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Citizenship and Immigration

Human Resources Development Canada
Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions
Royal Canadian Mounted Police
Fisheries and Oceans Canada
Revenue Canada
Health Canada
Canada Post Corporation
Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation
Farm Credit Corporation Canada
Public Works and Government Services Canada

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SUMMARY

This report is a follow-up on the study we conducted in 1994 to determine the extent to which federal offices which are designated bilingual offered good quality service in English and French. The report deals with the situation in Quebec. Its purpose is to determine whether the recommendations made in 1994 produced results and to ensure effective corrective action for any deficiency found in the offices included in the follow-up.

It is relatively easy to obtain quality service in English consistently on the telephone and in person in designated offices in Quebec. The overall two-language capability of designated offices has declined slightly, but most offices continue to provide quality service in both official languages.

In view of the recommendations made in 1994 and the action plans prepared by federal institutions to give effect to them, the results achieved in correcting deficiencies regarding active offer of service are nevertheless unsatisfactory. The percentage of offices displaying the symbol for service in both languages has improved, but to an insufficient extent, rising from 68% to 82%. Moreover, just three of the 17 offices we visited provided a greeting in both official languages. As for two-language reception on the telephone, it was offered consistently in only 59% of cases; in 30% of cases it was done in French only.

Managers and staff are generally aware of their office's linguistic obligations. Unfortunately, directives are not always followed, especially with regard to reception in both official languages, for service on the telephone and service in person. In addition, some federal offices could no doubt substantially improve their provision of service in English by establishing better communications with the members of the English-speaking community.



INTRODUCTION

1. Background

The new *Official Languages Act* (OLA) came into effect on September 15, 1988. Under the OLA, every federal institution has the duty to ensure that members of the public can communicate with and obtain services from its central office in English or French, and has the same duty with respect to offices located within the National Capital Region (NCR), in areas where there is significant demand, or when warranted by the nature of the office.

Treasury Board Secretariat (TBS) published the *Official Languages Regulations - Communication with and Services to the Public* (Regulations) on December 16, 1991. The Regulations define the terms "significant demand*" and "nature of the office*" and establish general and specific rules governing their application. Federal institutions are required to designate the offices that must provide services in both official languages, based on the Regulations. TBS coordinated the process and compiled a list of designated points of service. The purpose of the Act and the Regulations is essentially to ensure the availability of services in either official language where a need exists and to enable the public to obtain services, at these designated offices, in the language of their choice.

In 1994, the Commissioner of Official Languages (COL) undertook a study to determine the extent to which federal institutions were complying with the provisions of the OLA and the Regulations. In his report (A Study of Federal Offices Designated to Respond to the Public in Both English and French) released on March 15, 1995, the COL found that services were available in both official languages in 79% of the designated offices (98.8% in Quebec and 72% on average in the other provinces and the territories), with variations from one province to another. The COL also made ten recommendations to improve service delivery in both official languages at designated offices. These recommendations are listed in Appendix A. It should be noted that on March 17, 1995, TBS asked federal institutions to analyze the two-language capability of each office that is required to serve the public in both official languages. Institutions were also to draw up action plans for offices with unsatisfactory performance and report to TBS on their implementation. This exercise was completed in March 1996.

This study fulfills the COL's commitment to follow up on the implementation of the recommended corrective measures. Starting in the fall of 1996, this follow-up is being conducted region by region over a three-year period. Separate reports are being prepared for each province and territory as well as for the NCR. Proceeding in this manner will enable us to identify each linguistic community's specific problems, inform the federal institutions of situations concerning the delivery of their services in English and French and find solutions adapted to local and regional needs. Each report will enable the federal institutions involved to immediately correct shortcomings in service to the public. This report deals with Quebec.

It should be borne in mind that the COL also specified in his study on points of service that "it should be possible to attain 100% effectiveness in two-language service to the public, where numbers warrant, which is the only figure that can be considered acceptable and satisfactory." In 1999, at the time of our follow-up, 885 federal offices out of 2,503 were designated to provide two-language service in Quebec. It is essential that at these locations, members of the public can actually receive all services in the official language of their choice.

In view of the recommendations that the COL made in 1994 and the action plans that federal institutions developed at TBS's request, we were expecting that all the offices designated bilingual would have taken measures to ensure the provision of service in both official languages in Quebec. We anticipated, however, finding occasional lapses, since the complaints we continue to receive show that the quality of services is inconsistent.

2. Objectives

Following the COL's recommendations, federal agencies made a commitment to take the required measures to ensure that services are provided in both official languages at their designated offices. This is, after all, a formal requirement under the OLA and the Regulations.

The purpose of the follow-up is to determine whether there has been improvement since 1994 and to assess the extent to which good quality services are offered and available in both official languages in these offices. Another goal is to efficiently correct any deficiencies in the offices being audited. To that end, specific recommendations are made for each office where there are shortcomings.

3. Scope, methodology and limits

In selecting the institutions to be included in the follow-up, special attention was paid to agencies which, under the Regulations, provide key services*: the Public Service Commission (PSC), Canada Post Corporation (CPC), Revenue Canada (Tax Services), Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC) (Income Security and Human Resources Canada Centres), the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) and Canadian Heritage. The other institutions selected offer services of a general nature to the public and/or are of special importance to the English-speaking population of Quebec. The 1994 study indicated very good results for the federal offices in the Montreal region. Our knowledge of this region : complaints, meetings with representatives of the English-speaking community, etc, revealed that the situation had not changed in 1999. However, we were less sure of the state of services in other parts of Quebec. For this reason, we only audited offices outside the Montreal region.

To evaluate the availability of service, our auditors chose the client approach; that is, they acted like English-speaking citizens of Quebec trying to obtain service in their language. They therefore made their requests for service in English, and if the employee replied in French without directing them to a bilingual employee, the auditors recorded that services were not available in English. They generally did not insist that the organization find someone who could serve them in English.

To begin with, they checked whether telephones were answered in both official languages and whether services were actually available in English at the numbers listed for that purpose in the Government of Canada section of the local telephone directories. They also compared the numbers in the telephone directories with those on the TBS list to identify any discrepancies.

They generally made at least two telephone calls to each of the offices. They then observed whether the greeting was in both languages and whether service was provided in English consistently, occasionally or not at all. When they were greeted in both languages and obtained service in English on each call, our auditors indicated that two-language greeting and service in English were consistent. When the greeting was sometimes in two languages and sometimes in only one, or when service was not available in English on each call, they indicated that two-language greeting and service in English were available occasionally. When, on each call, the greeting was in only one language and service was available in French only, they indicated that there was no two-language greeting and no service in English.

Generally, the auditors visited each office which provided service in person to check signage, documentation, greeting and the availability of service in English. They met the manager to inform him or her of the results of their audit. When they found shortcomings, they informed the manager of the recommendations that would be included in the COL's report.

They also told managers that any corrective action taken before the follow-up report was published would be noted in it. The results of the audits were also sent to the deputy head of each federal institution for comment. We publish the institutions' responses in Part C of the report, immediately following the recommendations to each organization.

As for limits, it should be noted that in the 1994 study, the statistical data were weighted* and the results for Quebec were valid within a limit of 5%. The data from the follow-up have not been weighted and are intended only to describe the situations in the offices visited.

Recommendations made in this report only apply to the offices we visited. However, federal institutions have a duty to examine the linguistic situation in the other offices designated to serve the public in both official languages, and to implement such recommendations as would be relevant there. Also, members of the public can inform us of any shortcomings they encounter at an office designated to provide services in both official languages. These would be investigated through the normal complaints handling process.



B) GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

In our 1994 study, we audited 200 designated offices in Quebec. In the follow-up, we examined 30. The exercise took place during the spring of 1999.

The following pages present general observations on the offices of federal institutions which were included in the follow-up in Quebec. The findings give a portrait of the situations in these offices, which are designated to serve the public in both official languages, and enable us to make a comparison with the situation reported in the 1994 study.

At the time of our 1994 study, Quebec had 2,731 federal offices, 940 of which were designated to provide services in both languages. In 1999, at the time of our follow-up, there were 2,503 offices, 885 of which were designated bilingual. Thus there has been an overall decrease of 10% in the number of federal offices. For offices designated to provide service in English and French, the decrease is about 6%. This decline reflects the many transformations that have occurred within the federal system in recent years.

1. Point of view of representatives of the English-speaking community

During the follow-up, the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages communicated with representatives of the English-speaking community of Quebec to identify the particular factors which might have an impact on the services offered and to better understand the community's concerns.

There was consensus about the general absence of active offer of service, both on the telephone and in person. According to community representatives, the absence of active offer dissuades English-speaking clients in Quebec from fully exercising their language rights.

The observations gathered in this follow-up dealing with services offered by federal institutions generally support the claims made by the English-speaking community representative for Quebec.

2. Signs and documentation

Most of the physical elements associated with the provision of service in both official languages are in place. Only a few designated offices have difficulty managing interior signage in both official languages.

We have made specific recommendations for the offices with shortcomings in this area.

Table 1

Materials Available in Both Official Languages

Type of material	1994 study	1999 follow-up
<i>Exterior sign</i>	98 %	100 %
<i>Interior sign</i>	94 %	94 %
<i>Documentation</i>	98 %	100 %
<i>Forms</i>	99 %	100 %

3. Active offer

Under Section 28 of the OLA, federal institutions are required to provide their clients with a choice of the official language in which they wish to communicate by ensuring that "appropriate measures are taken, including the provision of signs, notices and other information on services and the initiation of communication with the public to make it known ... that those services are available in either official language." Therefore, the onus is not on members of the public to request or demand service in their language. On the contrary, the intent of the OLA is that federal institutions should invite members of the public to communicate with them in the official language of their choice.

The perception that members of the public have of the availability of service in their language depends largely on the effectiveness of measures related to signs and greetings in both languages, over the telephone and in person.

In 1994, we evaluated the quality of measures taken to encourage clients to choose the language in which they wish to be served. This evaluation was based in part on the presence or absence of relevant signage, but also on whether or not employees used a greeting formula which would indicate to members of the public that they could be served in either language. A third element of the evaluation was the attitude shown by staff to a request for service in the language of the local linguistic minority. In 1994, the measures intended to promote the use of services in English in Quebec were satisfactory or better in 93% of cases.

In the follow-up, we limited ourselves to observations on whether or not a two-language greeting was used over the telephone and in person and on the presence or absence of signs telling clients that they could be served in English or French.

a) Signs



A sign is often the only indication the public has that an office is designated to provide service in English and in French. A pictogram or a sign is therefore essential. Since 1988, official languages policies have required that institutions whose employer is the Treasury Board use TBS's official symbol (see left), and that other institutions use this or a some equivalent symbol.

