint a Commissioner of Official Languages charged with ensuring respect for the status of French and English in Canada.”²³

But why did the commissioners recommend that the official status of English and French be recognized in legislation? Part of the answer can perhaps be found in a provision of Canada’s constitution.

3.1.2.1 Section 133 of the *British North America Act*

At the time, many legal experts and academics believed that section 133 of the BNA Act already conferred official status on English and French. Section 133 reads as follows:

Either the English or the French Language may be used by any Person in the Debates of the Houses of the Parliament of Canada and of the Houses of the Legislature of Quebec; and both those Languages shall be used in the respective Records and Journals of those Houses; and either of those Languages may be used by any Person or in any Pleading or Process in or issuing from any Court of Canada established under this Act, and in or from all or any of the Courts of Quebec.

In a 1964 publication concerning language in Canada, Commissioner Rudnyckyj stated that entrenching English and French as official languages was an outcome of the country’s history:

The colonial languages were established by peoples that were able to take hold and maintain their domination in Canada, thus ensuring the continuation of the imported languages in this country. Two colonial languages succeeded in establishing themselves as official languages in Canada: English (unrestrictedly) and French (restricted to some spheres of use by [article] 133 of the BNA Act and its further amendments).²⁴

Some legal experts, such as Walter Jacobson Lindal, had also accepted the idea that the official status of English and French flowed from section 133 of the BNA Act. On 5 September 1964, Lindal wrote to Commissioner Rudnyckyj to share his thoughts on the evolution of the status of English and French in Canada based on various constitutional documents. He wrote as follows:

The use of a language in the legislative body of a state and in its records establishes that language as an official language of that state. Section 133 of the BNA Act provides that both English and French may be used in the debates of the Parliament of Canada, and of the Legislature of Quebec. That makes English and French official languages in all of Canada, and, of course, Quebec.²⁵

The following excerpts from Book I of the Commission's final report clearly show that, in the minds of the commissioners, section 133 of the BNA Act was the basis of the official status of English and French:

In Book I our attention is directed to the two languages mentioned in section 133 of the B.N.A. Act, namely English and French. ...

[T]he present legal foundation of linguistic rights in Canada is to be found in section 133 of the B.N.A. Act of 1867. ...

[T]hus French received definite recognition in the fundamental constitutional law of Canada as an official language equal to English for all federal statutes and in all federal courts everywhere in Canada, and for provincial statutes and in provincial courts in Quebec. ...

Canada is to some extent an officially bilingual country, due mainly to section 133 of the B.N.A. Act. But it is incompletely bilingual, especially if we judge the present situation by the yardstick of the equality of the two official languages.²⁶

3.1.2.2 "Official language": Reality and Definition

At the Commission's 55th meeting, held in Ottawa from 27 to 29 April 1967, commissioners Rudnycky and Royce Frith explained their thoughts on the benefits of using the word "official." Rudnycky said that he supported use of the word because "it legalized the languages and gave them a status *de jure*."²⁷

Frith, who was a diplomat, lawyer and parliamentarian, supported the use of the word "official" because it was "all the more attractive precisely because it was not a 'term of art' in law." He provided the following explanation:

In choosing this word [official], which was thus far not restricted by legal definition, we would, following English legal practice, be leaving it to the courts to define the term through jurisprudence, so as to extend bilingualism to more and more institutions and activities.²⁸

Not long before the meeting, on April 13, N.M. Morrison, the joint secretary to the Commission, sent the commissioners a memorandum in which he suggested that they consider the recommendations made by Marcel Faribault and Robert M. Fowler in their book *Ten To One: The Confederation Wager*, published in 1965.

In the book, the authors had proposed a new constitution for Canada. Morrison believed that, as part of the work to prepare Book I of the Commission's final report, it would be a good idea to look at proposals regarding the status of French and English.

One of the sections to which Morrison drew their attention was section 4:

[Canada's] national anthem is "O Canada," its motto *A mari usque ad mare* and its capital, Ottawa. Its official Federal languages are English and French.²⁹

It was clear to Faribault, Fowler and many others that Canada already had two "official" languages.³⁰

In a document prepared for the Commission in 1966, Claude-Armand Sheppard stated that the term "official language" is "current in legal and political discussions of the language question in Canada." However, he pointed out that "[t]o our knowledge, [it has] never been properly defined."

