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Commissioner of Official Languages

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A WORD FROM THE COMMISSIONER

A Tower of Babel gave way to two linguistic communities that could understand each other with ease

These few words eloquently describe my vision as Commissioner of Official Languages. Creating ties, building bridges and enriching our society by focussing on the richness of our differences: this is what motivates me to fulfill the mission that the Parliament of Canada bestowed upon me five years ago.

My vision of the future of our country is firmly rooted in the 35-year history of the *Official Languages Act*. There is still work to be done in the area of linguistic rights, as you will certainly have noticed while reading my most recent annual report. You may also have noted my keen determination to contribute to transforming our linguistic plan into a developmental tool. As I state every chance I get, Canada is strong not only because it defends fundamental freedoms and equality, but also because it has been able to sow these principles into the fertile soil of a constantly changing society that is based on the equality of our two official languages. Like many of you, I dream of a day when bilingualism is a true, integrated part of our daily lives, a day when there are no obstacles impeding communication between linguistic communities.

Some may be inclined to label my vision as a “pipe dream.” I need only remind them that, over the past 35 years, our linguistic plan has produced significant results in several areas. Faithful readers of *INFOACTION* have been witness to the many steps and actions toward

active bilingualism from Newfoundland and Labrador to the Northwest Territories. However, implementation of the *Official Languages Act* remains incomplete, and the Government of Canada is still very far from declaring “mission accomplished.” As the Commissioner of Official Languages, it is my responsibility to occasionally remind the government of its duty, which I do through each of my annual reports. Last November, in my presentation to the House of Commons Standing Committee of Official Languages, I again emphasized that, more than ever, the Act needs strong and bold leadership to ensure full implementation. When commenting on the execution of the *Action Plan for Official Languages*, I reiterated my recommendation that the government maintain all resources associated with the Official Languages Program. The new year will be replete with challenges concerning official languages, and I trust that the government will take every opportunity to make progress in this area. I will remain vigilant and ensure that this translates into concrete, specific and measurable actions for all citizens through the official language promises set out in the Throne Speech.

It is not only the government's duty to build a linguistic bridge; we must all contribute to this social project. Each of us must be an architect of change to create a country in which unity and harmony reign. Allow me to

cite the example of Canadian Parents for French. For almost 30 years, its members have worked tirelessly so that their children may learn and speak both official languages of Canada. They act as parents and responsible citizens. They want their children to participate in the development and functioning of a remarkable vision for our country: the improvement of our society through the richness of our differences. This is the vision that calls each of us to make Canadian linguistic duality a reality.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish all *INFOACTION* readers a very happy 2005. I hope that the new year brings you health, peace and the desire to make a contribution to this, our country.

Dyane Adam



Dyane Adam

A GLOBAL VISION OF LINGUISTIC DUALITY

*One fundamental way Canada is making
a mark on the international scene*

The Government of Canada has made commendable efforts to reflect the country's bilingual identity, yet this identity is still not firmly anchored in the objectives of Canada's international policy. So reveal the results of a study entitled *Doorway to the World: Linguistic Duality in Canada's International Relations*, published in November 2004 by the Commissioner of Official Languages.

The study addresses the place held by linguistic duality, both as domestic policy and as a fundamental value of Canada's international policy. From this perspective, the study examined five major aspects of international relations:

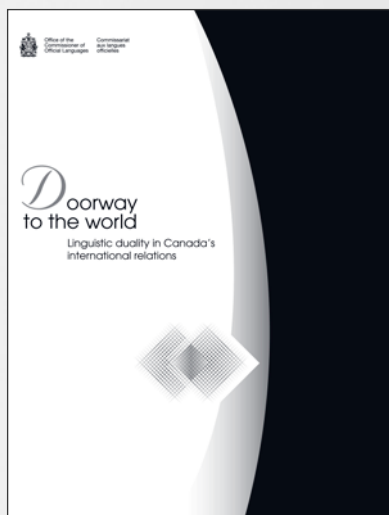
- Linguistic duality in international policy
- Duality in certain key programs and initiatives
 - i. Public Diplomacy Program
 - ii. Canadian Studies Program
 - iii. Cultural Diversity Agenda
 - iv. La Francophonie
 - v. Regional multinational organizations
 - vi. Trade missions
- Linguistic duality in foreign missions
 - i. Culture and society
 - ii. University relations
 - iii. Trade and investment
- Linguistic duality on the front lines: consular services, publications and safety services
- Internal support for linguistic duality: requirements, training, assessment, etc.

The study began at the end of 2003, in the midst of a broad ministerial review of Canada's international relations. The observations contained in the study are based on more than 150 interviews conducted with public servants in three federal departments: Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada, Canadian Heritage, and Industry Canada. The results of the study indicate that there are a considerable number of initiatives that contribute to enhancing linguistic duality in Canada. Of note are the efforts made by Canada within international organizations, such as UNESCO, to support cultural diversity. There is also the major role the country plays at the heart of La Francophonie. In contrast, Dr. Adam has noted the

absence of a common vision with respect to linguistic duality within Canada's international activities. This results in a certain inconsistency in the application of programs, which gives rise to inadequate support mechanisms. These weak links have a damaging effect on the government's capacity to optimize the contribution of linguistic duality to Canada's international interests.