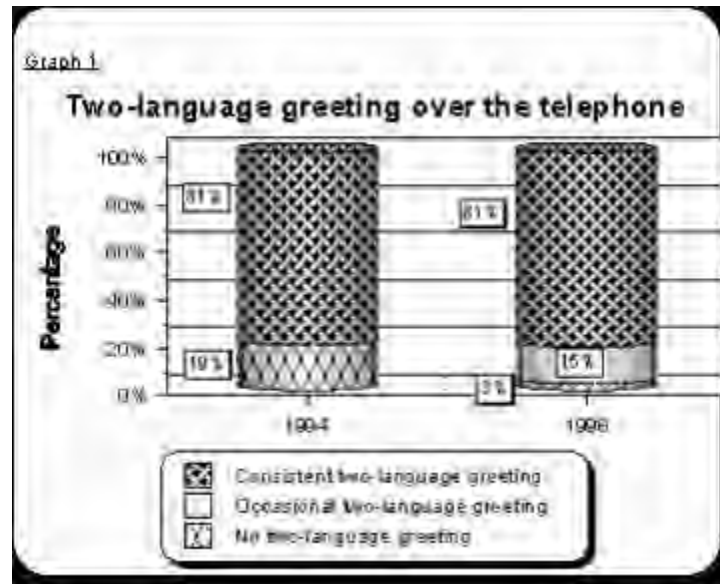
In 1994, 68% of designated offices in Quebec displayed a sign (pictogram) indicating that service was available in English or French. At the time of the follow-up, 82% of the offices visited displayed the TBS pictogram or an equivalent symbol. This is a noteworthy improvement. However, we find it difficult to understand why three of the designated offices visited still do not display an appropriate symbol, more than ten years after the TBS made its pictogram available to them.

Table 2

Signs on the Availability of Service in Both Official Languages

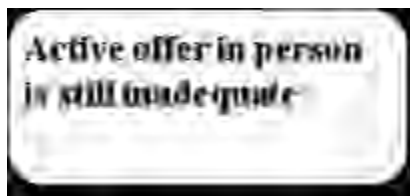
Board or poster	1994 study	1999 follow-up
<i>Present</i>	68 %	82 %

b) Greeting on the telephone and in person



In 1994, employees in federal institutions in Quebec used a two-language greeting on the telephone in only 45% of cases. At the time of our 1999 visit, we noted a slight improvement, but also a certain inconsistency in the way employees of designated offices in Quebec answered telephone calls.

Employees used a two-language greeting consistently on the telephone in 59% of cases; they used a two-language greeting occasionally in 11% of cases; they did not use a two-language greeting in 30% of cases. We have made recommendations to institutions whose offices showed deficiencies in this regard.



In 1994, there was a two-language greeting in person in barely 16% of cases. During our recent survey, only three of the 17 offices we visited (18%) provided a two-language greeting to our auditor. Federal institutions must take concrete measures to rectify this deficiency, which has persisted too long.

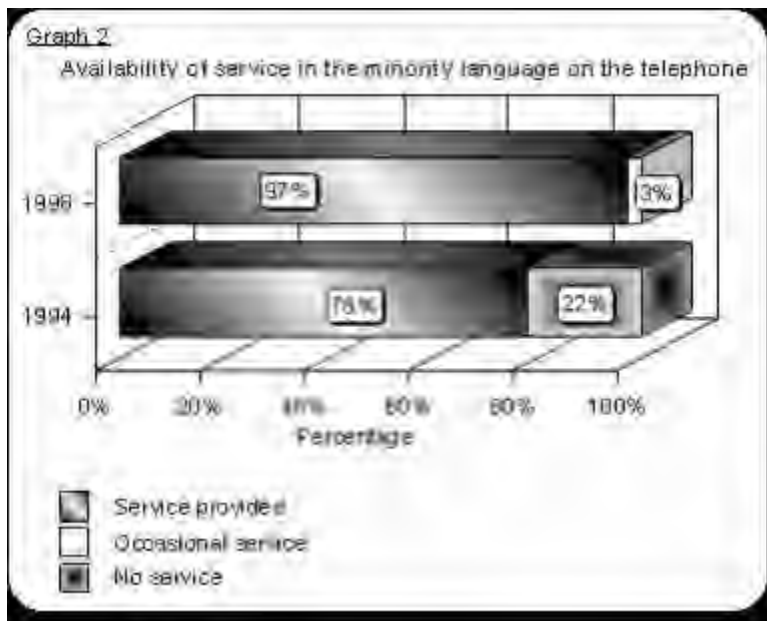
The absence of active offer by federal employees can only discourage English-speaking clients in Quebec from exercising their language rights. In our experience, when members of the public are not clearly encouraged to choose the language of service, the level of demand in the minority language declines significantly.

It should also be noted that citizens often feel at a disadvantage when they deal with federal employees because public servants personify authority, have a better knowledge of the services the clients needs and control access to those services. It is even more important for clients to be invited and encouraged to choose the language of service when they deal with institutions responsible for law enforcement, such as the RCMP, Customs or Revenue Canada, or with institutions providing financial assistance such as the Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions, the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) and the Farm Credit Corporation.

In short, active offer is an essential component of good service. The use of signs and a two-language greeting to indicate that services are available in either language is as indispensable to good service as common courtesy.

4. Service

a) Availability of service in English on the telephone



During the 1994 study, telephone receptionists at bilingual offices in Quebec provided service in English in 96% of cases. The situation was the same in 1999. Employees provided service in English consistently in 96% of cases; they did so occasionally in the other 4% of cases.

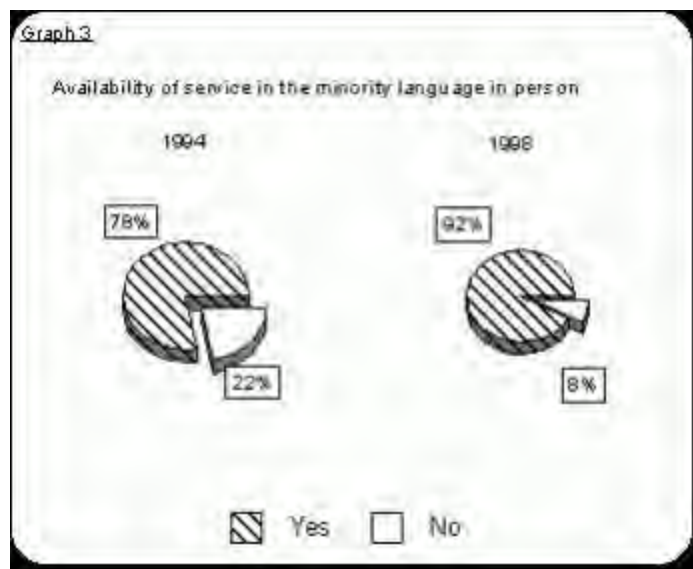
The generally strong two-language capability of most offices explains the very good performance in this regard. We made specific recommendations to redress the situation in offices that showed deficiencies in this regard.

We also made calls to four toll-free telephone lines. In each case, we obtained good quality service in English.

As we stated earlier, reception clerks play a significant role in the provision of service to the public. Clients form their perception of the availability or unavailability of service in their language from the reception or greeting they receive. Employees who are not in a position to offer service in both official languages should call as quickly as possible upon the services of a colleague who is able to serve the client in English.

We also noted that English-speaking clients in Quebec are often transferred to a bilingual employee in French. Federal institutions must take all necessary measures to ensure that English-speaking clients in Quebec feel free to choose to communicate in English at every stage of service.

b) Availability of service in English in person



At the time of our follow-up in 1999, service in person was similar to 1994. Service in English was obtained in all offices that were visited as compared with 98.8% of cases during the initial study. This performance deserves to be noted.

c) Quality of service in English and courtesy

When service in English was provided, the auditors assigned one of three ratings ("very good," "satisfactory" or "poor") to it by evaluating employees' ability to communicate comprehensibly in English. In 1994, the overall evaluation of service provided in English (including telephone and in-person service) was satisfactory or better at 98% of the designated points of service in Quebec.

At the time of our follow-up, the linguistic quality of the service provided in English over the telephone was rated satisfactory or better in all cases. As for the linguistic quality of service in English in person, it was judged satisfactory or better in all of the offices that we visited.

Therefore, we can reasonably say that offices that offer services in both official languages provide good quality service in English, as they did in 1994.

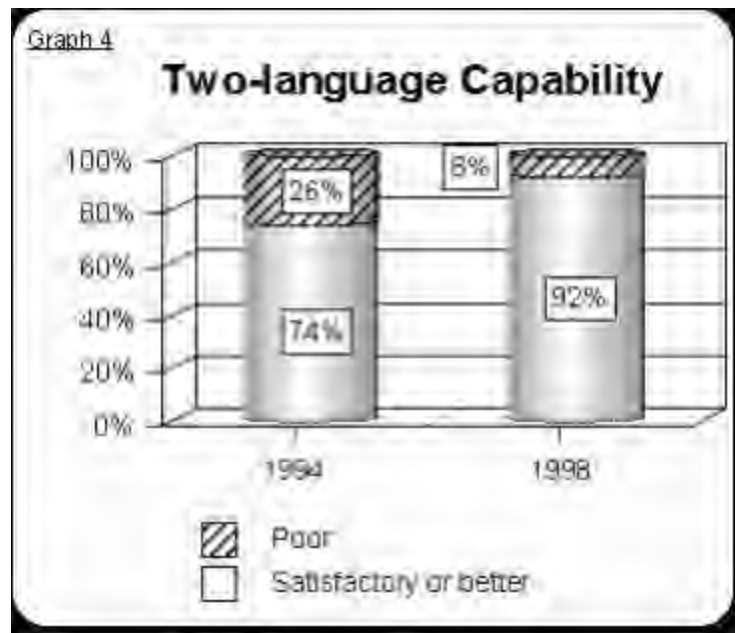
With regard to courtesy, all offices visited and almost all offices (96%) that our auditors have communicated with by telephone have provided courteous service.

d) Comparability

The degree of comparability between service provided in English and that offered in French was judged "very good" when the employee immediately provided our auditor with the service requested in English. For another example, an office was rated "satisfactory" when the employee, perhaps after asking our auditor to speak more slowly, was able to provide him with adequate service in English.

Service on the telephone was described as "poor" in the following case, by way of example. Service was provided, in the end, after communication initiated in English by our auditor was transferred successively to several interlocutors without anyone taking the trouble to inform him of the procedure, each interlocutor speaking in French and transferring the call in English to someone else. While in the end the service was provided in English, we consider this method of delivering service in English inadequate.

During the follow-up, our auditors obtained service in English in person in all of the designated offices that they visited in Quebec. They consistently obtained service in English on the telephone in 96% of cases and occasionally in the other 4% of cases.



