



LANGUAGE and society

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THE OFFICIAL LANGUAGES ACT TEN YEARS LATER

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David Lewis, a Rhodes scholar with a multilingual and multicultural

background, has had a prominent career as lawyer, politician and, more recently, as university professor and writer. He is best known for his long association with the New Democratic Party (formerly CCF), of which he was federal leader for four years. He is a respected spokesman on many federal issues, including relations between French and English Canadians.



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Gérard Pelletier's entire career has focussed on communications. A professional

journalist since the late 1940s, he was a reporter for *Le Devoir*, director of *Le Travail*, and a radio and television broadcaster before becoming editor of *La Presse* in 1961. In 1965, he entered federal politics. Appointed to the Cabinet in 1968, he served as Secretary of State and then as Minister of Communications. Since 1975, he has been Ambassador extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Canada in France.



ROBERT STANFIELD

Robert Stanfield's career in politics makes him no stranger to the issue of

French-English relations in Canada. After 11 years as Premier of Nova Scotia, he became national leader of the Progressive Conservative Party and Leader of

the Opposition in the House of Commons. His determination to master French in his mid-life years and his sensitivity toward the language issue have gained him a respect that transcends partisan politics.



DAVIDSON DUNTON

Davidson Duntton's varied career has honed to a sharp edge his insights

and linguistic complexities of Canada. After working in journalism and doing wartime service, he was appointed Chairman of the CBC. He later became President of Carleton University and Co-chairman of the B and B Commission. He is currently Chairman of the Ontario Press Council and a Fellow of the Institute of Canadian Studies at Carleton.



JEAN-LOUIS GAGNON

Jean-Louis Gagnon expresses his passion for Canada with wit and elegance. He

played a leading role in Quebec journalism as Editor of *Le Canada* and *La Presse*, and founder of *Les Écrits du Canada français* and *Le Nouveau Journal*. After three decades as journalist, broadcaster, editor and author, frequently working abroad, he served as a member and later as co-chairman of the B and B Commission. Undaunted, he has since occupied positions as Director General of Information Canada, and Canadian Ambassador to UNESCO and is currently a Commissioner of the CRTC.



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Tom Sloan has spent almost 20 years as a journalist bridging the gap

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Carleton University professor Blair Neatby is an authority on

twentieth-century Canadian political history. Among his many publications are works on Laurier, Mackenzie King and the politics of the Thirties. He combines a French-speaking

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The opinions expressed by contributors are their own, and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Commissioner.

Letters of comment and suggestions for future articles are invited.

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A measure of progress

Although the tenth anniversary of the *Official Languages Act* may not call for widespread jubilation, it nevertheless deserves some measure of celebration. The Act was, after all, a key piece of legislation when introduced in 1969, and its significance has grown with the years. Over the years too, I believe, there has developed a somewhat better understanding in Canada of what language reform is all about.

In order to help further that understanding and, coincidentally, to mark the Act's first decade on the statute books, my colleagues and I felt it would be useful to launch a review devoted to language questions of interest to Canadians. Hence the appearance of *Language and Society*, the pages of which will, we hope, contain a diversity of opinions and provide readers with an opportunity to reflect upon and, if the spirit moves them, to participate in the complex debate that few Canadians view with indifference.

For this first issue, we are happy to be able to publish contributions from a number of distinguished Canadians who, over the years, have been involved in the effort to achieve equality between their French- and English-speaking countrymen. Their variety of backgrounds has understandably led them to see the events of recent years from different perspectives and with mixed feelings. Nevertheless, what emerges from their articles is a common view that, while language reform has made substantial progress over the past decade, much still remains to be done.

From my own vantage point as Commissioner of Official Languages, I fully endorse that assessment. The federal Public Service is now considerably better equipped to provide satisfactory service in both official languages than it was a decade ago. It is also more capable of operating internally in two languages and of ensuring that French-speaking public servants, particularly those in Quebec, may pursue a career in their own language.

Outside the Public Service, it is not unreasonable to credit the *Official Languages Act*, and the all-party support that has lain behind it, for its substantial influence on the movement toward reform at all levels of government and

in the private sector. The National Capital, for example, has begun to look and sound more like a natural meeting ground of a country that values the heritage of two great languages. Most provinces, too, are moving slowly but surely toward improving services to their official language minority communities, particularly in the vital area of education.

However, despite progress on these fronts, it must be admitted that the most glaring deficiency of the past ten years has been the failure to promote a climate of receptivity to change in the community at large. Few people will admit to being opposed in principle to giving their neighbours a fair shake. But practical and psychological adjustments come less easily. Debate about where we are going is a perfectly healthy thing, but it has suffered too often in the past from misunderstanding and misinformation. As a result, it is more important than ever, in my view, to get the message of the *Official Languages Act* straight in our minds.

The Act was born of the realization that linguistic choice and opportunity did not exist to the same degree across the country, and that the two languages had to be placed on an equitable footing in order to rectify that situation. The choice was not and is not between two unilingual solitudes, on the one hand, or, on the other, forcing both languages on Canadians from coast to coast. What is needed is a decent measure of mutual civility and consideration between our two major language groups, and a willingness to open our minds to the advantages of learning to operate in two languages. Given the world-wide cultural importance of English and French, that does not seem a great deal to ask.

I hope that this and future issues of our review will help, if even in a modest way, to dispel misconceptions and to provide a forum for reasoned discussion of language issues which we as Canadians cannot ignore. Whatever else the future holds in store, the willing acceptance of linguistic reform will remain a fundamental condition of progress toward greater harmony and solidarity among all our countrymen. And ultimate success will depend not on legal texts but on the extent of public understanding and commitment.

*David Lewis, Gérard Pelletier and Robert Stanfield:
observations by three key participants in
the debate that preceded adoption
of the Official Languages Act ten years ago.*

Debate and decision

DAVID LEWIS

On April 6, 1966, commenting on a statement in Parliament by Prime Minister Pearson regarding bilingualism in the federal Public Service, I pointed out that the policy had been introduced a century after the founding of Canada and added, on behalf of the New Democratic Party:

"I think it is to be deeply regretted also that we had to face a grave national crisis before we had the common sense and understanding to take the necessary action, which is probably essential to the future of our country."