The study contains 25 recommendations intended to clarify the policy review process. These recommendations suggest new ways of carrying out programs and activities with a view to better highlighting our bilingual identity abroad. The government of Canada recognizes the importance of this portfolio and has, on the whole, reacted positively to the Commissioner's recommendations.

Dr. Adam will closely follow the evolution of this portfolio, which she considers a priority. "Entrenching our linguistic duality within our international relations means incorporating this fundamental value every step of the way: from overall vision to program development to service delivery," stated Dr. Adam, concluding: "This country's linguistic duality is part of our unique brand, which Canadians expect us to project in our international affairs. It is one of the fundamental ways in which our country stands out internationally, and the government of Canada should seize the opportunity to maximize the potential of linguistic duality."



TOWARDS A DIVERSIFIED AND VITAL ENGLISH-SPEAKING COMMUNITY IN QUEBEC

On November 5, Dr. Dyane Adam, Commissioner of Official Languages, released the findings of a key study on the future of Quebec's English-speaking community, *Going Forward: The Evolution of Quebec's English-Speaking Community*. The study offers a comprehensive and current view of Quebec's English-speaking community.

In the opinion of its author, Jack Jedwab, Executive Director of the Association for Canadian Studies, "The Quebec English-speaking community has adapted to many changes in the last few years. It is a community with an evolving identity and needs continuous support in order to ensure its enduring vitality." Mr. Jedwab's report is a first step in that direction.

Dr. Adam, who commissioned the study, agrees: "Over the course of the 20th century, there have been significant changes in the English-speaking population in Quebec. Understanding the evolution of the Quebec English-speaking community is essential for all stakeholders who will contribute to the development of future policy and to the decision making that will affect this community."

In fact, that is the ultimate goal of the study: to help community leaders and policy makers design strategies that better meet the needs of Quebec's English-speaking population and to better inform those responsible for providing government services in three key areas: health care, education and economic development.

The report showed that the Quebec English-speaking community has adapted to many changes in the last few years. With a continually evolving identity, the community needs constant support to promote its vitality. It must also stimulate its own dynamism by, for example, encouraging community initiatives.

Another point, one that is very dear to Dr. Adam, aims to shed light on the community consultation process as a way of revitalizing the minority English-speaking communities in Quebec.

ENSURING THE PROVISION OF ESSENTIAL SERVICES IN THE LANGUAGE OF THE MINORITY

Access to social and health services in English is a constant concern of the Anglophone community in Quebec, varying according to demographic situation, economic status and the nature and importance of government intervention. However, the study indicates that when Anglophones are ill, they are more likely than Francophones to seek help from their families before turning to public institutions.

There is no future without education; this is why the future of English schools, particularly in rural regions, is another matter of great concern for the Anglophone community. Indeed, the study showed a continuing decline in Anglophone registrations in English schools, but an increased presence of eligible Francophones in these schools.



Ms. Eva Ludvig, Commissioner's Representative, Quebec Region

THE NEW FACE OF THE ECONOMY

Although the Anglophone population of Quebec has diminished since the 1970s, today it has new socio-economic, regional, ethnic and religious characteristics.

For example, knowledge of both English and French is indispensable to the economic progress of Quebec Anglophones. In 2001, the unemployment rate among Quebec's bilingual Anglophones aged 25 to 34 was 7.5 percent, compared with 14.3 percent among unilingual Anglophones. This is clear progress since 1996, when the unemployment rates among these groups were 10.2 and 18.8 percent respectively.

Another telling example: the rate of English-French bilingualism has constantly increased over the past decade. According to Statistics Canada, 58.4 percent of Quebec

Anglophones were bilingual in 1991, whereas 66.6 percent spoke both official languages in 2001.

A NECESSARY UPDATE

Thanks to its complete and up-to-date data, the study not only reports on the current status of Quebec's Anglophone population, it also enables the reader to appreciate how the community evolves and adapts as it becomes more diversified, even though its population and social impact have declined. This is an undisputed sign of its vitality.

A WORD FROM BEIJING: THE COMMISSIONER SHOWCASES OUR LINGUISTIC DUALITY

In today's world, we are witnessing a greater tendency toward diversity, rather than uniformity

Twenty years after its founding, the International Academy of Linguistic Law (IALL) continues to grow. Created in Montréal by 100 founding members, this multidisciplinary international organization is composed primarily of jurists, linguists and social science specialists. It also welcomes individuals who are interested in exploring issues pertaining to law and language from a scientific or professional perspective, notably comparative linguistic law.