As a general rule, when they obtained service in English, our auditors estimated that it was comparable to that provided in French in 96% of the cases for service on the telephone and 94% of cases for service in person. The offices of federal institutions in Quebec generally offer services in English that are of comparable quality to those available in French. Thus, when service is provided in French 24 hours a day, it must be provided in English under the same conditions. When an office provides service in person in French, it is also required to offer service in English. The profiles

of each office that are found in

Part C of this report give details of the various reasons why the auditors judged that service was or was not comparable. The institutions cited should take the required measures to rectify the deficiencies.

5. Two-language capability of offices

The auditors evaluated the two-language capability of a point of service by considering the following two factors: whether or not the office had enough bilingual staff to provide good-quality service in both languages consistently, and whether or not these resources were assigned to positions and work shifts effectively.

In 1994, the capability to provide service in English and French was deemed at least satisfactory or better in 98% of the offices in Quebec. The follow-up showed that designated federal offices in the province had slipped slightly in their ability to provide service in both official languages. Two of the offices visited (8%) had rather poor two-language capability. In one office where there is only one bilingual employee to provide service in English, any absence by this employee deprives the office of its entire capability to provide such service.

In offices where two-language capability shows deficiencies, service in English may be available through administrative arrangements which are usually cumbersome and inadequate. We recognize that some offices may need to take temporary administrative measures to provide service in English. However, such measures should not become permanent; otherwise, English-speaking clients are not receiving service of equal quality, as required by the OLA. Of the offices audited in 1999 in Quebec, only one used an administrative measure to ensure the provision of service in English. No matter what arrangements are made to provide service in English, the lack of adequate two-language capability means that this office is not meeting its linguistic obligations.

Federal institutions with inadequate two-language capability in Quebec must immediately take the necessary measures to acquire the resources needed to provide effective service in both official languages.

6. Informing managers and employees of their official languages obligations

In our 1994 study, we found that 87% of the managers and 96% of the employees of designated offices in Quebec were fairly well informed about their linguistic obligations. At the time, we interviewed a considerable number of managers and employees. In our 1999 follow-up we met mainly with managers. We found that all managers of designated offices were well informed about their linguistic obligations. The percentage was slightly lower among employees, at 92%. We note, however, as shown by the results of our audits, that employees do not always implement the directives received. In addition, the directives are not always explicit, particularly as regards the language to be used to direct English-speaking clients to a bilingual employee. We have made recommendations concerning offices where a reminder to staff would be helpful.

In carefully reviewing the performance of each office and the data on its linguistic obligations, we found that the managers of offices that performed well had made the provision of quality two-language service part of the routine administration of their office. In addition to circulating directives from their head or regional offices, they had organized staff training and orientation sessions; they also regularly discussed problems related to the provision of service in both languages with the staff and monitored the application of directives. In addition, in most cases, they maintained regular contacts with Quebec's English-speaking community.

7. Informing the public about offices designated bilingual

The 1994 study showed that federal institutions had informed the English-speaking community of Quebec well about the services available. The measures taken to inform them were rated very good or satisfactory in 84% of cases. The follow-up shows that the situation has improved even more in this regard.

We found that 95% of the offices audited in 1999 listed their services in the federal government pages of local telephone directories. However, this figure may be deceptive. Our review of the telephone directories shows that the current situation does not make it possible for English-speaking citizens to find out as easily as French-speaking citizens where they can obtain service in their first language. In Quebec, French-speaking members of the public need only consult the blue pages of telephone directories to find out where service is available. This is not the case for English-speaking members of the public, since the publication of information in the English blue pages does not necessarily mean that an office is able to provide service in English or that it is designated bilingual.

The TBS compiles a directory of federal offices that are designated to serve the public in both official languages. In conducting our follow-up, we noted that some of the information in the TBS directory for offices in Quebec was erroneous. Inaccuracies were found in six out of 30 offices listed (20%). Some telephone numbers in the directory did not match those found in the blue pages of telephone directories. Other entries were out of date. In other cases, there was either no listing or the office had moved without updating the information. Federal agencies and the TBS will have to ensure the reliability of such information.

In June 1994, TBS published, in French-language media outside Quebec and in English-language media in Quebec, a list of federal offices designated to serve the public in both official languages. No update was provided in 1995 and in 1996. TBS now publishes the list of offices that provide services in both official languages on the Internet. However, not all Canadians have access to the Internet. Far from it. OCOL therefore decided to join TBS in making this list available to the general public as an insert, which appeared in minority official language newspapers in the spring of 1997.

We also noted in our follow-up that many designated offices had established regular contact with representatives of the province's English-speaking community. We also found that it would be to the advantage of six of the designated offices (20%) to establish ongoing communication with the English-speaking community in order to identify its needs and inform it of available services. We encourage the community's representatives to pursue the ongoing consultations with the managers of federal offices to make them better aware of the needs of their community.

8. Recommendations of the COL

When a designated point of service fails to serve the public adequately in both official languages, the COL makes recommendations to the federal agency concerned so that it can take corrective action to improve service. These recommendations are to be found in Part C of the report.

The OLA and the Regulations require that services in English have the same status as services in French at designated offices. For example, if services are available in French 24 hours a day in a designated office, they must also be available 24 hours a day in English.

It should also be noted that the provision of service in English includes any communication intended to transfer the client to an English-speaking employee. Thus, an employee who is unable to serve a client in English should use a formula such as "One moment, please" and ask an English-speaking colleague to look after the client's request.

The COL's recommendations aim to ensure 100% effectiveness of service to the public in both official languages where needed in Quebec. Nothing less is acceptable in federal offices expressly designated to provide quality service in both official languages.

9. Conclusion

The availability of services in English over the phone and in person remains excellent and it is worth mentioning it. However, we are disappointed with the findings for Quebec as a whole. We were expecting a marked improvement with regard to the active offer of service, which was and still is the main problem with the provision of service in both official languages in the province. Our findings show that in spite of some progress, overall, the problems brought to light in the 1994 study persist.

We strongly urge the TBS and federal institutions to take all necessary measures to ensure that all offices designated bilingual in Quebec provide quality service in both official languages, including two-language greeting on the telephone and in person.

* More information on this can be found in the Glossary in Appendix B.



C. AUDIT OF OFFICES

This part contains the observations we made concerning each of the 30 offices we audited in the Quebec at the time of our follow-up. Where it is relevant, we compare the present situation with that revealed in the 1994 study. The reader will note that some offices continue to provide quality services in French, while others are doing less well than in 1994.

This part of the report also contains specific recommendations for correcting the deficiencies we noted. The comments

of the federal institutions immediately follow the recommendations.

**Citizenship and Immigration
Canada Immigration Centre
(92293)**

315 King Street West
Room 212
Sherbrooke, Quebec
J1H 1R2
1-888-242-2100

Summary: This office was not included in our 1994 study. The survey conducted in 1999 showed that it offers very good service in English, but does not greet members of the public in person in both official languages.

Availability of two language service

Elements of service to the public examined	Yes	No	Not Applicable
Exterior signage in both official languages	x		
Interior signage in both official languages	x		
Documentation available in both official languages	x		
Official pictogram for bilingual services posted	x		
Forms available in both official languages	x		
Two-language greeting in person		x	
Two-language service in person	x		
Staff informed of linguistic obligations	x		
Contacts with English-speaking community	x		
Adequate two-language capability of office	x		

Availability of two language service

Service on the telephone	On a consistent basis	On an occasional basis	No
Two-language greeting	x		
Two-language service	x		

For the telephone survey, our auditor dialed the toll-free number listed. The greeting was in both languages on each call and the service in English was very good. The calls are forwarded to the central office in Montreal. This is a telephone message service where the client indicates his preferred language by pressing a button. Once the choice has been made, service is provided in that language. At the office number that is not listed in the telephone directory, members of the public are greeted in both official languages.

The auditor visited the office and recorded his observations, which appear in the table above. To gain access to the citizenship staff, it is necessary first to make an appointment. At the reception desk, he was greeted in French only and was instructed, in English, to telephone an officer. Our auditor spoke with the director. The office has five employees, all of them bilingual. In addition, it has regular contacts with the members of the English-speaking community to involve them in citizenship ceremonies.

RECOMMENDATION

The Commissioner of Official Languages therefore recommends that Citizenship and Immigration:

1. ensure, as soon as possible and no later than two months after the publication of this report, that employees who meet the public use a two-language greeting at all times to encourage members of the public to communicate with them in English or French.

Institution's response

The service manager confirms that he has issued a reminder to all employees about the importance of using a greeting in both official languages at all times to ensure that active offer of service is provided and clients are thereby invited to communicate with employees in English or in French.

In addition, the Regional Director General will issue a reminder to all her managers, and a message will again be sent to all employees.

Human Resources Development Canada

Human Resources Centre of Canada

(12500)

2489 St-Dominique Street

Jonquière, Quebec

G7X 0A2

(418) 693-8883 (English)

Summary: We did not examine this office in our 1994 study. The survey conducted in 1999 showed that it offers very good service in English on the telephone.

Availability of two language service

Elements of service to the public examined	Yes	No	Not Applicable
Exterior signage in both official languages			x
Interior signage in both official languages			x
Documentation available in both official languages			x
Official pictogram for bilingual services posted			x
Forms available in both official languages			x
Two-language greeting in person			x
Two-language service in person			x
Staff informed of linguistic obligations	x		
Contacts with English-speaking community		x	
Adequate two-language capability of office	x		

Availability of two language service

Service on the telephone	On a consistent basis	On an occasional basis	No
Two-language greeting	x		
Two-language service	x		

This office was surveyed by telephone. Thus, there are no data on the visual aspect of the premises nor on service in person.

The two calls made to the number listed in the TBS directory showed that the greeting was in both official languages and that the service in English was very good. When all local lines are busy the teleservice line of the Montreal Infocentre takes the telephone calls.

According to the manager, the centre has three employees, all of them bilingual. The employees were reminded of their linguistic obligations in 1998 following a problem related to service in both official languages. The office does not maintain contact with the English-speaking community.

RECOMMENDATION

The Commissioner of Official Languages therefore recommends that Human Resources Development Canada:

1. establish, as soon as possible and no later than two months after the publication of this report, contact with the English-speaking community served by the office to become more familiar with its needs and inform it of the services provided by the office.

Institution's response

Contacts with the English-speaking community were established during the summer to determine its needs and make our services better known. An official meeting with Ray Strakowsky, the President of Alliance Quebec for the Saguenay Lac St-Jean region, is scheduled in the near future in order to identify consultation mechanisms that will enable us to continue to offer the community quality service.