He suggested the following definition:

We consider an official language to be the language in which laws are passed, cases can be pleaded and argued, and the government and the citizenry deal with one another. In Canada, such description, depending, of course on the jurisdiction, can only fit French and English.³¹

In Book I of its final report, the Laurendeau-Dunton Commission stated that the "expression 'official language' can be ambiguous: the word 'official' has various meanings," and it suggested the following definition: "a language will be official only to the extent that it has received such legal protection." The Commission noted that official bilingualism, "that is, the recognition of English and French as official languages, evolves from the sum of rights expressly guaranteed to English and French by laws protecting their use."³²

3.1.2.3 The Need for a More Specific Legal Foundation

Lindal had previously expressed his thoughts on confirming the official status of English and French in legislation:

If what is contended above [regarding the official character conferred upon English and French by section 133] is unsound, all the [Laurendeau-Dunton] Commission need do is to recommend that there be a declaration in a revised constitution that English and French are the two official languages of Canada.³³

Several Commission members had come to the same conclusion. At a meeting in April 1966, Commissioner Frank Scott "noted that in the present Constitution what is lacking is a statement that French and English are official languages, although such a principle is obviously at the base of the present section 133."³⁴

The Commission illustrated the principle of legal recognition and protection by citing the linguistic guarantees given to Quebec in section 133 of the BNA Act:

Thus it is often said, “Quebec is the only officially bilingual province,” because it is the only province mentioned in section 133 of the Constitution. The guarantee protecting French and English in Quebec is not subject to arbitrary decisions of officials, ministers, or governments, or even of a particular legislative assembly; it has, therefore, the maximum degree of permanence.³⁵

It was this concern about expanding the scope of section 133 of the BNA Act that led the Commission to decide in September 1966 to recommend passing an official languages act.³⁶ This recommendation was made official in 1967 in Book I of its final report.

3.2 ADOPTION OF THE *OFFICIAL LANGUAGES ACT*

On 17 October 1968, slightly more than a year after the Commission released Book I of its report, the government tabled in the House of Commons Bill C-120, An Act respecting the status of official languages in Canada.

In keeping with the Commission’s main recommendations,³⁷ the purpose of the bill was to make English and French the official languages of Canada and confirm the equal status, rights and privileges regarding their use in all institutions of Parliament and the government of Canada.³⁸

Neither the House of Commons nor the Senate disputed the “official” status of English and French. The bill’s opponents mainly did the following:

- challenged its constitutionality;
- questioned Parliament’s authority to pass legislation of this kind, stating that it amended section 133 of the BNA Act;
- expressed concern over the jobs held by unilingual public servants; and
- stated that the bill discriminated against the other languages spoken in Canada.³⁹

After lengthy debate, the legislation received Royal Assent on 9 July 1969, and came into force two months later on 7 September.

4 RECENT USE OF THE TERM “NATIONAL LANGUAGES”

On 16 October 2013, in the Speech from the Throne beginning the 2nd Session of the 41st Parliament, the Right Honourable David Johnston, Governor General of Canada, described Canada as a “federation in which [our] two national languages position us uniquely in the world.”⁴⁰ The Prime Minister of Canada also used the term “national languages” in his message in the *Roadmap for Canada’s Official Languages 2013–2018*,⁴¹ and it has been used by the government on other occasions.⁴²

For example, at a meeting of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Official Languages on 27 November 2013, a government member asked the Commissioner of Official Languages whether using the term “national languages” would symbolize a stronger recognition of English and French. In responding, the Commissioner expressed some concern regarding its use: “If we agree that certain languages are official and that others are national, which is to say limited to a certain territory, I think there may be a risk of creating hierarchy. That being said, I am just beginning to reflect upon this issue, which is why I hesitate to provide you with a clear answer.”⁴³

The issue arose again in March 2014, when the Honourable Shelly Glover, Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages, used both terms during her two appearances before the Standing Senate Committee on Official Languages⁴⁴ and the House of Commons Standing Committee on Official Languages.⁴⁵

The *Action Plan for Official Languages 2018–2023: Investing in Our Future*,⁴⁶ unveiled by the federal government in March 2018, does not use the term “national languages.”

In June 2020, during the first Conservative Party of Canada leadership debate (held in French), the Honourable Erin O’Toole stated that “it is an advantage for our country to have our two national languages.”⁴⁷ In his victory speech in August 2020, Mr. O’Toole, newly elected as Conservative Party leader, said that he was in politics to “fight for all Canadians and our two national languages.”⁴⁸ Since that time, Mr. O’Toole, along with some other Conservative members of Parliament, has used the term “national languages” in the House of Commons,⁴⁹ during meetings of the Standing Committee on Official Languages,⁵⁰ in official communications and in various forums.