Every two years, the IALL hosts an international conference. The first was held in Montréal in 1988, and since then the conference has travelled to such locales as Hong Kong, Pretoria and Brussels. The Ninth International Conference took place this past September in Beijing, China. It was organized in collaboration with the Chinese University of Law and Political Science and the Institute of Applied Linguistics of China's Ministry of Education. The working languages of the conference were Chinese, English and French.

Forty internationally known speakers, Dr. Dyane Adam among them, discussed various aspects of linguistic diversity, based on the experience in their respective countries. The commissioner had received a special invitation from the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China. Each speaker highlighted different facets of comparative language rights, notably the legal and linguistic standards that apply to language rights, the language of law, and the right to language as a basic human right.

On the occasion of the conference, Dr. Adam gave a speech entitled "Linguistic Duality and Cultural Diversity in Canada: Harmonizing Territorial and Individual Rights." Making reference to the adoption of the UNESCO *Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity*, the Commissioner began by highlighting the current tendency toward promotion of a new universal ethic of intercultural dialogue, as seen in the IALL conference, for example, which promoted this needed dialogue. After a brief overview of the Canadian experience in linguistic governance, the Commissioner showed how Canada's

linguistic legislation forms an effective framework for communication between citizens and their government. She also explained the implementation of the policy of multiculturalism within the context of linguistic duality. After reviewing the main characteristics of this policy, Dr. Adam described how Canadian linguistic legislation is put into practice, with a particular emphasis on the significant progress made in the delivery of provincial and territorial services in a minority official language.

Canadians understand the link between the support given to French and English as official languages and the country's capacity to manage its growing diversity. Within the context of globalized commerce, the Canadian population is very aware of the considerable economic advantages offered by a bilingual and multicultural society. In her speech, which included many relevant illustrations,

Dr. Adam showed that Canada's model for language planning works because it promotes equal opportunity for both official language communities.

In conclusion, the Commissioner of Official Languages observed that, within the current context, globalization offers a comparative advantage to societies that are particularly sensitive to plurality and linguistic diversity. "In Canada, our model of accommodation allows us to manage our diversity and to reap its benefits." Dr. Adam said that she felt both proud and honoured to have had the opportunity to share with the participants of the international conference the results of Canada's linguistic experience which, along with our Aboriginal heritage, has formed an essential characteristic of Canada for more than 200 years.

LES TROPHÉES DE LA LANGUE FRANÇAISE: DYANE ADAM DISCUSSES THE NEED TO PROTECT THE FRENCH LANGUAGE

Following hot on the heels of New York and Cairo, Canada's capital was the next stop for *Les Trophées de la langue française*, a prestigious television show hosted by Bernard Pivot. The program, which was recorded in the Great Hall of the National Gallery of Canada on October 27, paid tribute to Francophones and francophiles who are outstanding in their field. It was broadcast on TV5 Québec-Canada and TV5 Monde in late November, in the wake of the Francophone Summit in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso. Thus, audiences in 43 countries spanning five continents had a chance to view a program entirely dedicated to Canada's linguistic duality and multiculturalism.

COMMISSIONER DYANE ADAM IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Dr. Adam was among the program's guests. Bernard Pivot, after reviewing the role of Canada's Commissioner of Official Languages, asked if it was not more important for Francophones to learn to speak English than for Anglophones to learn to speak French. She replied, "English is a fact of life throughout Canada. In a North American context, there is no doubt that the French language needs to be protected. Furthermore, there is also a need to protect and promote French in settings beyond home and school. We must foster the use of French in every aspect of life."

PRESTIGIOUS PRIZES

In March 2005, in Paris, a gala evening will cap the program's season and honour the winners of the *Trophées de la langue française* in five categories: spelling, song/poetry (awarded in 2004 to Lynda Lemay), translation/interpretation, humour, and cultural diversity.

These awards recognize the talent, dedication, culture, humour, and creativity of those who, in a variety of disciplines, contribute to promoting the French language. They celebrate those who enrich the language and enliven its soul, its musicality and its usability; who promote its use in international communication, education and creativity; and who see it as a language without restrictions or borders and a bulwark against cultural assimilation as it evolves around the world.

INTERNATIONAL PROMOTION OF FRANCOPHONE CULTURE IN CANADA

Bernard Pivot's name is synonymous with his *dictée*. In this case, the dictation was held in the Canadian Museum of Civilization, and the theme was Canada. His text for francophiles whose mother tongue is not French was a glowing testimony to Canada's two founding cultures, its linguistic duality and its openness to multiculturalism.

Les Trophées de la langue française could not have better highlighted the bilingual nature of Canada's capital and the dynamism of the French language in Canada. This was a real coup for Francophone culture in Canada, and one which will surely promote this culture the world over.