Human Resources Development Canada Human Resources Centre of Canada (12543)

Carrefour Baie des Chaleurs
120 Perron Boulevard West
New Richmond, Quebec
G0C 2B0
(418) 392-5041

Summary: This office had offered very good service at the time of our 1994 study. The follow-up in 1999 showed that it has maintained the same quality of service. It was noted, however, that greeting in person was not provided in both official languages.

Availability of two language service

Elements of service to the public examined	Yes	No	Not Applicable
Exterior signage in both official languages	x		
Interior signage in both official languages	x		
Documentation available in both official languages	x		
Official pictogram for bilingual services posted	x		
Forms available in both official languages	x		
Two-language greeting in person		x	
Two-language service in person	x		
Staff informed of linguistic obligations	x		
Contacts with English-speaking community	x		
Adequate two-language capability of office	x		

Availability of two language service

Service on the telephone	On a consistent basis	On an occasional basis	No
Two-language greeting	x		
Two-language service	x		

In the telephone survey, the auditor found that the Centre had changed its telephone number several months before. When (418) 392-4431 was dialed, the greeting was in both official languages.

As for the telephone numbers for Insurance service, they are as follows:

1-800-808-6352 for service in French;
1-800-463-1757 for service in English.

Reception in person was in French only when the auditor went to the office. Very good service in English was subsequently provided. The Centre had five employees, two of whom are bilingual, the receptionist and an officer.

Regular contact is maintained with members of the English-speaking community.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Commissioner of Official Languages therefore recommends that the Department of Human Resources Development Canada:

1. ensure, as soon as possible and no later than two months after the publication of this report, that employees who meet the public use a two-language greeting at all times to encourage members of the public to communicate with them in English or French;
2. immediately inform the TBS of the telephone numbers that should be listed in the directory of federal offices designated to provide service in both official languages.

Institution's response

All employees who meet members of the public were informed last November, that they must use a greeting in both official languages to invite the client to communicate in the official language of his choice. In addition, measures have been taken to correct the telephone numbers listed in the TBS directory.

Human Resources Development Canada Human Resources Centre of Canada (12476)

Federal Building
Principale Street
P.O. Box 1000
Cap-aux-Meules, Quebec
G0B 1B0
(418) 986-5415

Summary: At the time of our 1994 study, this office had offered adequate service in English. It now offers very good service in English on the telephone, including greeting in both official languages.

Availability of two language service

Elements of service to the public examined	Yes	No	Not Applicable
Exterior signage in both official languages			x
Interior signage in both official languages			x
Documentation available in both official languages			x
Official pictogram for bilingual services posted			x
Forms available in both official languages			x
Two-language greeting in person			x
Two-language service in person			x
Staff informed of linguistic obligations	x		
Contacts with English-speaking community	x		
Adequate two-language capability of office	x		

Availability of two language service

Service on the telephone	On a consistent basis	On an occasional basis	No
Two-language greeting	x		
Two-language service	x		

This office was surveyed by telephone. Thus, there are no data on the visual aspect of the premises nor on service in person.

The telephone survey showed that greeting is consistently offered in both official languages and that service in English is very good. The office has two bilingual employees out of four, the receptionist and an officer.

The staff are aware of the office's linguistic obligations following a meeting with the Department's official languages adviser in 1998. The office also maintains contacts with the English-speaking community.

Human Resources Development Canada

Human Resources Centre of Canada

(12572)

701 Laure Boulevard

3rd Floor

P.O. Box 7777

Sept-Îles, Quebec

G4R 1X8

(418) 962-5501

Summary: At the time of our 1994 study, this office offered very good service in English. The 1999 follow-up showed that it has maintained the same quality of service.

Availability of two language service

Elements of service to the public examined	Yes	No	Not Applicable
Exterior signage in both official languages			x
Interior signage in both official languages			x
Documentation available in both official languages			x
Official pictogram for bilingual services posted			x
Forms available in both official languages			x
Two-language greeting in person			x
Two-language service in person			x
Staff informed of linguistic obligations	x		
Contacts with English-speaking community	x		
Adequate two-language capability of office	x		

Availability of two language service

Service on the telephone	On a consistent basis	On an occasional basis	No
Two-language greeting	x		
Two-language service	x		

This office was surveyed by telephone. Thus, there are no data on the visual aspect of the premises nor on service in person.

The two calls made to the number listed showed that greeting was in both official languages and that the service in English was very good.

The office has 45 employees, 18 of whom fill positions designated bilingual. All the employees meet or exceed the required level of linguistic proficiency. We also note that the office maintains regular communications with the English-speaking community. According to the office manager, the staff are aware of the office's linguistic obligations since the subject is regularly raised at meetings.

Human Resources Development Canada

Human Resources Centre of Canada

(12579)

55 Des Forges Street
 Suite 012
 Trois-Rivières, Quebec
 G9A 6A8
 (819) 379-3900

Summary: At the time of our 1994 study, this office had offered satisfactory service in English. With the exception of service on the telephone, the service in English offered by this office has greatly deteriorated. The deficiencies must be corrected as quickly as possible.

Availability of two language service

Elements of service to the public examined	Yes	No	Not Applicable
Exterior signage in both official languages	x		
Interior signage in both official languages		x	
Documentation available in both official languages	x		
Official pictogram for bilingual services posted		x	
Forms available in both official languages	x		
Two-language greeting in person		x	
Two-language service in person	x		
Staff informed of linguistic obligations	x		
Contacts with English-speaking community		x	
Adequate two-language capability of office		x	

Availability of two language service

Service on the telephone	On a consistent basis	On an occasional basis	No
Two-language greeting	x		
Two-language service	x		

The new telephone system put in service recently automatically forwards calls to the Montreal regional office when all the office's lines are busy. In this case, the greeting is in both official languages and the service in English is very good. Our auditor noted this when he made two calls that were transferred to the Montreal office.

During his visit, he noted the absence of the TBS pictogram to inform members of the public that the office offers service in both official languages. In addition, a large number of in-house signs in French only help to project the image of an office where service is available only in French.

The office has only one bilingual employee out of 15. The receptionist is unilingual and must transfer calls from English-speaking clients to the bilingual officer, if the latter is on the premises. Any absence of the sole bilingual employee deprives the office of its capability to serve the public in both official languages. The office has no contact with the local English-speaking community.

When made aware of our observations, the manager agreed to take the required steps to have the largest unilingual signs translated. We should point out that other smaller signs were in French only. These should also be in both official languages.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Commissioner of Official Languages therefore recommends that the Department of Human Resources Development Canada:

1. ensure, as soon as possible and no later than two months after the publication of this report, that the TBS pictogram is clearly visible to indicate to members of the public that they can obtain service in English or French;
2. ensure, as soon as possible and no later than two months after the publication of this report, that all signs inside the office, including in-house signs, are in both official languages;

3. ensure, as soon as possible and no later than two months after the publication of this report, that employees who meet the public use a two-language greeting at all times to encourage members of the public to communicate with them in English or French;
4. review, as soon as possible and no later than three months after the publication of this report, the office's two-language capability to ensure that there are enough bilingual employees to provide service to the public in both official languages at all times;
5. establish, as soon as possible and no later than two months after the publication of this report, regular communications with the local English-speaking community to identify its needs and inform it of the services provided by the office.

Institution's response

The TBS pictogram, as well as two signs clearly indicating that service is available in both official languages, are now displayed at reception. In addition, following the investigators' visit, the manager agreed to have all the in-house signs translated within the prescribed two months. Reminders will be sent to all employees who meet the public that they must use a greeting in both official languages to invite the client to communicate in his preferred official language.

To ensure service to the public in both official languages at all times, the reception clerk automatically refers a client who wants to obtain service in English to the bilingual officer. In addition, administrative arrangements have been made with two bilingual immigration officers who can provide our services if need be.

With regard to communications with the English-speaking community, arrangements have been made with the local English-language school board for the distribution of posters and promotional tools concerning youth employment. All the information posted on our Internet site is in both official languages.

Commissioner's comments

The Commissioner thanks the Department for all the actions taken and commitments made to improve the availability of service in both official languages at this office. However, she notices that, at the first opportunity, the Department should designate bilingual other positions and staff them accordingly.

Human Resources Development Canada Income Security Programs (12815)

330 De la Gare du Palais Street
Quebec, Quebec
G1K 7L5

Summary: It was impossible to find the office listed at this address. The Human Resources Centre that usually houses this service must have moved, but the necessary changes were not made to the TBS directory of federal offices designated bilingual.

Availability of two language service

Elements of service to the public examined	Yes	No	Not Applicable
Exterior signage in both official languages			
Interior signage in both official languages			
Documentation available in both official languages			
Official pictogram for bilingual services posted			
Forms available in both official languages			
Two-language greeting in person			
Two-language service in person			
Staff informed of linguistic obligations			
Contacts with English-speaking community			

Adequate two-language capability of office

Availability of two language service

Service on the telephone	On a consistent basis	On an occasional basis	No
Two-language greeting			
Two-language service			

RECOMMENDATION

The Commissioner of Official Languages therefore recommends that the Department of Human Resources Development Canada:

1. immediately inform the TBS of the new address to be listed in the directory of federal offices designated to provide service in both official languages or, if applicable, of the complete closing of the office.

Institution's response

This office is a file processing centre and does not provide service in person to the public. We have asked the TBS to amend BUROLIS accordingly.

**Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions
Bas-Saint-Laurent/Gaspésie/Îles-de-la-Madeleine
(1371)**

2 Saint-Germain Street East
Suite 310
Rimouski, Quebec
G5L 8T7
1-800-463-9073

Summary: This office was not included in our 1994 study. The survey conducted in 1999 showed that it offers very good service in English on the telephone but does not greet members of the public in both official languages.

Availability of two language service

Elements of service to the public examined	Yes	No	Not Applicable
Exterior signage in both official languages			x
Interior signage in both official languages			x
Documentation available in both official languages			x
Official pictogram for bilingual services posted			x
Forms available in both official languages			x
Two-language greeting in person			x
Two-language service in person			x
Staff informed of linguistic obligations	x		
Contacts with English-speaking community			x
Adequate two-language capability of office	x		

Availability of two language service

Service on the telephone	On a consistent basis	On an occasional basis	No
Two-language greeting			x
Two-language service	x		

This office was surveyed by telephone. Thus, there are no data on the visual aspect of the premises nor on service

in person.

To facilitate communication with members of the public, the office uses a toll-free telephone number. The greeting is in French only. The receptionist, who fills a position designated French essential, is not bilingual. When she receives a call from a member of the public who wishes to be served in English, she transfers the call to a bilingual colleague, using a short sentence in English. This is what happened when our auditor tried to reach the office. After a "one moment please," he received very good service in English.

