is one of linguistic pluralism with French always as the predominant language. Obviously, some people would love it if Quebec became officially bilingual. We are not there yet, anyway.

Bill 86 will dismantle, or at least substantially reshuffle, the various public bodies in charge of the implementation and supervision of language policy. The Commission de protection de la langue française (affectionately called the language watchdog by the English-speaking media) will be abolished. The other bodies will lose a good chunk of their autonomy and regulatory power. The minister responsible for the file, Claude Ryan for the time being, will issue the regulations that will specify what the marked predominance of French will mean in practical circumstances. Moreover, the government is also prepared to make exceptions allowing immigrant children with learning disabilities to have access to elementary and high school education in English.

The government could have done all that while continuing to invoke the notwithstanding clause. In the aftermath of the October 26 referendum, this would have meant that a "business as usual" attitude was not being followed on the constitutional file. Bourassa's government behaves on the issue of language policy as it did during the Canada Round. If it is inspired by a vision, by principles, it fails to let us know what they are. However, actions by themselves have meanings and convey messages. Bill 86 tells the rest of Canada that an unconditional allegiance to Canadian federalism is the creed of the day in Quebec City.

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backed up by a legislated deficit-elimination requirement, will ensure that these targets are met." Citizens ordinarily assume that a political promise that is enacted in law must be kept. However, as U.S. federal experience has shown, balanced budget legislation may placate a public that has grown increasingly concerned about the national debt, without achieving any progress toward its reduction.

Should failed promises in this regard be left to the process of democratic accountability, or should balanced budget legislation be enforceable? More on that question in the next issue of Canada Watch.

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Canada Watch welcomes submissions on issues of current national interest. Submissions should be a maximum of 1,000 words. The deadline for consideration in our July/August issue is Monday, June 28. Write or fax us at: Canada Watch, Osgoode Hall Law School, Room 454, 4700 Keele Street, North York, ON M3J 1P3. Tel: (416) 736-5515, Fax: (416) 736-5546.

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QUEBEC LANGUAGE LAW
Quebec Liberal Cabinet minister Claude Ryan introduced a new language law, Bill 86, in the National Assembly on May 6. (See Quebec Report on page 120.) The legislation would relax certain provisions of the five-year-old law that restricts the use of English. Bilingual signs would be legal, French schools would be allowed to offer English immersion courses, and the Commission de protection de langue fran
caise would be disbanded. Significantly, Cabinet would have greater regulatory control over language services, meaning that section 33 of the Constitution Act, the notwithstanding clause, would not have to be resorted to restrict the use of English in advertising. The Supreme Court, and most recently the United Nations Human Rights Commission, have found Quebec’s current law to violate the freedom of expression. The legislation is similar in content to the compromise worked out within the Quebec Liberal party’s general council on April 25.

Premier Bourassa announced on May 5 that his cancer treatment had been successful, postponing the need for him to decide immediately whether to continue in office. The government’s mandate does not expire until September 1994. Bourassa’s news bolstered the Liberals because of his ability to unite the party over its language policy, and because of his popularity among the provincial electorate. A SOM-Le Soleil poll, of 1,020 voters from April 13 to 19, found the Liberals to have 51 percent support of decided voters, and the PQ 41 percent.

NAFTA
The NAFTA implementing legislation has cleared its final hurdles in the House of Commons. Parliamentary committee hearings on NAFTA