HOMAGE TO JEAN-ROBERT GAUTHIER

Let us not think that retirement will put an end to the exemplary commitment of Senator Jean-Robert Gauthier. On October 22, this brave defender of Francophone rights took leave of the Canadian Senate on the eve of his 75th birthday. His peers paid him homage that resounded not only through the upper house, but across Canada. Numerous fellow senators spoke in recognition of his sustained commitment throughout a long career as member of Parliament, senator, and citizen of Ottawa.



Photo: Jean-Marc Carisse

Senator Gauthier has always risen to the defence of Francophone rights. His tenacious, courageous and persistent efforts were carried out on all fronts. To cite just one example among many: in 2001, Senator Gauthier tabled a bill intended to strengthen the *Official Languages Act*. On three occasions the bill died on the order paper. In the spring of 2004, the bill was passed at third reading in the Senate, then referred to the House of Commons. When Parliament was dissolved for an election call, the new bill did not proceed. Senators finally approved bill S-3 on October 26, just a few days after the man who had introduced it retired.

The Commissioner of Official Languages has always offered full support to Senator Gauthier. On November 1, when she appeared before the Standing Committee on Official Languages of the House of Commons, Dr. Adam took the opportunity to publicly express her appreciation and best wishes to the Senator: "I fully support Senator

Gauthier's bill and congratulate you on adopting it. The passage of this bill will, in my opinion, help official language communities respond to many challenges and contribute to strengthening their means to develop."

Senator Gauthier's quest to defend the language rights of his fellow citizens has not ended. It is easy to see why he is

considered by many to be a national hero, a model for action. For this man of politics, there have never been obstacles, only rights to be defended. Mark these words: Jean-Robert Gauthier will continue to make official language history.

WHY COMPLAIN?

It all depends...!

If complaining just means bemoaning our fate, expressing our distress or showing our dissatisfaction, it is generally something we should refrain from doing in the public arena.

Complaining to the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages, however, is another story altogether. In most cases, making a complaint to OCOL sets a process in motion that leads to greater equality for English and French in our federal institutions: the resolution of a complaint can benefit thousands of people. Consider the following case.

CANSASK centres were set up under a federal-provincial initiative designed to deliver employment and vocational guidance services to the people of Saskatchewan. They provide services that were formerly the responsibility of the Government of Canada.

The centres operate under a labour market development agreement between Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC) and the Government of Saskatchewan. The agreement requires that certain services be offered in both official languages in order to respect the public's language rights.

Recently, a French-speaking member of the public was unable to carry out activities related to job searches in French on the computer at the CANSASK Centre in Saskatoon. The keyboard and applications of the computer seemed to be set up to operate in English only. Since he

was of the opinion that his language rights were not being respected, he filed a complaint with OCOL.

An investigation by an OCOL official revealed that although the computers in the Saskatoon centre were indeed set up to operate in English and in French, this information was not conveyed to the public. The investigator pointed this out to the centre's staff, who quickly rectified the situation. Each workstation available for public use now displays a notice informing users that the keyboard can be set up to operate in French and inviting them to contact a staff member to make the change. The same notice is also displayed as a screensaver.

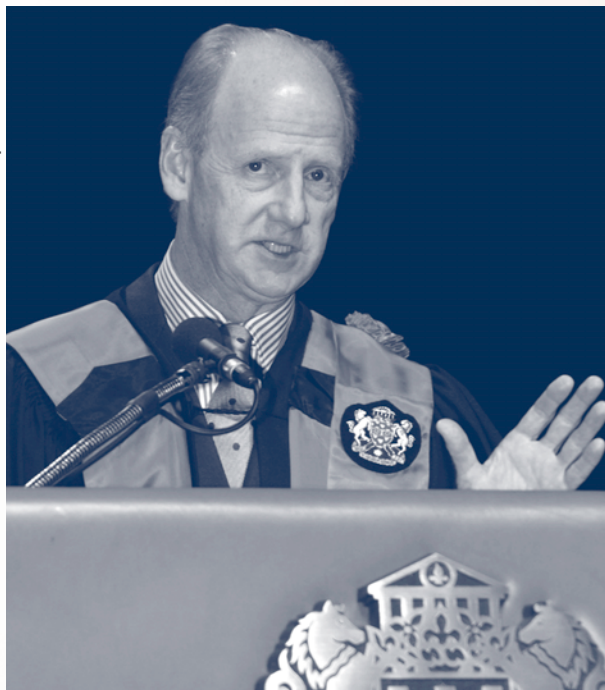
Two other centres in Saskatchewan, Prince Albert and Regina, have taken similar steps to provide service to the public in both official languages, as required by the Act. One of the Saskatoon CANSASK managers met with the client service staff to remind them of their obligations with regard to official languages and the availability of computers in French as well as the procedures for their utilization.

Thanks to a private citizen's sense of responsibility, a complaint has led to a positive change within the Government of Canada. HRSDC was quick to make the necessary changes in order to respect the language rights of everyone who enters a CANSASK centre where service must be provided in both official languages. As this example illustrates, a complaint to the Office of the Commissioner is a vote for change.