The office has three bilingual officers out of a total of six employees. They are aware of their linguistic obligations. According to the person interviewed, the demand for service in English comes mainly from the Gaspé peninsula.

RECOMMENDATION

The Commissioner of Official Languages therefore recommends that the Department of Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions:

1. ensure, as soon as possible and no later than two months after the publication of this report, that employees who answer the telephone or meet the public use a two-language greeting at all times to encourage members of the public to communicate with them in English or French.

Institution's response

A memorandum has been sent to all the directors general and regional directors to inform them again of their responsibilities regarding service in both official languages.

In addition, the Department's Director General, Resource Management, has contacted the office manager by telephone to ensure that the recommendation is implemented.

Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions Quebec/Chaudière/Appalaches (1372)

112 Dalhousie Street
John-Munn Building
2nd Floor
Quebec, Quebec
G1K 4C1

Summary: We did not examine the service to the public provided by this office during our 1994 study. The survey conducted in 1999 showed that it offers good service in English, but that the greeting is not consistently in both languages.

Availability of two language service

Elements of service to the public examined	Yes	No	Not Applicable
Exterior signage in both official languages	x		
Interior signage in both official languages	x		
Documentation available in both official languages	x		
Official pictogram for bilingual services posted	x		
Forms available in both official languages	x		
Two-language greeting in person	x		
Two-language service in person	x		
Staff informed of linguistic obligations	x		
Contacts with English-speaking community		x	

Availability of two language service

Service on the telephone	On a consistent basis	On an occasional basis	No
Two-language greeting		x	
Two-language service	x		

Until December 1998, this office was located on Dufferin Street. At that address a sign indicated, in French only, the office's new address. During the telephone survey, the greeting was in both languages one out of two times.

The office has four bilingual employees out of 14. It communicates approximately once a year with English-speaking Aboriginal groups who have previously submitted economic development projects, but it does not maintain regular contact with the English-speaking community.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Commissioner of Official Languages therefore recommends that Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions:

1. ensure, as soon as possible and no later than two months after the publication of this report, that employees who answer the telephone use a two-language greeting at all times to encourage members of the public to communicate with them in English or French;
2. immediately replace the unilingual French sign posted at the office's former address with a bilingual sign indicating the office's new address;
3. establish, as soon as possible and no later than two months after the publication of this report, contact with the English-speaking communities served by the office to better identify their needs and inform them of the services provided by the office;
4. immediately inform the TBS of the new address to be listed in the directory of federal offices designated to provide service in both official languages.

Institution's response

A memorandum has been sent to all the directors general and regional directors to inform them again of their responsibilities regarding service in both official languages.

In addition, the Department's Director General, Resource Management, has contacted the office manager to ensure that the recommendations are implemented. Finally, the office's change of address has already been recorded in BUROLIS, the TBS's directory of federal offices designated bilingual.

**Royal Canadian Mounted Police
Chicoutimi Detachment
(12980)**

429 Newton Street
P.O. Box 398
Chicoutimi, Quebec
G7H 5C2
(418) 698-5666

Summary: This detachment was not included in our 1994 study. The survey conducted in 1999 showed that it is able to offer very good service in English but does not greet members of the public in both official languages.

Availability of two language service

Elements of service to the public examined	Yes	No	Not Applicable
Exterior signage in both official languages			x

Interior signage in both official languages			x
Documentation available in both official languages			x
Official pictogram for bilingual services posted			x
Forms available in both official languages			x
Two-language greeting in person			x
Two-language service in person			x
Staff informed of linguistic obligations	x		
Contacts with English-speaking community			x
Adequate two-language capability of office	x		

Availability of two language service

Service on the telephone	On a consistent basis	On an occasional basis	No
Two-language greeting		x	
Two-language service	x		

This office was surveyed by telephone. Thus, there are no data on the visual aspect of the premises nor on service in person.

In the telephone survey, the greeting was in French only in the first case. The service provided in English was very good. In the second case, the greeting was in both official languages and service in English was very good.

The detachment has 12 officers, all of them bilingual. Four of them fill positions designated bilingual. The Detachment's capability to provide service in both official languages is therefore very good. When all the officers are on the road, telephone reception is provided from Montreal, where the greeting is in both official languages. The Chicoutimi Detachment greets members of the public in French only.

RECOMMENDATION

The Commissioner of Official Languages therefore recommends that the Royal Canadian Mounted Police:

1. ensure, as soon as possible and no later than two months after the publication of this report, that employees who answer the telephone use a two-language greeting at all times to encourage members of the public to communicate with them in English or French.

Institution's response

During the next few months, the Official Languages Coordinator for « C » Division will remind the commanders of all designated service points in Quebec that they must take appropriate measures to ensure that their staff greet members of the public in both official languages over the telephone and in person.

**Royal Canadian Mounted Police
Gaspé Detachment
(12983)**

194 Jacques-Cartier Street
P.O. Box 1339
Gaspé, Quebec
G0C 1R0
(418) 368-1611

Summary: The Carleton Detachment has been closed for two years. The Gaspé Detachment offers the service and was therefore the subject of our audit in 1999. It provides very good service to the public in English, despite the absence of the greeting in person in both official languages.

Availability of two language service

Elements of service to the public examined	Yes	No	Not Applicable
Exterior signage in both official languages	x		
Interior signage in both official languages	x		
Documentation available in both official languages	x		
Official pictogram for bilingual services posted	x		
Forms available in both official languages	x		
Two-language greeting in person		x	
Two-language service in person	x		
Staff informed of linguistic obligations	x		
Contacts with English-speaking community	x		
Adequate two-language capability of office	x		

Availability of two language service

Service on the telephone	On a consistent basis	On an occasional basis	No
Two-language greeting	x		
Two-language service	x		

The Carleton Detachment was to be the subject of our follow-up in 1999. During the telephone survey, our auditor was informed that this detachment had closed at least two years ago. However, it is still listed in the TBS directory of federal offices designated bilingual. The Gaspé detachment is now responsible for providing service to the residents of Carleton.

It has six staff, four of whom are bilingual. The officer in charge of the Detachment maintains regular contact with the English-speaking community. Training courses organized in the community are given in both languages.

According to the officer in charge, it is known that the greeting in person is not in both languages. They rely, however, on the presence of signs inviting members of the public to use their language and on the fact that most frequent callers are known to the receptionist. This is clearly not adequate.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Commissioner of Official Languages therefore recommends that the Royal Canadian Mounted Police:

1. ensure, as soon as possible and no later than two months after the publication of this report, that employees who meet the public use a two-language greeting at all times to encourage members of the public to communicate with them in English or French;
2. immediately inform the TBS of the changes to be made to the directory of federal offices designated to provide service in both official languages as a result of the closing of the Carleton Detachment.

Institution's response

During the next few months, the Official Languages Coordinator for « C » Division will remind the commanders of all designated service points in Quebec that they must take appropriate measures to ensure that their staff greet members of the public in both official languages over the telephone and in person.

In addition, our staff who are responsible for maintaining the TBS directory of federal offices designated bilingual, will amend the directory to reflect the closing of the Carleton Detachment.

Fisheries and Oceans Canada Fisheries Management (91236)

Laurentian Region
Federal Building
118 De la Reine Street

P.O. Box 516
 Gaspé, Quebec
 G0C 2R2
 (418) 368-5559

Summary: We did not include this office in our 1994 study. The survey conducted in 1999 showed that it offers very good service in English, but does not greet members of the public consistently in both official languages.

Availability of two language service

Elements of service to the public examined	Yes	No	Not Applicable
Exterior signage in both official languages	x		
Interior signage in both official languages	x		
Documentation available in both official languages	x		
Official pictogram for bilingual services posted	x		
Forms available in both official languages	x		
Two-language greeting in person		x	
Two-language service in person	x		
Staff informed of linguistic obligations	x		
Contacts with English-speaking community	x		
Adequate two-language capability of office	x		

Availability of two language service

Service on the telephone	On a consistent basis	On an occasional basis	No
Two-language greeting		x	
Two-language service	x		

In the telephone survey, the auditor was greeted in both official languages only one out of two times. On the visit to the office, he was greeted in French. He obtained very good service in English as soon as he spoke that language.

The office has 19 employees, nine of whom are bilingual. It also maintains close contact with the English-speaking community.

RECOMMENDATION

The Commissioner of Official Languages therefore recommends that Fisheries and Oceans Canada:

1. ensure, as soon as possible and no later than two months after the publication of this report, that employees who answer the telephone or meet the public use a two-language greeting at all times to encourage members of the public to communicate with them in English or French.

Institution's response

The Department assures us that the managers in the Laurentian region will take the measures required to ensure that active offer and services of equal quality are provided consistently in both official languages in all the designated offices.

Fisheries and Oceans Canada
Fisheries Management
(91244)

120 Gros-Cap Road
 P.O. Box 1058
 Cap-aux-Meules, Quebec
 G0B 1B0

Summary: At the time of our 1994 study, this office had offered very good service in English. The 1999 follow-up showed that it has maintained the same quality of service.

Availability of two language service

Elements of service to the public examined	Yes	No	Not Applicable
Exterior signage in both official languages			x
Interior signage in both official languages			x
Documentation available in both official languages			x
Official pictogram for bilingual services posted			x
Forms available in both official languages			x
Two-language greeting in person			x
Two-language service in person			x
Staff informed of linguistic obligations	x		
Contacts with English-speaking community	x		
Adequate two-language capability of office	x		

Availability of two language service

Service on the telephone	On a consistent basis	On an occasional basis	No
Two-language greeting	x		
Two-language service	x		

This office was surveyed by telephone. Thus, there are no data on the visual aspect of the premises nor on service in person.

When calls were made to audit service on the telephone, the greeting was in both official languages. The service provided in English was very good.

The office manager told us that his staff are made aware of their linguistic obligations at regular meetings. There are 14 employees, four of whom are bilingual. There are frequent contacts with the English-speaking community, especially during the fishing season. According to the manager, the office takes various initiatives to provide very good service in both official languages.

**Fisheries and Oceans Canada
Fisheries Management
(2282)**

701 Boulevard Laure
Suite 203
Sept-Îles, Quebec
G4R 3K7
(418) 962-6314

Summary: At the time of our 1994 study, this office had offered satisfactory service in English. The 1999 follow-up showed that the situation has not changed. The office still provides good service in English.

Availability of two language service

Elements of service to the public examined	Yes	No	Not Applicable
Exterior signage in both official languages			x
Interior signage in both official languages			x
Documentation available in both official languages			x
Official pictogram for bilingual services posted			x

Forms available in both official languages			x
Two-language greeting in person			x
Two-language service in person			x
Staff informed of linguistic obligations	x		
Contacts with English-speaking community	x		
Adequate two-language capability of office	x		

Availability of two language service

Service on the telephone	On a consistent basis	On an occasional basis	No
Two-language greeting	x		
Two-language service	x		

This office was surveyed by telephone. Thus, there are no data on the visual aspect of the premises nor on service in person.

