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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE

TORONTO, ONTARIO
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The Honourable Hugh Edighoffer, M.P.P.,
Speaker of the Legislative Assembly.

Sir,

Your Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly has the honour to present its Report and commends it to the House.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Michael Breugh". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent initial 'M'.

Michael J. Breugh, M.P.P.
Chairman

Queen's Park
12 June 1986

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON
THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

Report on Simultaneous Interpretation

**2nd Session 33rd Parliament
35 Elizabeth II**

**MEMBERSHIP OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON
THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

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A. SMIRLE FORSYTH
Clerk of the Committee

On Thursday, 1 May 1986, the House adopted the following motion:

That the Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly review and report on the provision of simultaneous translation services to the House and its committees, and that the evidence and documents received by the Standing Committee on Members' Services in the First Session be referred to the Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly.

The Committee considered evidence and reports presented to the Standing Committee on Members' Services in the last Session and heard evidence with respect to this matter from consultants to and staff of the Office of the Assembly who are working on the installation of a television broadcast system for the House.

In 1970, the House adopted changes to the Standing Orders which recognized the right of members to speak in either English or French. Previously, the Standing Orders had only provided for the use of English in the proceedings of the House, although it was the custom to allow a member to address the House in another language provided a copy of the remarks in the language other than English was provided to the Speaker, together with a translation of such remarks into English.

At various times over the years, simultaneous interpretation of the proceedings of the House or of the committees has been provided. In 1980, the House, by special order, provided for simultaneous interpretation of the debates on the constitution. Several committees have provided simultaneous interpretation of their proceedings when evidence in French was being received.

In the present Parliament, more than in any previous Parliament, members are using French in the proceedings of the House, whether it be in asking or responding to questions, in debate or in introducing bills. It is important that members be able to express themselves in either English or French, and equally important, that other members understand their remarks.

Your Committee is of the opinion that the time has come to take the next step in the development of services provided to members and the public in English and French. Accordingly, your Committee recommends that:

- 1. Simultaneous interpretation be provided of all proceedings in the Legislative Chamber.**

Upon the recommendation of this Committee's predecessor committee, the House adopted a recommendation that a permanent television facility, similar to that installed in the Legislative Chamber, be installed in the Amethyst Room. Your Committee believes that a simultaneous interpretation facility should be installed in the Amethyst Room. Committees requiring simultaneous interpretation of their proceedings would have priority access to the Amethyst Room. However, the Committee envisages that the proceedings of those committees regularly using the Amethyst Room would be interpreted simultaneously.

Your Committee recommends that:

- 2. Simultaneous interpretation be provided of all committee proceedings in the Amethyst Room.**

Your Committee further recommends that:

- 3. Within one year of the installation of the simultaneous interpretation facility in the Amethyst Room, the Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly consider the advisability of extending the provision of this facility to the other committee rooms.**

The Committee also considered the location and design of a booth to provide for simultaneous interpretation in the House. The Committee considered two options: a booth located within the confines of the Chamber which would give line-of-sight vision to the interpreters, or a booth located off-site, using television monitors to provide the interpreters with a view of members speaking and the Chamber.

The Committee agrees with the representations that an in-House booth is most advantageous. It immerses the interpreter in the atmosphere of the House and allows a greater perception of non-verbal communication signals (e.g. body language), it will require less space, and it will minimize the disruption to other components of the legislative television broadcast system.

Your Committee recommends that:

- 4. The simultaneous interpretation booth be located within the confines of the Legislative Chamber.**

Various locations for this simultaneous interpretation booth were considered by the Committee. The Committee also considered architectural factors which could have an impact on the appearance and historical features of the Legislative Chamber. The Committee cannot stress too strongly its commitment to ensuring that the architectural and historical integrity of the Legislative Chamber is maintained.

The Committee is of the opinion that the simultaneous interpretation booth should be located in the Members' Gallery under the Speaker's Gallery and on the Government side of the Chamber. The booth would extend into the Members' Gallery and into the East Lobby. Such a booth would reduce by a relatively small number the amount of visitor seating and would eliminate the need for awkward modifications to the existing seating arrangement. It would also have the least disruptive effect on the appearance of the Chamber.

Your Committee recommends that:

- 5. The simultaneous interpretation booth be located in the Members' Under-Gallery on the Government side of the Chamber.**

The Committee also considered the staffing and organization of a simultaneous interpretation unit to provide the coverage required by the House and its committees. The size and composition of interpreter teams varies according to work load as measured by the number of languages to be interpreted, the number of locations and the duration of the speech to be simultaneously interpreted.

Standards established by the International Association of Conference Interpreters for two-language, two-way simultaneous interpretation are as follows:

- maximum forty-five minutes (single speech) - 1 interpreter
- from forty-five minutes to four hours (1 booth) - 2 interpreters
- from four to six hours (1 booth) - 3 interpreters
- from six to eight hours (1 booth) - 4 interpreters.

The Committee is of the opinion that the simultaneous interpretation of the proceedings of the House will require three interpreters working from one booth to provide two-way, two-language interpretation. In addition, an additional three interpreters will be required to provide simultaneous interpretation of committee proceedings in the Amethyst Room. An additional interpreter should also be employed to provide for flexibility and to act as a back-up interpreter in case of illness or vacation.

In addition, the Committee considered whether these interpreters should be full-time employees of the Assembly, contract employees or employees on loan from a branch of government.

The Committee is concerned that the interpretation be of the highest possible quality. For this reason, the use of full-time employees is preferred over contract employees or employees on loan from various branches of government. Permanent full-time employees of the Assembly would be very familiar with the proceedings, subject-matter and technical terms of the House and would become expert in providing interpretation services to the House and its committees.

The Committee was concerned that the time of full-time employees of the Assembly be utilized effectively during periods when the House and the committees are not meeting. The Committee heard proposals to utilize their time during such periods by making arrangements with ministries of the

Government and encourages discussions with management in the Ministry of the Attorney General to make use of simultaneous interpreters employed by the Assembly in the court system or with agencies of the Government when the House or its committees are not meeting.

Your Committee recommends that:

6. **A simultaneous interpretation unit, composed of seven full-time employees of the Office of the Assembly (3 for the House, 3 for the Amethyst Room and 1 back-up interpreter), be established.**

Your Committee further recommends that:

7. **Arrangements be made with other branches of government to utilize the time of the interpreters when neither the House nor the committees are meeting.**

The provision of simultaneous interpretation facilities is an important step in the history and development of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario and is one which will benefit all members and those persons observing the proceedings.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Simultaneous interpretation be provided of all proceedings in the Legislative Chamber. (page 2)
2. Simultaneous interpretation be provided of all committee proceedings in the Amethyst Room. (page 2)
3. Within one year of the installation of the simultaneous interpretation facility in the Amethyst Room, the Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly consider the advisability of extending the provision of this facility to the other committee rooms. (page 2)
4. The simultaneous interpretation booth be located within the confines of the Legislative Chamber. (page 3)
5. The simultaneous interpretation booth be located in the Members' Under-Gallery on the Government side of the Chamber. (page 3)
6. A simultaneous interpretation unit, composed of seven full-time employees of the Office of the Assembly (3 for the House, 3 for the Amethyst Room and 1 back-up interpreter), be established. (page 5)
7. Arrangements be made with other branches of government to utilize the time of the interpreters when neither the House nor the committees are meeting. (page 5)