HONORARY DOCTORATE TO A PROMOTER OF BILINGUALISM

At this fall's graduation ceremony, the University of Ottawa conferred an honorary doctorate on His Excellency John Ralston Saul, highlighting his active work in promoting a diverse, bilingual Canada. An award-winning essayist and novelist, Mr. Saul is also founder and honorary chair of *Le français pour l'avenir/French for the future* and chair of the advisory board of the LaFontaine-Baldwin Symposium.

Photo: MCpl Pascal Quillé



His Excellency John Ralston Saul

In addressing more than 1,200 graduates, Mr. Saul said: “We need a critical mass of bilingual, bicultural Canadians—writers, artists, judges, a whole range of people—who can deal with issues that relate to the fact that we have two cultures. Far more, we need a generosity of spirit that says that’s the way we want to live in our very unusual society.” He also told the graduates that “unilingual Anglophones all over this country rave on about how wonderful it is that they’ve got a nephew somewhere who’s bilingual, and how wonderful for the country. There’s no sense that there are those who are in and those who are out.”

Mr. Saul also took the opportunity to remind the audience that, in attending a bilingual university, they have already demonstrated an understanding of what parts of the Canadian fabric are important. He added, “Your bilingualism at the University of Ottawa is a model for the bilingualism and biculturalism of the country.”

Quotes from *The Ottawa Citizen*, Nov. 1, 2004

A PAGE OF HISTORY ON A NEW BANKNOTE

The next time you have a new \$50 bill, take a moment to read a page of Canada's history.

To illustrate the theme of this new bill, "Building a nation", an excerpt from the first article of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* is featured on the reverse: "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights." The text is accompanied by four images that recall Canada's progress in democracy and equality:

- the statue of the Famous Five;
- a 1929 newspaper headline proclaiming that "Women are persons";
- the bronze medallion of the Thérèse-Casgrain Volunteer Award; and
- the scales of justice.

The Famous Five were major architects of change. With commitment and determination, these women worked to defend the political rights of women in Canada, helping to consolidate the principle of equal rights in our society. The Famous Five were:

- **Judge Emily Murphy**, first woman in the British Empire to become a magistrate;
- **Henrietta Muir Edwards**, Convenor of Laws for the National Council of Women;

- **Louise McKinney**, first woman in the British Empire to be elected to a legislative assembly;
- **Irene Parlby**, first female cabinet minister in Alberta history;
- **Nellie McClung**, writer and suffragist who worked to obtain the right to vote for the women of Manitoba, the first in Canada.

At the unveiling of the new bill in Calgary, the Honourable Senator Joyce Fairbairn explained that banknotes are "a national symbol and a source of pride. It is therefore fitting that the illustrations on our bank notes represent the elements of our society that help us to define ourselves. The new \$50 note celebrates citizens who have, throughout our history, helped to make Canada one of the world's most democratic countries—a place where the rights and freedoms of individual Canadians are secure."

Thanks to the persistent efforts of the Famous Five, democracy made great strides in Canada. The new \$50 banknote celebrates the passion of those who strive to build democracy and equality in Canada.

By the way, if you're heading out to Parliament Hill, be sure to go see the superb bronze sculpture of the Famous Five—you won't regret it!



DID YOU KNOW?

September 7, 2004, marked 35 years since the *Official Languages Act* first came into effect. In its *United Nations Report on Development*, the UN stated that the Canadian experience in multiculturalism and bilingualism was exemplary. The document underscored the need to integrate cultural diversity in a world where migration has exploded, giving the Canadian model as a notable example.

SOME INTERESTING FACTS

- ♦ English and French remain the most widely spoken languages in Canada: 98% of the population knows at least one of the two official languages (Statistics Canada, 2001 Census).
- ♦ Approximately 1.9 million Canadians live in minority official language communities (Statistics Canada, 2001 Census).
- ♦ A growing number of post-secondary institutions are recognizing the importance of offering programs in a minority official language. This is not only a question of responding to the needs of the minority, but also of offering young people the opportunity to perfect their skills in a second official language.
- ♦ Many young people in Canada study a second official language. According to Statistics Canada, during the 2002–2003 school year, some 2 million students took courses in French as a second language. In addition, approximately 50 percent of all students in the English-language school system take such courses.