I believe that this is still true and am saddened by the fact that too many Canadians still refuse to accept bilingualism as an integral part of their country's being. Many of them are ready to tolerate the Official Languages Act on the statute books,

so long as nothing, or little, is done to bring it to life; it could thus serve as testimony to their generosity of spirit without disturbing their linguistic or racial prejudices.

Whether the law has been fairly implemented or not is for the Commissioner of Official Languages to judge, but the rest of us remain accountable for the response to the idea across the country. Errors of administration can be corrected, the law itself might be improved, but neither will be of any avail if there remain substantial numbers of our people who reject the very notion of bilingualism in any meaningful form.

To reverse this condition requires a wide programme of education, not only in the schools but for adults. I have sometimes wondered whether some of the money spent on teaching a second language to public servants might not have been better spent on educating the public to the meaning of institutional bilingualism. The experiences a politician has had on the subject are nightmarish.

One day, during an open-line show in Vancouver, an elderly, female voice asked querulously: "Why do

the French-Canadians want to speak French, why don't they speak Canadian?" I very much doubt that I succeeded in persuading her that French was as Canadian as English.

More recently, at a meeting of the Canadian Bar Association, a grey-haired lawyer asked why the French-Canadians weren't satisfied with learning English as he, a Ukrainian, had done? He added proudly that he had suffered no discrimination, so surely that was the solution. The man was obviously sincere and decent.

The examples could be multiplied over several pages. They illustrate a problem of which everyone is aware and to which there seems to be no easy solution.

Yet there is no reason for despair. My travels across Canada also tell me there is now a much wider and deeper understanding of our country's duality than even one or two decades ago. Many more people are eager to learn the second language and to see an end to the linguistic conflict. And Ottawa itself has changed. My wife and I first lived in Ottawa from 1935 to 1950. It was then almost entirely unilingual.

One seldom heard French spoken. Even in Parliament, French-speaking members rarely spoke in their mother tongue because few, if any, of their English-speaking colleagues could understand them, since there was no simultaneous translation.

Today Ottawa is a much more bilingual city, as the capital of Canada should be. It is still far short of ideal, but so are many other aspects of Canada's social and economic life.

I believe that a mistake was made by people who acted as if institutional bilingualism was the sole or even the most important answer to the threat to our country's unity. I also believe that the manner of implementing the official languages programme sometimes created fears that could and should have been avoided. But all this does not detract from the validity of the objective enshrined in the Act. Bilingualism, at least in the federal Public Service and federal agencies, must become an important and integral part of our Canadian society, one of the foundation stones of the country's unity.

GÉRARD PELLETIER

I have just been through a painful experience.

Ten years after the fact, I have reread the debates which preceded passage of the Official Languages Act.

My distress may have had little to do with the subject itself: after all, this

was my first look at *Hansard* since I retired from active politics. It's quite possible that subsequent pages may have contained some other debate on an entirely different subject which would have depressed me even more.

Perhaps, perhaps not. But with the referendum in Quebec only a few months away, it's hard not to shudder at the recollection of what an Opposition Member had to say in 1969: "The bogey of separatism has been skillfully inflated . . . so . . . that ordinary Canadians . . . have been hoodwinked into believing that massive concession to a minority is the only answer" to the problem of Canadian unity. However, it's also hard not to smile when this same prophet turns on you and accuses you of being "narrow, fanatical and inflexible" for supporting a Bill as moderate as the Official Languages Act of Canada.

Of course, you can take comfort in the remarkably courageous speeches of Messrs. Stanfield, Lewis, Fairweather and several other Members. But rereading this debate mostly reminded me of the intense disappointment I felt at the time. I had just spent several exhausting months working on an extremely difficult project, one which was entirely new to me: drafting a piece of legislation. I knew how we had struggled day and night to create a Bill which would be clear, honest and suited to the realities of the time. Above all, I knew that this Act could bring an end to the flagrant injustices which had been inflicted upon Canada's Francophone community during the previous hundred years. And I

thought, naïvely enough, that the Parliament of Canada would adopt the Act, certainly not without studying it, but with a sense of finally making a long-awaited and historic gesture.

I was soon brought down to earth.

Not only did certain Members of the Opposition attack the Bill relentlessly for days on end, denouncing it as a shameful concession to Francophones and an injustice to Anglophones, but I also perceived within the Government's own ranks a few silent reservations which did not bode well for the future. Subsequent events showed that this perception was correct.

What are my feelings now, ten years later, when I reread the thousands of words which poured forth during the endless debate?

My initial reaction is a certain sense of disillusionment. From the very outset, we repeatedly gave assurances that there was no intention of telling citizens which official language they had to use. Those assurances have since been repeated a hundred times a day both in word and in deed.

And yet, ten years later, we are still being accused of having "forced French upon Western farmers." Prejudice — or is it politics? — moves in mysterious ways.

Nevertheless, going over these accounts also gives a unique sense of satisfaction at having set in motion changes that were necessary. For a century, Canada had been disgraced by the justice it denied. Over the

past ten years, this denial of justice has certainly not disappeared entirely, but it is an increasingly rare phenomenon. Times have changed. A provincial minister wrote me recently that "French has become respectable in the federal administration." He admits that in 1969 he would never have believed it possible.

I must add one final impression. In politics, the myth of Sisyphus and his rock is always applicable. Have we heaved this massive rock to the top of the mountain only to have it come crashing down on our heads one fine morning? I think not. It seems firmly in place.

Better still, even if the rock did start to move, many English-speaking Canadians would now shout a warning in the belief that they themselves were in danger — serious danger — of losing something of great value.

Prejudice has not been defeated but it has been seriously weakened. And the Act is still in force . . .

(Adapted from French)

ROBERT STANFIELD

The tenth anniversary of the passing of the Official Languages Act is an appropriate time to reflect and assess. The Act recognizes the linguistic duality of Canada and the principle that equality in Canada requires linguistic equality for Anglophones and Francophones.