The increased use of the term “national languages” by the leader of the Conservative Party has raised questions among some community stakeholders and observers. Recently, Alexandre Cédric Doucet, President of the Société de l’Acadie du Nouveau-Brunswick (SANB), published a document in which he pondered the reasons for this change in vocabulary among federal Conservatives:

The question that can be asked about this choice of words is whether the use of the adjective “national” (instead of the usual “official”)

represents 1) simply a different choice of words to distance themselves from the words of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, 2) a change of ideological direction respecting the legal status of English and French, 3) an indicator of a binational vision of Canada that breaks with multiculturalism and the recognition of Canada's Indigenous peoples, or 4) just an extension of the recognition of Quebec as a nation within Canada.⁵¹

Mr. Doucet went on to state the following:

Those four possible answers may not be mutually exclusive or even the only possibilities. Conversely, they could imply that Mr. O'Toole is drawing on a different tradition from the one that has permeated Canadian politics for the past 50 years or that he is proposing a new social contract on the complex issue of official languages.⁵²

Recently, Mr. O'Toole told ONFR+ that his use of the term "national languages" is a way of promoting Canadian history: "Sometimes I use national languages, sometimes official languages, but talking about the importance of French is a matter of respect, to make people understand that French is a fundamental language in our history."⁵³

5 THE POSSIBILITY OF DESIGNATING NATIONAL LANGUAGES IN CANADA

Internationally, some countries have chosen to grant one or more languages both official language and national language status. This is the case in Sri Lanka, whose constitution recognizes Sinhala and Tamil as the official, national and administrative languages of the country. It is also true of Switzerland, where German, French, Italian and Romansh are the official and national languages of the Confederation.⁵⁴

In Canada, it can be argued that the *Indigenous Languages Act* (2019) implicitly confers the status of national languages on Indigenous languages.⁵⁵ The Act recognizes that Indigenous language rights are Aboriginal rights: they are constitutional rights under section 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982*, and international rights (*United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*). More concretely, the Act commits the federal government to supporting Indigenous language revitalization efforts, as led by Indigenous governing bodies or organizations. It also authorizes federal institutions to provide, to the extent possible, services in Indigenous languages and calls for the creation of an Office of the Commissioner of Indigenous Languages.

In February 2021, the federal government issued *English and French: Towards a Substantive Equality of Official Languages in Canada*. This white paper was produced as part of the process of modernizing the *Official Languages Act*. In it, the government states that Canada's linguistic regime must take into account the *Indigenous Languages Act*. More specifically, it proposes to “strengthen section 83, which indicates that nothing in the Act abrogates or derogates from the rights of other languages, by explicitly mentioning Indigenous languages.”⁵⁶

6 CONCLUSION

There is a difference between the legal status of an “official language” and that of a “national language” in that an official language generally bestows language rights on citizens. This distinction is more than a simple matter of terminology; these terms represent different concepts in language management.

Canada decided to grant English and French the status of official languages and not to include the concept of a national language in legislation following a process of debate that ended with a conscious decision and the adoption of the first *Official Languages Act*.

More recently, the term “national languages” has been used by some political figures to refer to English and French. In addition, the enactment of the *Indigenous Languages Act* in 2019 and the desire to give some consideration to Indigenous languages in the modernization of the *Official Languages Act* raise questions as to the future use of the term “national languages” in Canadian language policy.

NOTES

1. Louis-Jean Calvet, *Les politiques linguistiques*, Collection “Que sais-je?”, Presses universitaires de France, Paris, 1996, pp. 17 and 18.
2. Switzerland has three official languages (German, French and Italian) and four national languages (German, French, Italian and Romansh).
3. On 9 December 1968, following closely on the federal government's language management initiatives, the Quebec government established the Commission of Inquiry on the Position of the French Language and on Language Rights in Quebec, chaired by linguist Jean-Denis Gendron (Gendron Commission).
4. Government of Quebec, [Rapport de la Commission d'enquête sur la situation de la langue française et sur les droits linguistiques au Québec – Livre II : Les droits linguistiques](#), Québec, December 1972, p. 21. [TRANSLATION]
5. Ibid., p. 22.
6. Official Languages and Bilingualism Institute [OLBI], University of Ottawa, [“National-Language Status,” Compendium of Language Management in Canada](#).
7. Linda Cardinal, [“Les sources de légitimité des droits linguistiques au Canada,”](#) Documentation capitale/Capital Documentation – Centre de ressources, 11th Annual Michel Bastarache Conference, Ottawa, 21 March 2014. [AVAILABLE IN FRENCH ONLY]