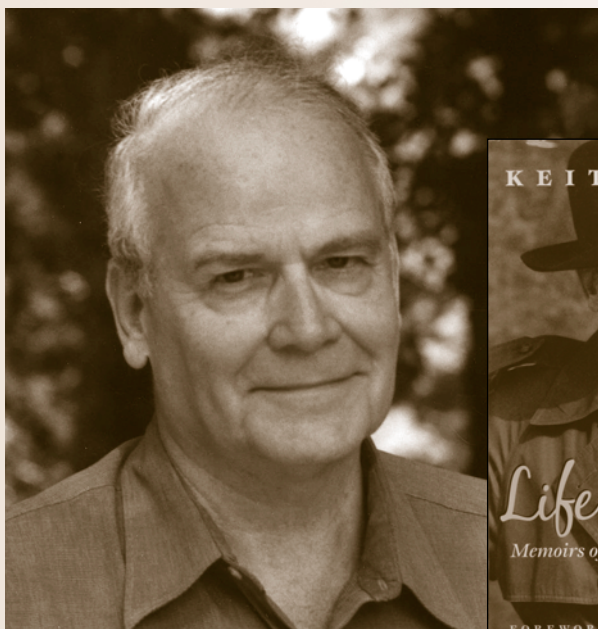
Want to know more about the *Official Languages Act*? OCOL's website, at www.ocol-clo.gc.ca, offers you a wealth of information. Just click on "Newsroom", then "Fact Sheets", and then on the "35th anniversary" link.

THE INCORRIGIBLE KEITH SPICER: MEMOIRS OF AN EXCEPTIONAL CANADIAN

Keith Spicer has just published his fourth book, *Life Sentences: Memoirs of an Incorrigible Canadian*. Over the course of his career in government, from 1960 to 1990, Keith Spicer became a great defender of national unity. As the first Commissioner of Official Languages, during the Trudeau government, he played a major role in the 1969 implementation of the *Official Languages Act*. Thus the invitation was extended to all Canadians to come together in linguistic equality. Keith Spicer subsequently chaired the CRTC during the government of Brian Mulroney, as

well as the Citizens' Forum on Canada's Future (1990–1991), as part of which 700,000 Canadians set out their vision of the country: the form, the fundamental values, and the priorities that the country should assume in years to come. He has also had a varied career in the private sector: he has been an editorial writer for *The Globe and Mail*, editor-in-chief of *The Ottawa Citizen*, a public affairs television commentator, and a professor of political science and international relations at several universities in Canada and the United States.

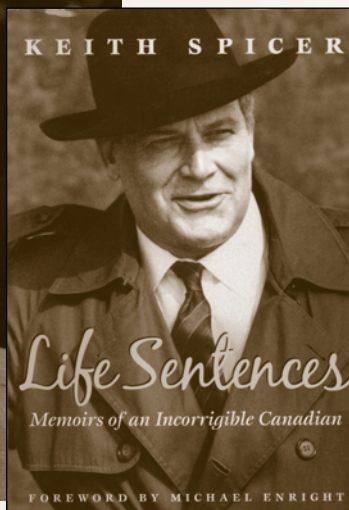
Photo: Ilona Hurda



Keith Spicer

to become the ardent defender of French that he is known as, both in Quebec and in France (where he has lived since 1996), and to become a member of the Haut Conseil de la Francophonie, which advises Jacques Chirac on the future of French. Official bilingualism was the means through which he promoted his cause of national unity. There can be no doubt that his experiences as a student at the Institut d'Études politiques in 1950s Paris had an impact in this regard. He was living at that time close to

the Luxembourg Garden, just as he does today, a place to which he longed to return. With 70 full years behind him, Keith Spicer directs the Institute for Media, Peace and Security of the University for Peace of the United Nations based in Paris. He also gives many lectures at the Sorbonne on national strategies associated with the Internet.



Life Sentences: Memoirs of an Incurable Canadian is an absolute delight to read, for the spirit, the candour and the self-deprecating attitude of the author. What is more, these memoirs are full of charming anecdotes, the stories of a man moving easily through the corridors of power. What makes this book valuable above all, however, is the evolving Canada that Keith Spicer depicts as the backdrop to his public life. We see the country come of age throughout the second half of the 20th century, tuning into technological progress and sticking together

while the separatist movement tries to shake it up.

The story does not end with the last century. Keith Spicer—the iconoclast, the intellectual—the brilliant jack-of-all-trades, also offers his ideas for the 21st century, ideas that remain stimulating and timely. A truly incurable Canadian!

REGIONAL NEWS

MANITOBA

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS ALREADY

Since its founding, the CNPF, or Commission nationale des parents francophones (National Commission of Francophone Parents), has passionately and enthusiastically defended the right to French schooling. In October 2004, the organization celebrated its 25th anniversary at a gala event in Winnipeg, featuring the Honourable Mr. Justice Michel Bastarache of the Supreme Court of Canada as speaker of honour.

Mr. Justice Bastarache began by congratulating all the parents and directors of the CNPF who, over the past 25 years, have contributed to upholding the right to receive education in French and have helped Canada's French-language minorities maintain and enhance their standing. He then proceeded to the main theme of his speech, section 23 of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, which has proven to be an indispensable tool in the struggle for the recognition and implementation of the right to education in one's own language.

Mr. Justice Bastarache presented this subject from the point of view of a lawyer who has, over the years, played a number of roles in this saga. In particular, he described the four legal cases that have had the greatest impact on the recognition of educational and linguistic rights in Canada over the past 25 years:

- the Mahé judgment, 1990;
- the Manitoba reference, 1993;
- the Arsenault-Cameron Case, 2000;
- the Doucet-Boudreau Decision, 2003.