I have good reason to remember vividly the debates and votes in Parliament because my party split, reflecting widespread concerns in our country about the legislation and the concepts upon which it was based. Many English-speaking Canadians believed that French was being stuffed down their throats; and that Anglophones from most parts of Canada, being unilingual, would be disadvantaged in the Public Service. Canadians whose origin was a country other than France or the United Kingdom often felt strongly that French was being granted special privileges denied to their mother tongue.

My concerns about the degree of acceptance of the legislation were reflected in my speeches on the Bill in the House of Commons. While I supported the Bill whole-heartedly and recognized it as a courageous and indeed noble concept, I felt the difficulties involved in implementing the legislation were being vastly underrated by its sponsors. The need to sell the legislation in the country and to allay fears and suspicions were daily apparent to me from discussions with my colleagues.

Ten years later the Official Languages Act is still widely misunderstood by many Canadians. Anything like universal acceptance in so short a time would have been too much to expect, because of the suspicions that linguistic differences generally create and because of the tendency of many Anglophone Canadians to think of Canada as an English-speaking country outside of

Quebec. The measures taken in Quebec to give priority there to French did not soften hostility towards the Official Languages Act in those parts of English-speaking Canada where such hostility existed.

I do not mean to suggest that little progress has been made during the first ten years of the Act. We have been fortunate in our first two Commissioners under the Act. Progress has been made towards the goal of careers in the Public Service being equally accessible to both Anglophones and Francophones. And Canadians can now generally receive service from their federal government and its agencies in the official language of their choice.

There has also been an increased recognition of the importance for Anglophone children to learn French as a spoken language. The leadership in all federal political parties has continued to support the Official Languages Act.

As it becomes apparent that the English language in Canada has survived the Act and that Anglophone Canadians can still pursue rewarding careers in the Public Service, hostility towards the Act where it exists may well die down. We should not expect language differences to bring us together, but we should recognize that the principles and requirements of the Official Languages Act are essential if we are to live together in equity. In thinking of this Act and its future, we might derive some comfort from the old joke about marriage: the first 30 years are the hardest. Or is it the first ten years?

*Bilingualism has become a bad word to Canadians.
A co-chairman of the B & B Commission explains
and renames equality of language.*

The muddy waters of bilingualism

DAVIDSON DUNTON

A surprising number of people I have spoken to recently in different parts of the country seem to like the idea of a “two unilingualisms” solution to the Canadian language question: Quebec to become entirely French-speaking; the rest purely English-speaking.

It is not hard to see the attractiveness of the idea to some people, both in Quebec and in the other provinces. Some in Quebec, mostly *indépendantistes*, are happy to envisage a complete take-over of French in their “state” — and to renounce any hope for the language of Francophones outside it. In the other nine provinces some would like to get rid of the bother and presumed expense of education in French for Francophone minorities; of bilingual government service in some areas; of French signs in federal buildings and parks; of French-language television and radio stations; and of French on cereal boxes. And these people would be glad in return to trade the rights of the English-speaking minority in Quebec.

Unilingual precedents

There are precedents in other bilingual and multilingual countries for such a broad pattern of unilingual areas. In Switzerland, for example, there are rigorous boundaries separating regions in each of which one language fully prevails. Belgium is sharply divided into Flemish- and French-speaking territories but also has the large bilingual metropolitan area of Brussels.

But conditions in those countries differ from ours in Canada. In Switzerland, there is a long history of populations in different areas, mostly whole cantons, being entirely of one language or another. In Belgium, the geographical division between the two main language groups was less clear historically but in recent years has been made very rigid. The result has been many irritations and unfortunate consequences for minority groups and institutions on each side. Not too happy an example to try to follow.

In Canada we have a complex interpenetration of populations. Over a million English-speaking people live in the province of Quebec. Nearly a million people of French-language background live in other provinces. In terms of Canadian history we are not speaking of new arrivals. The Acadian community of the Maritime provinces was founded before the French community of Quebec. And the Acadian people deserve immense respect for maintaining their language, culture and community through enormous difficulties over two and a half centuries. The history of some of the Francophone groups in Ontario goes back to the 18th century, of others to the 19th. Francophones played a major part in the original opening of the West and probably formed a majority in Manitoba before it entered Confederation.

English came into Quebec with the events of 1759, 1760 and 1763, but it would be inappropriate to argue that language rights should remain because of a military conquest of over two centuries ago. Much more important is the fact that the English-speaking minority has contributed greatly to the development of the province where it has been so long established. Home for most of its members is very much Quebec.

Proponents of the two unilingualisms idea usually argue that the future situation they favour is probably inevitable in any case. They produce as supporting evidence statistics showing language loss by Francophone minorities. It is true that through the years a considerable number of Francophones outside Quebec, largely among those living in smaller groupings, have shifted to English as their main language. The important fact, however, is not the number who have changed language, but the far greater number who have kept French as their first language in the face of great obstacles. The degree of survival is evidence of the incredibly strong attachment of most French-Canadians to their language and culture.

It is widely accepted that if a minority group is vigorously trying to maintain a language, at very least it needs widespread public educational facilities, government services and popular media available in that language. Throughout their history, most Francophone minority groups have lacked these supports. The most important — publicly financed education with French as the language of instruction — was almost entirely absent in all nine provinces until recent years.

In the last few years the situation has changed radically. In Ontario there is now reasonably good provision for French-language schooling and the province has two bilingual universities; in New Brunswick, there is now a Francophone university; and in other provinces, French-language schooling is becoming more readily available.

With these changes, it will be interesting to see if the language loss continues at the same rate or diminishes over time. My prediction is that, even if loss persists among some groups, especially the smaller ones in the West, the vitality of French outside Quebec will grow if current improvements in support continue.

Enthusiasts for two unilingualisms also point to the current pressure on English in Quebec coming from the Bill 101 Language Charter, and make dire predictions about the demise of English in the province.