8. Linda Cardinal, "Les enjeux de la diversité linguistique au Canada et au Québec," in Jacques Palard et al., eds., *Diversité et identités au Québec et dans les régions d'Europe*, Les Presses de l'Université Laval, 2006, p. 98.
9. OLBI, "National-Language Status."
10. Government of Quebec (1972), pp. 24–25. In a summary prepared for the Gendron Commission, Claude-Armand Sheppard explored the difference between an official language and a national language and suggested that "French be proclaimed the national language of Quebec, and French and English be recognized as official languages" [TRANSLATION]. It is worth noting that Sheppard had also produced documents for the federal Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism several years before. See Claude-Armand Sheppard, *Régimes linguistiques canadiens et étrangers*, Summary S6. Summaries prepared for the Commission of Inquiry on the Position of the French Language and on Language Rights in Quebec, Montréal, 1972.
11. OLBI, "National-Language Status."
12. Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism [RCBB], [*Report of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism: Book I – General Introduction. The Official Languages*](#), Ottawa, Queen's Printer, 1967, p. XXI.
13. Library and Archives Canada [LAC], Jaroslav Rudnyckyj fonds, MG31 D58, Vol. 6, "Memoranda and correspondence re drafts 1966–1967," *Oct–Nov 1963 – Royal CBB Summary Report on the Ottawa Preliminary Hearings*, Ottawa.
14. LAC, Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism fonds, RG33-80, "Preliminary Hearings," 7 and 8 November 1963, Ottawa, p. 338, Microfilm reel 4884.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 346.
16. LAC, Jaroslav Rudnyckyj fonds, MG31 D58, Vol. 5, File 7, "Reports on Canadian Meetings re: B&B issues 1963–1968," Memorandum, 1965. The speaker was Mary Wawrykow of Winnipeg. Unfortunately, her document does not seem to have been published.
17. Study groups were composed of commissioners, members of the research team and specialists. Their task was to examine specific issues in order to advise the Commission and prepare recommendations for its review.
18. LAC, Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism fonds, RG33-80 1974-5/39, Vol. 256, 891E – 5th meeting.
19. Five people were present at this meeting: Frank Scott, a constitutional law expert and a commissioner; Michael Oliver, a professor of political science at McGill University and research director for the Commission; J. Taylor, study group secretary; André Laurendeau, co-chair and chief administrator of the Commission; and Kenneth McRae, professor of political science at Carleton University and research supervisor-consultant for the Commission.
20. LAC, Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism fonds, RG33-80 1974-5/39, Vol. 256, File 943 E, "Report of discussion SG 'C.'"
21. LAC, Jaroslav Rudnyckyj fonds, MG31 D58, Vol. 6, "Memoranda and correspondence re drafts 1966–1967, Study Group 'C' Meeting, April 25, 1966."
22. LAC, Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism fonds, RG33-80 1974-5/39, Vol. 56, "Minutes of the 51st meeting of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, 2 to 4 February 1967."
23. RCBB (1967), pp. 147 and 149.
24. LAC, Jaroslav Rudnyckyj fonds, MG31 D58, Vol. 206, File 13, Rudnyckyj, "Ethno-lingual Groups in Canada," 1964. Professor Rudnyckyj raised these issues again in the supplementary opinion to Book I of the final report of the Laurendeau-Dunton Commission.
25. LAC, Jaroslav Rudnyckyj fonds, MG31 D58, Vol. 8, File 1, "W.J. Lindal on bilingualism."
26. RCBB (1967), pp. xxvii, 47, 48 and 74.
27. LAC, Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism Fonds, RG33-80 1974-5/39, Vol. 56, "Minutes of the 55th meeting of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, 27 to 29 April 1967."
28. *Ibid.*