Through these examples, the distinguished speaker clearly illustrated the role played by Canada's judiciary in implementing basic rights, such as the right to education in one's own language.

In addition, Mr. Justice Bastarache reminded the guests of the importance of knowing English and other languages. As he explained, "Linguistic pluralism is becoming a requirement. Multilingualism opens the door to transnational co-operation and intercultural exchange in a world in which communication has been completely revolutionized." Once again congratulating the members of the CNPF, he concluded by encouraging them to continue their committed efforts: "To be sure, your work is not yet done, but this gathering is evidence of your willingness and your solidarity—it is a renewed rallying around the objectives you have pursued for 25 years."

A NEW NATIONAL SYNERGY

A nationwide initiative has led to a new partnership project that is being warmly welcomed by the Commissioner of Official Languages. The partnership was launched in October with the signing of an official co-operative protocol in Winnipeg.

One of the objectives of the Government of Canada's *Action Plan for Official Languages* is to double, by 2013, the number of young people with skills in their second official language. This considerable challenge has been taken up by two national parents' organizations: Canadian Parents for French and the National Commission of Francophone Parents (Commission nationale des parents francophones).

Since January 2004, the two organizations have been working hard to define the parameters of a protocol that will foster the promotion of education in the second official language for Canada's youth. These two organizations, which include numerous regional and local offices across the country, want to join forces to create real change in Canadian society. As part of this new partnership, Canadian Parents for French and the National Commission of Francophone Parents have launched several joint initiatives, including the creation of a standing strategic committee. They have also established a mechanism for participating in the process to assess the results of the *Action Plan for Official Languages*. In addition, they will share information on the annual reports relating to the state of French-language education.

At the signing of the protocol, Gérard Gagnon, the Commissioner's representative for Manitoba and Saskatchewan, expressed his hope that the Government of Canada would participate in this collaborative effort. He added that, together with the provincial and territorial governments, the Government of Canada should, like the two parents' organizations, work to advance linguistic duality in education. For her part, Ghislaine Pilon, president of the National Commission of Francophone Parents, stated, "As parents, we are responsible not only for raising a family, but also for building a society."

REGIONAL NEWS

QUEBEC

AMERICAN EDUCATORS WANT
TO KNOW US BETTER

Have you ever heard of the Fulbright-Hays Seminars Abroad? This American program provides opportunities for both educators and administrators who are involved in curriculum development in fields related to humanities and languages. The seminars are designed to provide a broad and introductory cultural orientation to a particular country.

Last summer, a seminar for educators entitled "Getting to Know America's Neighbors: Nationhood, Culture, and Identity in Mexico and Canada" took place in both Canada and Mexico. After visiting Ottawa, Iqaluit and Kimmirut, on Baffin Island, the 16 educators proceeded to Montréal, Québec and Toronto. While in Montréal, the group met with officials from the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages.

Eva Ludvig, the Commissioner's Quebec Representative, welcomed the group and delivered a comprehensive lecture on bilingualism in Canada, including information on the Canadian population, education, culture and arts. She presented the *Official Languages Act* and an overview of the Canadian experience with language rights. She also characterized the mandate and roles of the Commissioner as agent of change and ombudsman. Finally, she pointed out how duality and diversity in Canada are inseparable values rooted in the two official languages. Gérard Finn, Senior Advisor to Dr. Dyane Adam, focused his presentation on the historical evolution of linguistic duality in Canada. A round table and a question and answer period followed the presentations.

This meeting gave the 16 visiting American educators an opportunity to explore the Canadian national and cultural identity by learning what the *Official Languages Act* means and what it stands for in Canada.

A MEETING IN QUÉBEC

An organization in full sail

More than 250 members of Canadian Parents for French (CPF) attended the organization's annual general meeting in Québec from November 12 to 14. Members of the national and provincial boards of directors, chairs and executive directors of provincial branches, and members of local chapters were there, representing every major region of Canada. A large number of researchers in the field of language instruction and representatives of governments and educational bodies also attended. They had all gathered to consider the current situation and look at trends in the teaching and learning of French as a second language (FSL).



Left to right: Paul Castonguay, President (Quebec Branch), Max Cooke, Executive Director, Mary Vane, Executive Director (NWT Branch) and Randy Phillips, President.

Meetings, which were held in both official languages, opened with the launch of the annual publication, *The State of French Second Language Education in Canada 2004*. This report is based on the results of national and regional consultations held by Canadian Parents for French, and on panel discussions held during the year at which strategies were proposed for the implementation of the federal government's *Action Plan for Official Languages*. It also reflects the findings of the Vision and Challenges for the 21st Century Symposium held in March 2004. Participants in the annual general meeting reviewed the highlights of the report, particularly the data showing a drop in FSL enrolment in some parts of Canada.