On the telephone calls, the greeting was in both official languages. In the first case, the call was transferred to a bilingual officer. In the second case, service was provided in English with a little difficulty by the person who took the call. It might be advisable for staff who are less at ease in English to transfer calls from clients who wish to be served in that language to officers able to serve them more easily.

According to the manager, the staff are kept informed regularly of the office's linguistic obligations at meetings. There are 15 bilingual employees out of 30. The office therefore has very good capability to serve the public in both official languages. In addition, frequent contacts are maintained with associations representing the English-speaking community.

**Health Canada
Health Protection Branch
(12803)**

50 Place de la Cité
Suite 319
Sherbrooke, Quebec
J1H 5L5
(819) 564-5550

Summary: This office was not examined in our 1994 study. In conducting our 1999 survey we discovered that this office is closed. The services of Health Canada can be accessed by a toll-free telephone number at 1-800-561-3350. The service it offers to the public in both official languages is very good.

Availability of two language service

Elements of service to the public examined	Yes	No	Not Applicable
Exterior signage in both official languages			x
Interior signage in both official languages			x
Documentation available in both official languages			x
Official pictogram for bilingual services posted			x
Forms available in both official languages			x
Two-language greeting in person			x
Two-language service in person			x
Staff informed of linguistic obligations			x
Contacts with English-speaking community			x
Adequate two-language capability of office			x

Availability of two language service

Service on the telephone	On a consistent basis	On an occasional basis	No
Two-language greeting	x		
Two-language service	x		

When the number for the office was called, an employee took the call and gave our auditor the toll-free number for Health Canada services. At that number, the greeting was in both official languages on each call and the service in English was of very good quality.

In a discussion with the Department's representative, the auditor learned that the Sherbrooke office had been closed for about two years following the creation of the Canadian Food Inspection Agency. For the Department's other services, a toll-free telephone line was set up where calls are forwarded to the regional office in Longueuil.

Service is available in both official languages with active offer of service.

RECOMMENDATION

The Commissioner of Official Languages therefore recommends that Health Canada:

1. immediately inform the TBS of the toll-free telephone number to be listed in the directory of federal offices designated to provide service in both official languages following the closing of the office and the implementation of this service.

Institution's response

The appropriate measures have been taken to notify the TBS of the toll-free telephone number to be listed in the directory of designated federal offices.

Canada Post Corporation (207276)

Chamber of Commerce
2700 Laurier Boulevard
Sainte-Foy, Quebec
G1V 2M0

Summary: We did not examine this postal franchise at the time of our 1994 study. The survey conducted in 1999 showed that it offers very good service in English, but does not greet members of the public in both official languages.

Availability of two language service

Elements of service to the public examined	Yes	No	Not Applicable
Exterior signage in both official languages	x		
Interior signage in both official languages	x		
Documentation available in both official languages	x		
Official pictogram for bilingual services posted	x		
Forms available in both official languages	x		
Two-language greeting in person		x	
Two-language service in person	x		
Staff informed of linguistic obligations	x		
Contacts with English-speaking community			x
Adequate two-language capability of office	x		

Availability of two language service

Service on the telephone	On a consistent basis	On an occasional basis	No
Two-language greeting			

Two-language service

This is a postal franchise located in a shopping centre. It does not offer service by telephone. The Sainte-Foy Chamber of Commerce operates this franchise. At the time of our visit, the greeting was in French only. Very good service in English was available immediately.

The four employees are bilingual. They were made aware of their linguistic obligations when the Corporation asked the franchise to provide service in both official languages, even though there was no language clause in the original contract.

RECOMMENDATION

The Commissioner of Official Languages therefore recommends that Canada Post Corporation:

1. ensure, as soon as possible and no later than two months after the publication of this report, that employees who meet the public use a two-language greeting at all times to encourage members of the public to communicate with them in English or French.

Corporation's response

Each manager has been reminded of his obligations under our official languages policy. We also expect to conduct a more rigorous follow-up over the next six months to ensure that employees greet clients and provide service, in person and on the telephone, in both official languages. Spot checks will subsequently be made.

Commissioner's comments

The Commissioner notices that the Corporation must include a linguistic clause during the renewal of the postal franchise contract.

Canada Post Corporation (2494070)

3803 du Roi-Georges Street
Chicoutimi-Jonquière, Quebec
G7X 1T0
(418) 547-8622

Summary: At the time of our 1994 study, this office had provided satisfactory service in English. The 1999 follow-up showed that it has maintained the same quality of service in English. The greeting in both official languages is still deficient.

Availability of two language service

Elements of service to the public examined	Yes	No	Not Applicable
Exterior signage in both official languages			x
Interior signage in both official languages			x
Documentation available in both official languages			x
Official pictogram for bilingual services posted			x
Forms available in both official languages			x
Two-language greeting in person			x
Two-language service in person			x
Staff informed of linguistic obligations	x		
Contacts with English-speaking community		x	
Adequate two-language capability of office	x		

Availability of two language service

Service on the telephone	On a consistent basis	On an occasional basis	No
Two-language greeting			x
Two-language service	x		

This office was surveyed by telephone. Thus, there are no data on the visual aspect of the premises nor on service in person.

During the telephone survey, the greeting was in French only each time. The service provided in English was satisfactory on the first call and very good in the second case.

The Corporation's representative indicated that the office has two employees, both of them bilingual. They were made aware of their linguistic obligations upon their hiring in 1998. He explained the absence of active offer of service by the low level of demand for service in English. The office has no contact with the English-speaking community it serves.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Commissioner of Official Languages therefore recommends that Canada Post Corporation:

1. ensure, as soon as possible and no later than two months after the publication of this report, that employees who answer the telephone use a two-language greeting at all times to encourage members of the public to communicate with them in English or French;
2. establish, as soon as possible and no later than two months after the publication of this report, contact with the English-speaking community served by the office to become more familiar with its needs and inform it of the services provided by the office.

Corporation's response

Each manager has been reminded of his obligations under our official languages policy. We also expect to conduct a more rigorous follow-up over the next six months to ensure that employees greet clients and provide service, in person and on the telephone, in both official languages. Spot checks will subsequently be made.

Because of our vast points of sale network, it is generally the regional official languages co-ordinator's responsibility, in co-operation with the retail sales representative, to maintain contact with the official language minority community on behalf of the operators.

Canada Post Corporation (173606)

Uniprix
610 King Street East
Sherbrooke, Quebec
J1G 1B0

Summary: We did not examine this office in our 1994 study. The survey conducted in 1999 showed that it offers very good service in English, but does not greet members of the public in both official languages.

Availability of two language service

Elements of service to the public examined	Yes	No	Not Applicable
Exterior signage in both official languages	x		
Interior signage in both official languages	x		
Documentation available in both official languages	x		
Official pictogram for bilingual services posted	x		
Forms available in both official languages	x		
Two-language greeting in person		x	
Two-language service in person	x		

Staff informed of linguistic obligations	x		
Contacts with English-speaking community			x
Adequate two-language capability of office	x		

Availability of two language service

Service on the telephone	On a consistent basis	On an occasional basis	No
Two-language greeting			
Two-language service			

Since this is a postal franchise operating inside a pharmacy, it does not offer service by telephone.

When the franchise was visited, the greeting was in French only. However, very good service in English was provided as soon as the auditor spoke. According to the employee to whom he spoke, three employees serve the public in rotation and all are bilingual. The owner has informed them of the office's linguistic obligations.

RECOMMENDATION

The Commissioner of Official Languages therefore recommends that Canada Post Corporation:

1. ensure, as soon as possible and no later than two months after the publication of this report, that employees who meet the public use a two-language greeting at all times to encourage members of the public to communicate with them in English or French.

Corporation's response

Each manager has been reminded of his obligations under our official languages policy. We also expect to conduct a more rigorous follow-up over the next six months to ensure that employees greet clients and provide service, in person and on the telephone, in both official languages. Spot checks will subsequently be made.

**Canada Post Corporation
(2437065)**

1285 Notre-Dame Street
Trois-Rivières, Quebec
G9A 4X0
(819) 691-4215

Summary: At the time of our 1994 study, this office had provided very good service in English. It has maintained the quality of service provided in English but does not, however, greet members of the public in both official languages.

Availability of two language service

Elements of service to the public examined	Yes	No	Not Applicable
Exterior signage in both official languages	x		
Interior signage in both official languages	x		
Documentation available in both official languages	x		
Official pictogram for bilingual services posted	x		
Forms available in both official languages	x		
Two-language greeting in person		x	
Two-language service in person	x		
Staff informed of linguistic obligations	x		
Contacts with English-speaking community			x
Adequate two-language capability of office	x		

Availability of two language service

Service on the telephone	On a consistent basis	On an occasional basis	No
Two-language greeting			x
Two-language service	x		

The two telephone calls placed to the office showed that the greeting was in French only, but that service is available in English.

The greeting in person was in French only. The service in English, however, was satisfactory. The staff are aware of the office's linguistic obligations. There are two bilingual employees out of six. The office manager assures us that one of the two bilingual officers is always on duty to be able to meet demand in both official languages at all times. The responsibility for maintaining contacts with the English-speaking community lies not with the local office but with the retail sales officer.

RECOMMENDATION

The Commissioner of Official Languages therefore recommends that Canada Post Corporation:

1. ensure, as soon as possible and no later than two months after the publication of this report, that employees who answer the telephone and meet the public use a two-language greeting at all times to encourage members of the public to communicate with them in English or French.

Corporation's response

Each manager has been reminded of his obligations under our official languages policy. We also expect to conduct a more rigorous follow-up over the next six months to ensure that employees greet clients and provide service, in person and on the telephone, in both official languages. Spot checks will subsequently be made.

**Canada Post Corporation
(181536)**

98 de la Reine Street
Suite 1
Gaspé, Quebec
G4X 1A0
(418) 368-3666

Summary: This office was not examined in 1994. The survey conducted in 1999 showed that it offers very good service in English but does not greet clients who visit it in both official languages.

Availability of two language service

Elements of service to the public examined	Yes	No	Not Applicable
Exterior signage in both official languages	x		
Interior signage in both official languages	x		
Documentation available in both official languages	x		
Official pictogram for bilingual services posted	x		
Forms available in both official languages	x		
Two-language greeting in person		x	
Two-language service in person	x		
Staff informed of linguistic obligations	x		
Contacts with English-speaking community		x	
Adequate two-language capability of office	x		

Availability of two language service

Service on the telephone	On a consistent basis	On an occasional basis	No
Two-language greeting	x		
Two-language service	x		

When he visited the office, the auditor was greeted in French only. The office has six employees, three of whom are bilingual. According to the manager, it is possible for clients not to be greeted in both official languages because some postal employees believe they do not have to provide service in both languages in the absence of the bilingualism bonus.

