

D'Entremont, was a shining light.

## Description

This piece is a little long, but it is necessary and important to explain the position English speaking folks are in with respect to employment in government or any company that falls under the Official Languages Act. There are several quotes from Katherine D'Entremont, our last language commissioner. She unwittingly explained the barrier that bilingualism has become. Here it is.

On December 29, 2016, New Brunswick's Francophone daily newspaper, L'Acadie Nouvelle, named its Person of the Year for 2016: Commissioner Katherine D'Entremont. She was a great ambassador for the Francophone community.

We often speak about the leadership of the French community and she was certainly the voice for that leadership. Through her annual reports she gave us a view of the Francophone leadership's plans for the future.

### Their Plan for the Civil Service

The civil service is comprised of over 45,000 jobs but it is much more than that. It determines who in private industry gets contracts with the government. It has control over the administration of government policy including interpretation of laws and policies. Elected government officials rely on the civil service for information and advice in carrying out the government policy and enacting new laws.

So control of the civil service is a significant power and the management of it therefore critical. That is why D'Entremont was relentless on the push to produce a bilingual management in the civil service. Here she states, quote:

....."In a province with two official language communities, unilingualism of senior public servants is a significant impediment. Indeed, unilingual executives are unable to manage some employees in their language of choice. The language barrier prevents them from communicating directly with members of the other linguistic community."

She goes on to say:

"Moreover, unilingualism may greatly compromise clear communication between senior public servants and their ministers."

Unilingual senior public servants will be unable to monitor the quality of bilingual services. Furthermore, how can unilingual senior public servants demonstrate the importance of bilingual services to their employees if they have not made the effort to learn the other official language?

And we should ask ourselves, who shall they hire when 90+ percent of senior management are Francophone?

### More than Just Senior Management

D'Entremont reveals more:

....."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.".....

From this we can see that it is more than senior management but middle management and supervisors as well that must be bilingual.

She also mentions the "Language of Work" policy.

The "language of work" idea is the final piece to the puzzle. The leadership of the French community are striving for a utopia where Francophones can work for the government and companies contracted to the government completely in their French language as a minority. That cannot happen if there are unilingual Anglophones in the way.

Here she explains it:

....."Under the Language of Work policy, employees of departments and other government agencies 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".....

Anglophones are unilingual. They will never be bilingual in significant numbers and those that do will struggle to maintain it at the high proficiency levels being dictated. Bilingualism as a job requirement is increasing rapidly. As Anglophones retire, their positions that were previously designated "English" are changed to "Bilingual". The consequence is a rapidly diminishing participation by Anglophones in all areas of public service including paramedics, firefighters, police, healthcare workers, nursing and education.

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## **Date Created**

2019-01-29