I believe such prophets badly underrate the vigour of the English-speaking community, the contribution it makes to the life of the province, and the attachment of most of its members to Quebec. It is true some have left, others may go, and Anglophones from the rest of the country are discouraged from moving in by the current climate and by certain discriminatory provisions in the Language Charter, particularly those relating to education. But English and English-speaking people are going to survive in Quebec for a long, long time.

Many Québécois, by no means all of them *péquistes*, take some pleasure at the discomfort of the Anglophone community under the Language Charter. They believe that English for too long has had too dominant a place in the economic life of the province. And they remember the long decades when Francophones outside Quebec had practically no public education, government services or CBC broadcasting in French, while the Anglophones

within Quebec had a complete educational system of their own, public services provided in their language, and English radio and television.

Actually, even under the Language Charter, Anglophones in Quebec are as well or better off in most respects in language matters than Francophones in other provinces. Some of the oppressive and ridiculous provisions in the Language Charter are disliked by many Québécois who support the general thrust of the legislation. It can be hoped that those provisions will be modified in time. But it cannot be expected that any future government will drop the insistence on French being much more a language of commerce and industry than in the past. The situation will have to become more like that in other provinces where Francophone minorities have long accepted that English is the main language of business in their areas.

“Bilingualism” misunderstood

Unfortunately the term “bilingualism” when applied to language concepts or policies for Canada has led to many misunderstandings. Many people think the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism recommended that all Canadians should be able to use two languages, that French and English should have an equal place throughout the country. In point of fact, the Commission assumed and said from the beginning of its work that most areas of Canada would remain essentially unilingual, either English or French. On studying the distribution of population by

language, and listening to people all across the country, it rejected the idea of dividing the country into two unilingual territories.

Instead the Commission faced the Canadian reality that there are a number of areas in which substantial official-language minority groups live. It thought that these minorities, wherever of any reasonable size and whether French- or English-speaking, should be assured public education and public services in their language. If there were to be any real sense of equal partnership between the two main language communities of Canada, simple justice demanded that facilities for French-speaking minorities in the nine other provinces should be provided under conditions comparable to those applying to English-speaking groups in Quebec.

For Quebec, the big change seen by the Commission was that French should become the principal language of work, as English is in other provinces, but with a place left for firms where the main language used is naturally English.

For the federal government which serves all Canadians, the Commission recommended that French be firmly anchored as one of two official languages, that French become a principal working language in some parts of the central administration, that government documents and correspondence be generally available in French as well as English, and that service in French be available to private citizens where there is a French-speaking majority or substantial

minority. The Commission recommended in addition that provincial governments in the same way make services available in the two languages to areas having substantial minority populations of either tongue; and that French as well as English be declared official provincial languages in Ontario and New Brunswick.

The constant use of the term "bilingualism", as applied to concepts of the Commission and subsequent government actions, has encouraged misunderstanding and opposition in many quarters. In Anglophone areas, some people think the federal government has been out "to force French down our throats". In Quebec, some spokesmen scorn "bilingualism" as a subtle attempt to assert the domination of English everywhere.

**Equilingualism:
a more appropriate term**

I suggest a new term "equilingualism" would much better reflect the thinking of the Commission, the main measures taken by the federal government and the actions of a number of provincial governments in the language field.

Some public statements and secondary government policies under the heading "bilingualism" have unfortunately tended to muddy the waters. It is going too far, for example, to say that French-speaking Canadians should be able to feel at home anywhere in Canada. Even under full equilingualism, they simply will not feel as at home in Vancouver as in Quebec City. What they should be able to expect is that,

if they move to an area where there is a significant number of other Francophones, say ten percent as the Commission did, there will be schools where their children can study in French, government offices where someone can speak their language, and broadcasting services in French. The reverse should be true of Anglophones moving to Quebec.

The very heavy emphasis placed by the Federal Government for some years on the creation of tens of thousands of bilingual positions and on French courses for Anglophone civil servants helped add to the confusion. It should have been possible, without this undue emphasis, to develop French as a language of service and as a working language in areas of the Public Service. Anglophones have to realize, however, that equilingualism calls for a knowledge of French for certain federal positions, particularly a number of senior ones. And they should remember that, for generations, French-Canadians who wished to get anywhere in the Public Service have had on their own to develop a thorough knowledge of English.

A number of provinces, particularly New Brunswick and Ontario, have taken important steps in recent years to improve facilities for their Francophone populations. Ontario, unlike New Brunswick, has not declared French an official provincial language, but has widely developed French schooling, and is slowly improving its services, documents and provisions for court appearances in French. Francophones everywhere in

Canada would have been more impressed if Ontario had moved more quickly and more dramatically, and if it had accepted the embedding of rights for its Francophones. Nonetheless, it must be recognized the province has achieved very substantial changes.

Comparison of the present situation in the federal administration and in the provinces with that of the early sixties shows there has been very significant progress toward a position of fairness between the two official languages in Canada. But much remains to be done. At this stage it is vital that Canada move ahead to more complete and firmer equilingualism, and that Canadians not be deterred by simplistic visions of two great unilingual compartments (or by dreams of everyone knowing two languages, or of French having a place only in Quebec).

Why?

First, because the equilingual approach is fair and suited to Canadian realities. Development of "two unilingualisms" would be retrograde; it would mean loss of language rights for long-established Canadian populations at a time when the world needs more recognition of rights and opportunities, not less. It would probably make operation of a federal administration satisfying both sides extremely difficult.

Equilingualism is fair because it tends to even out the advantages and disadvantages of being English- or French-speaking, with minorities of each language being in comparable positions. In the federal administration, the situation of people of the two language groups is made more equitable.

No undue or unfair strain is put on any group. It is natural to expect that members of minority-language communities will be expected to learn the majority language of their area for working purposes. Anglophones aspiring to certain jobs in the federal Public Service will have to develop a reasonable knowledge of French, but the reverse has been true of Francophones for generations. It is no loss to Anglophones when a French school is established in their area or government documents are made available in French as well as English. There are some costs for the whole concept, but they are tiny in relation to the total expenditures of all governments, especially with the reduction under way in free federal language training.