The office does not maintain regular contacts with representatives of the English-speaking community. According to the office manager, the English-speaking clients are all known and are greeted and served in their language.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Commissioner of Official Languages therefore recommends that Canada Post Corporation:

1. ensure, as soon as possible and no later than two months after the publication of this report, that employees who meet the public use a two-language greeting at all times to encourage members of the public to communicate with them in English or French;
2. inform, as soon as possible and no later than two months after the publication of this report, the employees of this office of their linguistic obligations with regard to service to the public in both official languages.

Corporation's response

Each manager has been reminded of his obligations under our official languages policy. We also expect to conduct a more rigorous follow-up over the next six months to ensure that employees greet clients and provide service, in person and on the telephone, in both official languages. Spot checks will subsequently be made.

**Canada Post Corporation
(2405040)**

169 Route 132
New Carlisle, Quebec
G0C 1Z0
(418) 752-3856

Summary: This office had offered very good service in English at the time of our 1994 study. The follow-up conducted in 1999 shows that it has maintained the same quality of service.

Availability of two language service

Elements of service to the public examined	Yes	No	Not Applicable
Exterior signage in both official languages	x		
Interior signage in both official languages	x		
Documentation available in both official languages	x		
Official pictogram for bilingual services posted	x		
Forms available in both official languages	x		
Two-language greeting in person	x		
Two-language service in person	x		
Staff informed of linguistic obligations	x		
Contacts with English-speaking community	x		
Adequate two-language capability of office	x		

Availability of two language service

Service on the telephone	On a consistent basis	On an occasional basis	No
Two-language greeting	x		
Two-language service	x		

The office has two employees, both of them bilingual. They are aware of their linguistic obligations.

This office meets its linguistic obligations very well.

**Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation
Sherbrooke Office
(12372)**

2355 King Street West
Suite 201
Sherbrooke, Quebec
J1J 2G6
(819) 564-4220

Summary: At the time of our 1994 study, this office had offered very good service in English. The 1999 follow-up showed that the situation has deteriorated somewhat and that several deficiencies must be corrected to improve the quality of service provided in English.

Availability of two language service

Elements of service to the public examined	Yes	No	Not Applicable
Exterior signage in both official languages	x		
Interior signage in both official languages	x		
Documentation available in both official languages	x		
Official pictogram for bilingual services posted		x	
Forms available in both official languages	x		
Two-language greeting in person		x	
Two-language service in person	x		
Staff informed of linguistic obligations		x	
Contacts with English-speaking community			x
Adequate two-language capability of office	x		

Availability of two language service

Service on the telephone	On a consistent basis	On an occasional basis	No
Two-language greeting			x
Two-language service	x		

The telephone survey showed that the greeting was in French only. The service subsequently provided in English was very good.

When visiting the office, the auditor noted that the TBS pictogram was not posted to indicate to the public that service is available in both official languages. The greeting was in French only. The subsequent service in English was very good. Three out of eight positions are designated to provide service in both official languages. One of the bilingual positions requires only the basic level in English, which is insufficient to serve the public adequately. The incumbent of this position has not yet been tested. The other two incumbents of bilingual positions meet or exceed the language requirements. The office can also count on additional capability to serve the public in English because several employees are bilingual even though their positions do not require this competency.

Since the reorganization of the regional offices, there is no longer a manager on site. All the employees now report to

different managers, depending on their respective speciality, at the Head Office in Montreal.

The reception employee to whom the auditor spoke was not aware of her linguistic obligations, since no one had informed her of them. Yet she has worked at this location for over two years.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Commissioner of Official Languages therefore recommends that Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation:

1. ensure, as soon as possible and no later than two months after the publication of this report, that the TBS pictogram is easily visible to the public to clearly indicate that the office provides service in both official languages;
2. ensure, as soon as possible and no later than two months after the publication of this report, that employees who answer the telephone and meet the public use a two-language greeting at all times to encourage members of the public to communicate with them in English or French;
3. review, as soon as possible and no later than three months after the publication of this report, the linguistic profile of bilingual positions to ensure they are adequate to offer quality service in both official languages;
4. ensure, as soon as possible and no later than three months after the publication of this report, that employees in bilingual positions have valid language test results to offer quality service in both official languages;
5. inform, as soon as possible and no later than two months after the publication of this report, the employees of this office of their linguistic obligations with regard to service to the public in both official languages.

Corporation's response

The TBS pictogram has been installed in view of the public.

CMHC employees have just moved into the offices of Canada Economic Development. Call to the CMHC for service in English will automatically be transferred to Montreal. With regard to active offer of service, we are now reviewing the greeting procedure for the entire Corporation. We expect to inform all employees who are in contact with the public of it shortly.

As part of the review of official languages policy, the Corporation is reviewing the language profiles of all employees who fill bilingual positions to ensure that the levels of proficiency required are adequate to provide quality service in both official languages.

The CMHC is currently testing all employees whose test results are no longer valid. It plans to take the measures required to ensure that employees who must provide service to the public in both official languages are able to meet this objective in the near future.

Finally, all employees of the branch have been reminded of their obligations regarding service to the public.

Commissioner's comments

The Commissioner is aware of the constraints under which the Corporation operates, but she is nonetheless concerned about the problems noted with regard to the delivery of service in both official languages. She would like to be informed, as soon as possible and no later than three months after publication of this report, of the concrete results of the review presently being conducted by the Corporation of its methods of providing service in both official languages.

Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation Chicoutimi Branch Office (12360)

National Bank Building
1180 Talbot Boulevard
P.O. Box 34
Chicoutimi, Quebec
G7H 5B5
(418) 698-5511

Summary: We did not examine the service to the public provided by this office in our 1994 study. The survey conducted in 1999 showed that it offers service of poor quality in English. The office's capability to provide service in English must be improved.

Availability of two language service

Elements of service to the public examined	Yes	No	Not Applicable
Exterior signage in both official languages			x
Interior signage in both official languages			x
Documentation available in both official languages			x
Official pictogram for bilingual services posted			x
Forms available in both official languages			x
Two-language greeting in person			x
Two-language service in person			x
Staff informed of linguistic obligations		x	
Contacts with English-speaking community			x
Adequate two-language capability of office		x	

Availability of two language service

Service on the telephone	On a consistent basis	On an occasional basis	No
Two-language greeting			x
Two-language service		x	

This office was surveyed by telephone. Thus, there are no data on the visual aspect of the premises nor on service in person.

During the telephone survey, the greeting was in French only on two occasions. On the first call, the service in English was satisfactory. In the second case, the receptionist did not understand the auditor's question. She asked him to speak French. Since he continued in English, she transferred the call to the Montreal office without even telling him. The service provided in English was not comparable to that provided in French.

In pursuing the audit of service provided by the office, the auditor noted that, since the reorganization of the regional offices, there is no longer a manager on site. All the employees now report to different managers, depending on their respective specialty, at the Head Office in Montreal.

The Chicoutimi office has only one bilingual employee out of six. When he is absent, the office has no capability to serve the public in both official languages. Calls in English are then directed to the Montreal office or the client's contact information is taken down so that the call can be returned within 24 hours. The office's two-language capability is clearly inadequate.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Commissioner of Official Languages therefore recommends that Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation:

1. ensure, as soon as possible and no later than two months after the publication of this report, that employees who answer the telephone use a two-language greeting at all times to encourage members of the public to communicate with them in English or French;
2. review, as soon as possible and no later than three months after the publication of this report, the two-language capability of the office to ensure that there are enough bilingual employees to provide service to the public in both official languages at all times;
3. ensure, as soon as possible and no later than two months after the publication of this report, that employees of the office are informed of their linguistic obligations, including the procedures to direct to their bilingual colleagues, members of the public who wish to be served in English.

Corporation's response

Employees of this branch who are in contact with the public have been informed that they must use a greeting in both official languages at all times. This office has one bilingual employee capable of meeting the needs of English-speaking clients. Calls from English-speaking clients are forwarded to the Montreal regional office when that employee is not available.

Employees have been informed of their linguistic obligations and know the procedures to follow to ensure that members of the public can be served in the official language of their choice.

Commissioner's comments

The Commissioner is aware of the constraints under which the Corporation operates, but she is nonetheless concerned about the problems noted with regard to the delivery of service in both official languages. She would like to be informed, as soon as possible and no later than three months after publication of this report, of the concrete results of the review presently being conducted by the Corporation of its methods of providing service in both official languages.

The Commissioner reiterates that the office's two-language capability is clearly inadequate.

Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation

Quebec Branch Office

(12369)

Belle Cour Tower
2600 Laurier Boulevard
Suite 2800
8th Floor
P.O. Box 70
Sainte-Foy, Quebec
G1V 4C8
(418) 649-8080

Summary: At the time of our 1994 study, this office had offered satisfactory service in English. The 1999 follow-up showed that the quality of service in English has been maintained, but that the greeting in both official languages was still deficient, both for service on the telephone and in person.

Availability of two language service

Elements of service to the public examined	Yes	No	Not Applicable
Exterior signage in both official languages	x		
Interior signage in both official languages	x		
Documentation available in both official languages	x		
Official pictogram for bilingual services posted	x		
Forms available in both official languages	x		
Two-language greeting in person		x	
Two-language service in person	x		
Staff informed of linguistic obligations	x		
Contacts with English-speaking community	x		
Adequate two-language capability of office	x		

Availability of two language service

Service on the telephone	On a consistent basis	On an occasional basis	No
Two-language greeting			x
Two-language service	x		

The greeting on the two telephone calls was in French only. The service provided in English was very good on one call

and satisfactory on the second. The greeting in person was in French only, but the service provided in English was very good.

The office has 17 positions designated bilingual out of 47 employees. Two employees do not yet meet the language requirements of their positions, while two other incumbents of bilingual positions have not yet been tested. However, four employees filling positions designated "French essential" are bilingual. Since the reorganization of the regional offices there is no longer a manager on site. All the employees now report to different managers, at the Head Office in Montreal.

The officer with whom the auditor met is responsible for contacts with English-speaking clients. According to him, the office staff are aware of their linguistic obligations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Commissioner of Official Languages therefore recommends that Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation:

1. ensure, as soon as possible and no later than two months after the publication of this report, that employees who answer the telephone and meet the public use a two-language greeting at all times to encourage members of the public to communicate with them in English or French;
2. ensure, as soon as possible and no later than three months after the publication of this report, that employees in bilingual positions have valid language test results to offer quality service in both official languages;
3. inform, as soon as possible and no later than two months after the publication of this report, the employees of this office of their obligations with regard to service to the public in both official languages.