29. Marcel Faribault and Robert M. Fowler, *Ten To One: The Confederation Wager*, McClelland & Stewart, Toronto, 1965, pp. 120–121.
30. *Ibid.*, p. 45.
31. Claude-Armand Sheppard, "Part VII – Conclusions: The Official Status of Languages in Canada," [The Law of Languages in Canada](#), 1971, p. 291.
32. RCBB (1967), p. 74.
33. LAC, Jaroslav Rudnyckyj fonds, MG31 D58, Vol. 8, File 1, "W.J. Lindal on bilingualism."
34. LAC, Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism fonds, RG33-80 1974-5/39, Vol. 56, "Minutes of the 42nd meeting of the Commission, 13 to 15 April 1966," p. 24.
35. RCBB (1967), p. 74.
36. The decision to recommend that legislation be passed and the office of the commissioner be created was made in a formal vote in September 1966 at the 47th meeting of the Commission. LAC, Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism fonds, RG33-80 1974-5/39, Vol. 56, "Minutes of the 47th meeting of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, 1 to 2 September 1966."
37. RCBB (1967), recommendations 1 and 13.
38. *Official Languages Act* of 1969, R.S.C. 1970, c. O-2, s. 2. Similar to the Commission's position, this statement was also included, with a broader constitutional scope, in s. 16(1) of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. See [Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms](#), Part I of the *Constitution Act, 1982*, being Schedule B to the *Canada Act, 1982* (U.K.), 1982, c. 11.
39. The debate over the difference between an "official language" and a "national language" was not included in the report of the special committee studying the official languages bill, which was tabled in Parliament on 13 June 1969.
40. Library of Parliament, "[Speech from the Throne to open the Second Session of the Forty First Parliament of Canada](#)," *Parlinfo*, Database, 16 October 2013.
41. "As Canadians, we are very proud of the coexistence of our two national languages." See Canadian Heritage, "[Message from Prime Minister of Canada](#)," *Roadmap for Canada's Official Languages 2013–2018: Education, Immigration, Communities*, 2013.
42. The term "national languages" appears in several recent federal documents (e.g., Government of Canada, "[Harper Government Invests in Healthcare Services for Minority Language Communities](#)," News release, 30 May 2014), while the term "official languages" appears in others (e.g., Government of Canada, "[Statement by Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages Shelly Glover About National Acadian Day](#)," Statement, 15 August 2014). Both terms appear in Canadian Heritage, [Official Languages Annual Report 2012–13](#).
43. House of Commons, Standing Committee on Official Languages [LANG], [Evidence](#), 2nd Session, 41st Parliament, 27 November 2013, 1700 (Graham Fraser, Commissioner of Official Languages, Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages).
44. Senate, Standing Committee on Official Languages, [Evidence](#), 2nd Session, 41st Parliament, 3 March 2014 (The Honourable Shelley Glover, Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages).
45. LANG, [Evidence](#), 2nd Session, 41st Parliament, 6 March 2014 (The Honourable Shelley Glover, Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages).
46. Government of Canada, [Action Plan for Official Languages 2018–2023: Investing in Our Future](#), Ottawa, 2018.
47. Benjamin Vachet, "[Direction conservatrice: un débat en français laborieux](#)," *ONFR+*, 17 June 2020. [TRANSLATION]
48. "[Conservative Leadership: Erin O'Toole Delivers Victory Speech](#)," *CPAC*, Special episode, 23 August 2020, 06:12.
49. House of Commons, [Debates](#), 2nd Session, 43rd Parliament, 3 November 2020, 1211 (The Honourable Steven Blaney, MP); and House of Commons, [Debates](#), 2nd Session, 43rd Parliament, 8 October 2020, 1514 (Gérard Deltell, MP).
50. LANG, [Evidence](#), 2nd Session, 43rd Parliament, 24 November 2020, 1623 (The Honourable Steven Blaney, MP).

51. Alexandre Cédric Doucet, [Langues officielles vs Langues nationales: La confrontation de deux visions du Canada](#), Société de l'Acadie du Nouveau-Brunswick, 30 November 2020, p. 3. [TRANSLATION]
52. Ibid. [TRANSLATION]
53. Benjamin Vachet, "[Les langues officielles, une priorité, pas un simple geste politique](#)", dit O'Toole," *ONFR+*, 11 December 2020. [TRANSLATION]
54. In the case of Romansh, article 70 of the *Federal Constitution of the Swiss Confederation* specifies that "Romansh is also an official language of the Confederation when communicating with persons who speak Romansh." See Swiss Confederation, [Federal Constitution of the Swiss Confederation](#), RS 101, 18 April 1999, art. 70.
55. [Indigenous Languages Act](#), S.C. 2019, c. 23.
56. Government of Canada, [English and French: Towards a Substantive Equality of Official Languages in Canada](#), Ottawa, 2021.