Equilingualism fair

The concept of equilingualism is not only fair, but can be seen to be fair, and will be so perceived if it is pursued with vigour. It carries a spirit and good sense that can appeal to a majority of Canadians, both English- and French-speaking. Even if the two official-language minority

groups diminish in size the concept should be further consolidated because it so clearly stands for equity and equal partnership between the linguistic populations of Canada.

Some Anglophones will continue to oppose equilingual measures, often misrepresenting their scope and significance. Such people, in my experience, are usually opposed to any extension of the place of French in Canada, to any real idea of "equal partnership" between French- and English-speaking Canadians. Their attitudes can only increase the possibility of Canada separating into two countries. History shows that in countries successfully meeting problems of having two or more major languages, the majority — secure in its own position — has had to show generosity toward a minority.

For many Québécois, a feeling that equilingualism is being firmly implanted can mean a great deal. Convinced *indépendantistes* will not be swayed, but the opinions of others, many of whom have not yet made up their minds how to vote in a referendum, will be affected by what they perceive to be the position of their language in the Canada of the future. Language is not the only concern in the minds of many in Quebec, but without a reasonable solution to language questions, there can be little hope for any enduring Canadian federation.

The unresolved crisis of Confederation can be attributed to the provinces' wait-and-see attitude toward bilingualism says a co-chairman of the B & B Commission.

Bilingual districts revisited

JEAN-LOUIS GAGNON

Ten years should be long enough to form conclusions about the advantages and disadvantages of a piece of legislation. But how can you make a detached judgement about the feelings that accompany any type of change? Laws, after all, are like the photographs taken by camera-toting tourists: everything depends on the picture you're trying to take to illustrate a preconceived idea. Since it is not our purpose to focus on detailed accomplishments or problems, we shall limit ourselves to a broad overview of the facts and feelings generated by the implementation of a sustained policy of bilingualism.

In legislative terms, the Canadian Federation has evolved significantly since the creation of the Royal Commission of Inquiry into Bilingualism and Biculturalism in 1963. The analysis of the political crisis provided by the Commission in its Preliminary Report in 1965 was accepted with varying degrees of commitment by Members of Parliament. But there is no denying that a consensus existed among the political parties, a consensus which was maintained when the Official Languages Act was adopted in 1969. It has not been broken since.

It is true, of course, that in 1979 French is still more a language of service than a language of work in the Public Service. The more fundamental change lies in the procedures used to hire senior officers in federal institutions. By repeatedly drawing its manpower from

networks which had no ties whatsoever with Francophone *milieux*, the Public Service had in a sense institutionalized a closed shop for public appointments. A sustained and concerted effort was therefore necessary in order to recruit French-speaking Canadians to the highest echelons. While it is true, as Frank Underhill has asserted, that the political party was for many years the only realm where Anglophones and Francophones could deal with one another as equals, it can now be said that the world of the mandarins — peopled by innovators, academics and high priests of the State — is becoming truly bilingual and multicultural.

To what degree have the provincial governments contributed to the process of change sparked by the Commission's recommendations and by the Official Languages Act? First, New Brunswick declared itself a bilingual province; then Manitoba re-established French as a language of instruction; and Ontario developed an extensive system of French-language secondary schools and gradually phased in its first bilingual courts. There is not one province whose authorities have failed to give some form of official recognition to the French Fact.

History mocked and history mangled

Unfortunately, the feelings of individuals and the behaviour of nations do not always conform to the spirit of legislation. The State is not the entire nation — especially not in a democracy. Even if we exclude the rednecks and the dyed-in-the-wool Quebec separatists, it is not easy, in a country like Canada, to formulate a broad policy of bilingualism and to apply it in such a way that no one is tempted, sooner or later, to question its implications.

In recommending the creation of bilingual districts within the provinces, the Commission sought to meet the social and cultural needs of language minorities without endangering the rights of majorities. As in Finland, the minimum requirement was that the minority should represent ten percent of the local population. Moreover, given the nature of Canada's population and its federal structure, the recommendation which lay at the heart of the Final Report was a response to political necessity based on justice.

But neither the Commission nor Parliament took into account the foolish narrow-mindedness engendered by a mangled and pernicious teaching of history. Two advisory boards (the first headed by Roger Duhamel and the second by Paul Fox) tried unsuccessfully to get the province of Quebec to agree to the creation of the bilingual districts required to ensure the protection of minority Anglophone groups; everywhere else, the French-speaking population would have constituted a vast unilingual area. It was only fair that Montreal and the surrounding metropolitan area, where 30 percent of the population was English-speaking, should become a bilingual district.

No to bilingual districts

The Quebec government decided that it could not agree to this (seeing in it some kind of symbol) without endangering the pursuit of the nationalistic objectives which had become common to the leadership of all provincial parties. By definition, Quebec's opposition would allow the English-language provinces to

adopt a wait-and-see attitude; their position is easily understood when you consider how the bigots reacted when the CBC, at the request of Parliament, decided to extend its French network from Halifax to Vancouver and how in the wake of the Official Languages Act, the labelling of all standard consumer goods suddenly became bilingual. In fact, New Brunswick was the only province to adopt a positive attitude by declaring its intention of making the whole province into one bilingual district.

Blind antagonism

There was no better way of making the federalism crisis develop into a political confrontation between Anglophones and Francophones than to abandon the fundamental concept of bilingual districts. On the one hand, the Government's effort to make all federal services bilingual was seen by English Canadians as favouring French-speaking public servants; on the other, the indifferent and sometimes hostile reaction of provincial governments to the central government's attempts to extend the scope of bilingualism inevitably provoked resentment among Quebec nationalists and led to a sometimes rash form of militancy among Francophone minorities.

There is no need to go back to the Battle of the Plains of Abraham to understand the reasons for the confrontation which today places the Canadian Federation in mortal danger; one need look no further than the 1970s. How revealing it is that ten years after proclamation of the Official Languages Act, the province of Quebec is about to

launch a referendum on independence under the guise of sovereignty-association! What was to have been the decade of unity in diversity, of bilingualism and multiculturalism, has turned into ten years of blind antagonism. Who was it that said "Canadians have an innate sense of compromise"?

