

Dysfunctional Bilingualism

Description

There was a recent court ruling in Ottawa pertaining to language. The circumstances around this court case will give you an indication of how absurd the language reality has become.

Andre Dionne was employed in Montreal with a financial division of the federal government called the "Office of the Superintendent of Financial Institutions (OSFI). In his work he interacted with federal employees in Toronto. He placed a complaint with the federal commissioner of Languages that he was not able to use his "French language of work" when in communication to Toronto employees.

The commissioner agreed that this was a breach of his language rights. In response to the commissioner's statement, the government established 11 bilingual positions in Toronto so that employees in Montreal would not have to speak English in their work.

This is what "language of work" means and the consequences of it. Language of work" is part of the Official Languages Act requiring by law that employees must be able to work in their language of choice. This case shows you the extent of this law and how irrational it's implementation both from so minded employees and from the Language Commissioner's office.

It's here in New Brunswick as well. The government is moving toward this everyday in their plan of action on official languages. It requires the whole civil service to be bilingual, other wise it restricts someone from speaking only their own language. Recent NB. Language Commissioner Katherine d'Entremont explained this very clearly when she stated:

....."According to government documents, a unilingual person can become a supervisor if the linguistic profile of the team is maintained. Such a practice poses two major problems. First, pursuant to the Language of Work policy, employees can choose to be supervised and to work in the official language of their choice.

The fact that a unilingual employee can become a supervisor could prevent public servants from working in their language.

Second, by saying that unilingual persons can be promoted to senior positions, the government is compromising its efforts to make its senior public service bilingual, with senior public servants having started out as supervisors and then becoming middle managers."

She goes on to say:

Employees can choose the official language in which they wish to work and be supervised. In practice, they can exercise that choice only if the work environment actively supports the use of both official languages, and they can choose the official language in which they wish to work and be supervised."

This action by our government is so whacky and surreal that it makes Anglos doubt the reality and seriousness of it. But it's real and it's a train coming right at ya.

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