Corporation's response

Calls in English are forwarded to one of the 17 bilingual employees at the point of service (at least one employee per activity sector is identified as bilingual). The receptionist has a list of these employees.

All employees whose test results have expired will be tested shortly.

Employees have been informed of their linguistic obligations.

Commissioner's comments

The Commissioner is aware of the constraints under which the Corporation operates, but she is nonetheless concerned about the problems noted with regard to the delivery of service in both official languages. She would like to be informed, as soon as possible and no later than three months after publication of this report, of the concrete results of the review presently being conducted by the Corporation of its methods of providing service in both official languages.

Farm Credit Corporation Canada

District Office

(12746)

4300 Bourque Boulevard

Suite 203

Rock-Forest, Quebec

J1N 2A6

(819) 564-5512

Summary: At the time of our 1994 study, this office had offered very good service in English. The 1999 follow-up showed that it still provides the same quality of service in English, but does not greet members of the public who come to the office in both official languages.

Availability of two language service

Elements of service to the public examined	Yes	No	Not Applicable
Exterior signage in both official languages	x		

Interior signage in both official languages	x		
Documentation available in both official languages	x		
Official pictogram for bilingual services posted	x		
Forms available in both official languages	x		
Two-language greeting in person		x	
Two-language service in person	x		
Staff informed of linguistic obligations	x		
Contacts with English-speaking community	x		
Adequate two-language capability of office	x		

Availability of two language service

Service on the telephone	On a consistent basis	On an occasional basis	No
Two-language greeting	x		
Two-language service	x		

When the office was visited the greeting was in French only. The service in English was very good.

The office has six employees, three of whom are bilingual. Two of them have the superior level of linguistic proficiency. According to the manager, the staff are aware of the office's linguistic obligations. The office participates in meetings of English-speaking associations.

When informed of our observations, the manager agreed to issue a reminder to the receptionist, hired on a temporary basis, to greet members of the public in both official languages.

RECOMMENDATION

The Commissioner of Official Languages therefore recommends that Farm Credit Corporation Canada:

1. ensure, as soon as possible and no later than two months after the publication of this report, that employees who meet the public use a two-language greeting at all times to encourage members of the public to communicate with them in English or French.

**Public Works and Government Services Canada
District Office
(3115)**

Champlain Harbour Station
901 Cap-Diamant Street
Quebec, Quebec
G1K 4K1
Outside of Montreal: 1-800-884-5994

Summary: At the time of our 1994 study, the service in English provided at this toll-free telephone number was very good. The 1999 follow-up showed that the situation is unchanged. However, the Quebec office is no longer responsible for it.

Availability of two language service

Elements of service to the public examined	Yes	No	Not Applicable
Exterior signage in both official languages			x
Interior signage in both official languages			x
Documentation available in both official languages			x
Official pictogram for bilingual services posted			x
Forms available in both official languages			x

Two-language greeting in person			x
Two-language service in person			x
Staff informed of linguistic obligations			x
Contacts with English-speaking community			x
Adequate two-language capability of office			x

Availability of two language service

Service on the telephone	On a consistent basis	On an occasional basis	No
Two-language greeting	x		
Two-language service	x		

This is a service provided by a toll-free telephone number for the entire Quebec Region. The calls made to this number showed that the greeting is in both official languages and that the service in English is very good.

The manager we reached told us that, following a reorganization, the Montreal office is now responsible for this service.

RECOMMENDATION

The Commissioner of official Languages therefore recommends that Public Works and Government Services Canada:

1. immediately inform the TBS of the new information to be listed in the directory of federal offices designated to provide service in both official languages.

Institution's response

We have been made aware of disparities between toll-free service offered in French at Communication-Québec and the service offered in English. As part of our desire to centralize our services and in order to offer equal access and consistent messaging to all Canadians in both languages, Public Works and Government Services Canada served notice that the agreement with the provincial government of Quebec for toll-free delivery of Government of Canada information would end on September 30, 1999.

We are, until March 31, 2000, in a six month transition period during which many residents of Quebec may still call Communication-Québec for information on the Government of Canada. During this time Communication-Québec will refer the callers to 1 800 O-Canada.

Residents of Quebec now have direct access to the Government of Canada through 1 800 O-Canada, where they are given service in the official language of their choice. The Information Officers at 1 800 O-Canada are held to the same high bilingual service standards as the former Reference Canada program. The greetings are always bilingual as are all recorded messages. Information Officers are monitored on a regular basis to ensure that strict quality standards and compliance with the OLA are maintained.

**Public Works and Government Services Canada
(2616)**

Reference Canada - Communication-Quebec
Sherbrooke, Quebec
1-800-363-1363

Summary: At the time of our 1994 study, the service provided in both official languages at this number was very good. The 1999 follow-up showed that the service is good, but that the greeting is not in both official languages. It also seems that the information provided in English is not as complete as that provided in French.

Availability of two language service

Elements of service to the public examined	Yes	No	Not Applicable
Exterior signage in both official languages			x

Interior signage in both official languages			x
Documentation available in both official languages			x
Official pictogram for bilingual services posted			x
Forms available in both official languages			x
Two-language greeting in person			x
Two-language service in person			x
Staff informed of linguistic obligations			x
Contacts with English-speaking community			x
Adequate two-language capability of office			x

Availability of two language service

Service on the telephone	On a consistent basis	On an occasional basis	No
Two-language greeting			x
Two-language service	x		

This is a toll-free telephone service where members of the public can obtain information about government services.

Communication-Quebec greets members of the public in French only by means of an automated system. As soon as the service desired is chosen, everything is available in both official languages. In pursuing the audit of service, our auditor noticed that sometimes more information was given in French than in English. The service offered in English therefore does not seem exactly comparable to that provided in French.

In consulting the local telephone directory, the auditor noted that there is also another toll-free number for obtaining general information about federal services: 1-800-884-5994, under the heading "Government of Canada."

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Commissioner of Official Languages therefore recommends that Public Works and Government Services Canada:

1. ensure, as soon as possible and no later than three months after the publication of this report, that the information offered in English by Communication-Quebec about federal services is as complete and exhaustive as that provided in French and, if it is not, take this into account when the service agreement between the two organizations is renewed;
2. to inform her, as soon as possible, of the results of this study on the quality of service offered in both official languages by Communication-Quebec.

Institution's response

We have been made aware of disparities between toll-free service offered in French at Communication-Québec and the service offered in English. As part of our desire to centralize our services and in order to offer equal access and consistent messaging to all Canadians in both languages, Public Works and Government Services Canada served notice that the agreement with the provincial government of Quebec for toll-free delivery of Government of Canada information would end on September 30, 1999.

We are, until March 31, 2000, in a six month transition period during which many residents of Quebec may still call Communication-Québec for information on the Government of Canada. During this time Communication-Québec will refer the callers to 1 800 O-Canada.

Residents of Quebec now have direct access to the Government of Canada through 1 800 O-Canada, where they are given service in the official language of their choice. The Information Officers at 1 800 O-Canada are held to the same high bilingual service standards as the former Reference Canada program. The greetings are always bilingual as are all recorded messages. Information Officers are monitored on a regular basis to ensure that strict quality standards and compliance with the OLA are maintained.



Appendix A

1994 Recommendations

In the report entitled "A Study of Federal Offices Designated to Respond to the Public in Both English and French," the Commissioner recommended that:

- Federal offices designated to provide services in both official languages review the language of signs posted inside their premises to ensure that all signs are in both official languages.
- Designated offices post signs, preferably the standard TBS pictogram, indicating that service is available in English and French.
- Federal institutions review the number and the deployment of bilingual staff in offices which are designated to provide services in both official languages to ensure that they have adequate human resources to provide good quality service.
- Institutions and central agencies develop and adopt effective means of informing members of the public that they have a choice of language when communicating with or receiving services from federal institutions.
- Institutions which designate toll-free telephone numbers to provide service to the public in both languages ensure that an adequate number of bilingual staff are on hand at all times to guarantee service in both official languages.
- Federal institutions review the deployment of their bilingual staff, particularly those working in offices which are not required by the regulations to provide services in both official languages.
- Where appropriate, federal institutions establish in offices which have no official languages obligations an effective system to refer clients who require services in the other official language to designated offices.
- The TBS establish a process to periodically review and update the list of designated points of service to ensure that all information is current.
- The TBS ensure that the public is informed of the location of designated offices.
- Institutions ensure that all managers of designated offices and front-line staff are informed of their responsibilities.



Appendix B

Glossary

- **significant demand**

After conducting a widespread consultation of institutions and the public, TBS published the Official Languages (Communications with and Services to the Public) Regulations (the Regulations) on December 16, 1991. The Regulations define the expression "significant demand" and establish the rules for its application.

The general rules relating to **significant demand** are based on the demographic data from census units: the size of the linguistic minority (above a certain threshold) served by an office or a point of service, the characteristics of that population and the proportion of the region's population that it represents.

- **weighting**

When a probability sample survey is used (as was the case for the 1994 study), each unit chosen represents a certain number of other units within the population; in order to express this representation, each unit of the sample is weighted. For example, if we choose five points of service at random out of a total population of 30 points of service, each of the five units chosen thus receives a weight of six, and we assume that it represents six points in the population.

For the purposes of this follow-up to the study on the points of service, all the offices chosen have the same weight: a weight of one. Consequently, the results of the survey represent all the audited points of service and not all the designated two-language points of service in Quebec.

- **key services**

The Regulations established that certain federal institutions provide services deemed essential to the minority population. In census metropolitan areas where the English or French linguistic minority population has fewer than 5,000 persons and in census subdivisions where the minority population is at least 500 persons and represents less than 5% of the population of the subdivision, these institutions must offer services in both official languages if they are the only office of the federal institution within the region or subdivision to offer any of the following services:

- services related to income security programs
 - services of a post office
 - services of an employment centre (now called a human resources centre)
 - services of an office of the Department of Revenue Canada (Taxation)
 - services of an office of the Department of the Secretary of State of Canada (now called Canadian Heritage)
 - services of an office of the Public Service Commission
- **nature of the office**

After conducting a widespread consultation of institutions and the public, TBS published the Official Languages (Communications with and Services to the Public) Regulations (the Regulations) on December 16, 1991. The Regulations define the expression "nature of the office" and establish the rules for its application.

The rules on the nature of the office relate to the services that affect public health or safety or that, as a result of the office's location or mandate, require services in both languages. These include offices of federal institutions located in national parks and national historic parks (including one post office in each park).

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