The Commission never envisioned the concept of bilingual districts as a sort of Canadian panacea for all the ills inherent in political institutions and in the social and cultural traditions of a country where one is always part of one minority group or another. By looking hard enough, perhaps another solution could be found that would bring justice for all and, at the same time, be more acceptable because it would be based on a new sense of brotherhood rather than on legislative authority. But what imaginative efforts have been made in the past ten years to come up with a set of corrective measures which, without being a replica of the proposed model, would nevertheless be sufficiently coherent to constitute a viable alternative? Bill 101, which is intended to make Quebec a unilingual French province, has not even triggered any significant moves on the part of the other provinces which might strengthen the position of French Canadians in Quebec who are fighting to block separatism. Everything is business as usual. And Messrs. Lévesque and Lyon will probably ride to the Supreme court together — on a bicycle built for two. The number of Anglophones living in Quebec is about equal to the number of Francophones in the other nine provinces. The first group

is located mainly in Montreal and the surrounding area, while 90 percent of the second group lives in Acadia and Ontario. To all intents and purposes, the site of daily contact between Anglophones and Francophones is in the long corridor that extends from Moncton to Sudbury via Montreal.

Of course, the official language groups scattered across the country should be able to benefit from the bilingual services which the federal or provincial governments do — or ought to — make available to them. But what makes Canada a bilingual country is the fact that the French and English languages are not limited to enclaves, but overlap one another from Moncton to Sudbury and are thus in a state of balance. The Canadian crisis must therefore be settled within the provinces concerned or not at all.

At this point in our argument, we must recognize that Canada today is quite different from what it was when the Commission was first asked to examine it in 1963. Then, it was a question of averting an impending crisis by initiating a process of reform based on the equality of the “two founding nations” and consequently taking the steps required to extend the scope of bilingualism in Canada. The Commission was also asked to examine the state of health of the “other ethnic groups” and the native peoples. It soon became

evident that French Canadians were searching for a destiny, and others were suffering from a lack of identity — some, because they felt doomed to assimilation, others, because they could no longer distinguish between themselves and their American neighbours. Furthermore, the Commission was to note that the concern and irritation felt by French-speaking Quebecers were not solely cultural in nature; the division of powers was yet another source of discontent. In other words, they were asking not only that their linguistic rights be guaranteed throughout Canada, at least where their numbers were significant, but also that their constitutional status within Confederation be modified.

We are all members of minorities

What had been premonition at one time was to become reality. For the Quiet Revolution in Quebec was only the beginning. Since then, the Inuit, Canadian Indians and Métis have come out of the woodwork to claim their place in the sun. And Canadians whose background is neither French nor British have stopped seeing themselves as minorities destined for the melting pot. The English provinces have begun making demands of their own and have refused to accept that each province’s natural resources should make up the collective heritage of Canadian Federation. Finally, the province of Quebec has elected a separatist government . . .

Clearly the time has come for a new distribution of power between the federal government and the provinces. Renewing a consensus is one thing; buying peace is quite another. The reasoning behind the establishment of an equalization system remains as solid as ever: great regional disparities will only lead to the destruction of the Canadian federal state. But that is the second facet of the Canadian crisis. Let us restrict ourselves to the first: the socio-cultural upheaval.

Canada is one of the few countries on this small planet — perhaps the only one — which has no ethnic majority and which recognizes the right of minority groups to survive by integration without assimilation. The language question belongs to another order. Canada is a bilingual country precisely because it is made up of two societies. In practice, this means that neither can deny the other the exercise of specific rights it would not like to see questioned for itself. Following proclamation of the Official Languages Act, the Canadian government established most of the mechanisms required for implementing and ensuring respect for bilingualism within the federal administration. Whether they like it or not, it is now up to the provinces to take on the responsibilities which lie within their constitutional jurisdiction.

(Adapted from French)

Efforts to make Canada's largest and most symbolic institution bilingual have had their ups and downs. An interested observer charts the course these efforts have taken and synthesizes the conclusions of senior officials expressed in off-the-record interviews.

Bling went the public service!

TOM SLOAN

The mere suggestion that Ottawa reflects anything substantial about Canadian reality is certain to be greeted by hoots of derision from people who consider the federal capital irrelevant to the solution of our problems as a country. But even the most cynical will admit that Ottawa ought to reflect the reality that is Canada — including linguistic duality.

In this respect the city has changed for the better over the past several years. Bilingualism, both official and unofficial, has arrived. While still a far from perfect symbol, Ottawa has lost that style of unilingualism which, in the early 1960s, caused a civil servant named Marcel Chaput to return to Montreal in disgust and write a book called *Why I am a Separatist*.

Nearly 20 years later, another French-speaking Canadian named Jules Léger says that, while Ottawa has not yet become the model city he would like to see, he feels sufficiently at home to live his retirement years there.

If the face of Ottawa — and that of the federal public service — has changed, much of the credit must go to the Official Languages Act. Of course the process was already under way when the Act was proclaimed in 1969. The reports of the B & B Commission had spurred the federal Government into making its internal workings more bilingual and improving its readiness to serve the general public in Canada's two major languages.

And yet, despite the beginnings of movement, something more basic was needed to consecrate and speed up the whole process. This was the Official Languages Act.

A decade is not a long time in the life of a country, but it can be a crucial period. Certainly the last decade has been a difficult one for Canada. While factors other than language have entered the mix, none has been closer to the core of our national existence.

In off-the-record interviews, I talked with some of the senior officials who since 1969 have grappled with the problems of language as it affects the operations of and the people within the Public Service. Despite differences of emphasis, they agreed that an official languages policy was sorely needed and the direction taken was basically right, but much remains to be done.

If we were to draw up a balance sheet, we would have to include among the errors and failures at least the following items: overzealousness and lack of realism in deciding who and how many government employees really needed to be bilingual; misplaced confidence in certain structural changes such as those concerning units working in French and special bonuses for bilingualism; underestimation of the strength of emotions involved in language matters; and overconfidence in the impact of rules and regulations.