The Commissioner of Official Languages spoke at the annual banquet. She congratulated CPF on the opening of its new Quebec branch, in the province where it was born

in 1977. She noted the co-operation between CPF and her Office, mentioning such events as the Symposium on Official Languages, periodic consultations, public speaking contests, and the various activities related to the implementation of the Action Plan. Dr. Adam paid tribute to CPF for the unique and crucial role it has played in Canada by forging links and building bridges to bring the two official language communities together. She also noted the outstanding contribution CPF has made to the remarkable progress of bilingualism in Canada. More than one and a half million students are enrolled in FSL courses: half the young people in English Canada. For nearly 30 years, Canadian Parents for French has been actively promoting the learning of French.

Throughout the meeting, participants exchanged ideas and information to assist members in promoting second language instruction everywhere in Canada. CPF now has a nationwide reach, with offices in every province, and the opening of an office in the Northwest Territories has been announced. CPF membership has doubled since 1998 and is now more than 21,000. The current campaign to promote the teaching and learning of second languages (*I'm teaching/learning French because...*) has been very successful, and indications are that its goal—an increase in the number of bilingual teachers and students—will be achieved. CPF has renewed major partnership agreements with agencies working in the same area, including the Commission nationale des parents francophones.

At the AGM, members discussed several sources of concern. For example, they would like a more thorough assessment of core French programs. A round-table discussion entitled “Getting to the core” came up with various ways of improving such programs. Participants also noted the importance of developing national standards for language skills.

Trudy Comeau was elected to replace Ian Richmond as President of Canadian Parents for French. She is at the helm of an organization in full sail that is making a significant contribution to linguistic duality in Canada. We would like to take this opportunity to thank Dr. Richmond for his exemplary dedication and contribution to the advancement of French language education in Canada.

AN ACTIVE NETWORK

Five federal institutions have joined together to take on the challenge of establishing a work environment that encourages the use of both official languages. The creation of the Official Languages Information Network (OLIN) is an initiative of the Quebec Federal Council, which appointed one of its subcommittees, the Interdepartmental Human Resources Committee, to implement it.

Such a large-scale project required the co-operation of key stakeholders involved in matters of official languages, and the establishment of a partnership seemed essential to the project's success. The following institutions decided to join forces to share their best practices regarding official languages:

- Quebec Federal Council;
- Interdepartmental Committee for Continued Learning;
- Public Service Commission;
- Public Service Commission School of Languages; and
- Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages.

Since June 2004, the OLIN has initiated various activities to improve the linguistic skills of public servants in Quebec. These activities contribute to the promotion of official languages as a fundamental value of the federal public service. Furthermore, the OLIN plans to create interdepartmental partnerships regarding non-statutory linguistic training, in addition to a directory of language schools in Quebec. The OLIN and its partners have shown collective dynamism in initiating a lasting change to create a work environment that is far more conducive to the use of both official languages. This long-term objective is on its way to being accomplished and seems likely to succeed.

WORKING TOWARD AN EXEMPLARY PUBLIC SERVICE

The Commissioner of Official Languages publicly announced the success of the first phase of "Quality Management System for Official Languages," a joint initiative of the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) and the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA). It was with great pleasure that the Commissioner accepted the invitation to address the participants and guests at the certification ceremony of phase 1 of the project, which was held on November 1, 2004, at the Canadian Museum of Civilization in Gatineau.

Dr. Adam stressed that although the project is not a solution to all the complexities associated with the respect of linguistic duality in the workplace, it is nevertheless an important step that will pave the way to an exemplary public service. Creating a work environment based on the respect of personal identity demands a change in institutional culture. Such an initiative requires courage, patience and determination. She added that changes do not come "gift-wrapped" and congratulated the officials and participants for making the respect of linguistic rights a collective priority.

According to the Commissioner, the project's success can be attributed mainly to its completely innovative characteristics.

- First, the project was launched in steps, initially seeking the participation of 850 employees, then enlisting over 15,000 more to consolidate the progress made.

- Second, participation was voluntary and was not imposed by management, thereby encouraging consultation rather than confrontation.
- Third, the officials decided to take a human approach instead of resorting to legalities. They refrained from imposing the *Official Languages Act* arbitrarily and provided employees with every means possible to help employees respect the spirit and intent of the Act.

In short, the strength of this project lies in the fact that its standard of quality can be used and recognized by several agencies and departments, a standard which is based on respect and has enormous potential for influence.

Dr. Adam congratulated all the participants and paid special tribute to the initiators and promoters of the project within CRA: Elisabeth Châtillon, who launched the idea; Alan Nymark and Marcel Ethier, who were active participants in its implementation; as well as Alain Jolicœur, who decided to take the project to CBSA; and Diana Monnet of the Public Service Human Resources Management Agency of Canada. She concluded by expressing her wish that this project would mark the beginning of a positive trend.