On the positive side we could include the following: the presence of several thousand formerly unilingual, now more or less bilingual men and women, especially at the senior levels of the Public Service; the influx of a large number of Francophones so that the Public Service at all

levels more fairly reflects the official language makeup of Canada as a whole; and the new general acceptance of the basically bilingual character of the Canadian public service.

Bias of normalcy tilted

Significant progress has been made. Beyond doubt, service to the public provided in the language of the person being served is now the norm. An increase in the use of French within the Public Service has come with the increase of French-speaking personnel. And where in 1965 more than half the internal documentation was in English only, today it is almost completely bilingual.

As former Official Languages Commissioner Keith Spicer remarked in his 1976 report, "the bias of normalcy has tilted".

Three years later, the present Commissioner, Max Yalden, observed, "Only the wildest optimist could have thought that language reform was something to accomplish in a year or two, or even in a decade . . . And if a philosophy of persuasion has meant a more difficult and tortuous road, will not the benefits be more lasting in the long run?"

Bumpy road to bilingualism

Indeed, the road has often been bumpy, and fraught with obstacles. Not the least of these have been the attitudes of public servants themselves. The point was well made by Dr. Gilles Bibeau, an expert in linguistics commissioned by the Government in 1975 to study its language training programs. He

reported: "... there exists a very serious problem of credibility with regard to the official languages programme . . . too many federal public servants did not support the language policy of the Government and perhaps did not even take it seriously."

The Bibeau report was one indication of continuing problems in implementing the Official Languages Act. One of the major issues was the degree of flexibility that should be allowed. This issue of flexibility can be traced back to a statement by Prime Minister Lester B. Pearson in 1966 when language policy was being debated in Parliament.

The so-called Pearson Pledge stated that the government's policy on bilingualism must not prejudice the careers of civil servants who were not bilingual.

Improving the position of French was bound to affect the careers of at least some unilingual English-speaking civil servants, but real efforts were made to keep dislocation to a minimum. To soften the impact of designating 58 000 positions bilingual, the Government agreed that unilingual candidates could be accepted if they stated their willingness to learn the other official language. Thus the conditional appointment was born.

Unfortunately, those who were "willing" often found themselves shunted off to language training regardless of personal or departmental convenience. And often language students were called back to work to deal with urgent matters.

In response to situations like these, the Government's revised regulations of 1977 allowed more flexibility in language training schedules.

Officials today agree that greater flexibility was called for at the time, and that the changes left the basic principles of the language programs intact. But the decision to phase out language training within the Public Service by the end of 1983 has been described as idiotic by former Public Service Commission Chairman John Carson.

Those who share his views see little likelihood of Canadians emerging from our educational systems with an adequate command of both languages. Eliminating basic language training will, they believe, severely restrict recruitment of the best people available for senior posts. In any case, it would be a shame to completely dismantle a unique educational structure which has already proven its worth to several thousand Canadians, both English- and French-speaking. What they suggest instead is a small but intensive language training structure for middle- and upper-level civil servants who are highly motivated to learn the other language and give some indication that they have the capacity to do so.

Needs in name only

Even graduates of today's language training discover all too often that they have little practical use for their second language in subsequent work. This is partly due to an error in estimating the number of bilingual posts needed in the first place. In the words of the Bibeau report, "more

than half of the positions identified as bilingual in 1973 and 1974 correspond to nominal needs only and have, strictly speaking, no function."

While the number of designated bilingual positions has not substantially declined despite the recommendations of the Bibeau Report and the 1977 policy revisions, at least the current strategy of functional bilingualism emphasizes needs that are real.

This brings us to language of work. Much remains to be done to ensure Canadian public servants the right to work in the official language of their choice. In reality, of course, this means the right of Francophones to work in their own language; English-speaking employees seldom have had problems in this area.

A first step in this direction was the creation of French Language Units, later called Units Working in French. Today these units have all but disappeared except in Quebec. The basic reason for their demise was the conviction among Francophones in the National Capital Region that they could become language ghettos.

Receptive bilingualism

The current effort involves encouraging English- and French-speaking people to use their own first language in their dealings with each other. Despite some scepticism, this receptive bilingualism seems practical for mid-level public servants in the Ottawa area, and could do much to improve human relations within the Public Service.

These relations and the attitudes they engender and reflect are key factors in the success of language programs in Canada.

There is no doubt that within the Public Service attitudes have changed, though not as swiftly as the objective reality. A certain amount of resentment has been harboured by an overwhelmingly Anglophone middle management — a large proportion of which came in under veteran's preference regulations — at what might be considered some basic changes in the ground rules of career development.

Some resentment surely remains, especially among those who feel their career expectations have been jeopardized. Nevertheless, middle and upper managers generally accept the new look, and from all indications, the younger English-speaking recruits accept a bilingual Public Service as a natural phenomenon.

Has the Federal Public Service become as irreversibly bilingual as predicted in 1977 by the committee responsible for revising the regulations?

Some departments, such as the Public Service Commission itself, appear to have reached such a point. But others, such as Science and Technology, are still in the early stages of becoming bilingual.

Example at the centre

For the future, a great deal will depend on the example given from the top layers of bureaucracy itself.

"What the boss wants, the boss is likely to get", in the words of one senior official totally committed to the language policy.

The same applies to the political leadership of the country. Public servants at all levels will be watching closely for an indication of the new government's commitment to a process which, until now, its members have needed to support primarily in words.

From all accounts, the beginning has been auspicious, with the Prime Minister himself using French in meetings with public service officials. Countering this is the predominantly unilingual character of the cabinet as a whole.

The thing to remember is that the Government and the Public Service can set an example at the centre for the country as a whole of tolerance, mutual respect and co-operation between Canada's two official language groups.

Revolutions take time

At times, as reports of the Commissioner of Official Languages have shown, progress has been disappointingly slow. But then, as former Governor General Léger suggested in an interview, this is nothing less than a social revolution — and social revolutions take time. Assuming Canada survives and prospers, the past decade with its real, if hard-fought, achievements in the field of respect for language rights may well be viewed by future observers as a crucial and a positive era in the history of our country and its government structures.

Learning another language can be an enriching experience—under the right conditions. Can French- and English-speaking Canadians learn their second language at the same age and stage? The question invites debate.

Plurilingualism and quality of life

JEAN-GUY SAVARD

To grasp the complexity of plurilingualism we must realize that it is a world-wide and centuries old phenomenon. A few facts will help. But facts and figures on the use of languages will never be more accurate than the definitions we accept for words such as *language*, *dialect* and *patois*.

The reader interested in pursuing this subject will benefit greatly from consulting two series of volumes published under the direction of H. Kloss and G. McConnell, *La composition linguistique des nations du monde* and *Les langues écrites du monde*. In the first volume of *Langues écrites*, the authors advise that they have excluded from their investigation the non-alphabetized languages and those spoken by more than 50 000 000 people, the so-called international languages: Chinese (Mandarin), English, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Portuguese, Russian and Spanish. The study, when it is completed, will deal with some 1 500 languages. The first volume alone, *Les Amériques*, deals with 240 written languages.

La composition linguistique des nations du monde assembles information, by country, on the number of people who speak each mother tongue. It also gives composite data. Thus the second volume, *L'Amérique du nord*, deals with three countries which between them account for 500 languages. Similarly, *L'Amérique du sud et l'Amérique centrale* brings together 31 countries in which some 500 languages are used. The facts compiled to date by the

Centre international de recherche sur le bilinguisme show that 4 000 000 000 human beings distributed among fewer than 200 countries make use of some 4 000 to 6 000 languages.

Geographic examples

In the United States, in addition to English, at least 100 languages are spoken by populations varying in number from 1 000 to more than 3 000 000 people. Similarly, in the Soviet Union, despite state control and the predominance of Russian, some 70 languages have had to be recognized as vehicles for teaching.

In India, there are 15 national official languages, as well as 17 spoken by more than 500 000 people and another 19 spoken by more than 100 000 people — more than 50 languages in all. In Guatemala, some 20 languages are spoken by 5 000 000 inhabitants, but only four of them are spoken by more than 100 000 people. Brazil has 250 spoken languages. In Paraguay, which is quite wrongly cited as an example of a bilingual country, 4.4% of its population speak only Spanish, while the rest speak only Guarani.

When detailed information on the African continent is available, it will present a similar picture. C. M. B. Brann states that Nigeria is typical of all the countries south of the Sahara, with the possible exception of Cameroon, which is distinguished by its official French-English bilingualism. According to Brann, 513 different languages are spoken in Nigeria. Osaji reduces this figure to 368. The fact remains that Nigeria has three majority languages (Hausa, Ibo and Yoruba), each spoken by more than 10 000 000 people. These could have been declared national languages. They are so *de facto*,

not *de jure*. Such a declaration would be likely to jeopardize the rights of four or five hundred ethnolinguistic minorities. Even the officially bilingual Cameroon has more than 50 spoken languages.

Historic trends

The problem of linguistic and cultural autonomy is posed in many parts of the world and is not unique to Canada or Quebec. Nor does it date from the Quiet Revolution.

In the Middle Ages, literary genre, not nationality, determined the language an author would use. The Italian troubadours used French for narrative poetry and Provençal for lyric poetry. Catalans, such as Vidal de Besalu, followed the same practice, avoiding the use of their mother tongue for a genre to which it was not really suited. Even the king was not exempt from this convention. Alfonso of Castile wrote his lyric poetry not in his mother tongue but in Portuguese-Galician, as convention in the north of Spain dictated. In the south, Arabic was reserved for this genre.

On the eve of the First World War, half the material published on the chemical sciences was in German. After the Second World War, half the publications in this field were in English, less than 7% in German. And more than a third of the publications in English originated in non-English-speaking countries.

In the same way, a few Francophone countries now practise a kind of literary diglossia with respect to the physical sciences. Schroeder-Gudehus surveyed works on the physical sciences

published in 1971 and originating solely with French-language institutions. He found that a considerable percentage of Francophone scientists publish in English: in Algeria, 28.6%; in Belgium, 64.3%; in Switzerland, 64.9%; in Quebec, 81.4%.

There is a continuing tradition of using particular languages for certain purposes. Samuel Johnson, the great standardizer of the English language, in 1776 took a categorical stand against degrading the walls of Westminster Abbey by allowing inscriptions in English. And it was not solely through concern for neutrality that Dalhousie, in 1827, insisted on Latin for the inscription on the Wolfe and Montcalm monument he had erected on the Plains of Abraham.

In England, the language of menus is French, while that of coins is Latin. The Swiss use *Confoederatio helvetica* or *Helvetia* as a symbol of national unity on their stamps and coins. Latin also seems most appropriate for crests and tombstones and until the 1960s remained the language of the Mass. There are still Roman Catholics who have great difficulty admitting the validity of a Mass celebrated in the vernacular.

Words in our lives

Words are born and die through human agency. Thus, a word which was seldom heard on radio or television or found in Canadian newspapers before 1963 very rapidly came into vogue. The word was "bilingualism" and, between 1965 and 1975, it was among the most frequently used. Then suddenly,

people felt uncomfortable with it. Some people now think the word should disappear completely from the language.

The principal reason for this rise and fall of words is that language is more than an instrument of communication between human beings. It is also the best means we have of comprehending the universe. And, of course, how we see reality conditions how we designate things and how we view them.

It is not, therefore, always necessary for reality to change for it to be perceived differently. The name we give things shapes our attitudes and our behaviour. Sometimes to avoid changing our behaviour, we change the names of things. There is clearly an interaction between the development of thought and the development of language. But in my view, thought precedes language, although it is language which, little by little, makes it possible to bring order into thought which is, by its nature, confused.

Let us note once again that bilingualism is a universal phenomenon as old and as widespread on earth as human beings themselves. Since there is no point in displeasing those who dislike the words *bilingualism* and *multilingualism*, I shall give in to fashion and use the word *plurilingualism*. This is, however, a very arbitrary choice and mainly psychologically motivated.

Definitions

Before dealing with the effects of plurilingualism and setting out a few markers as potential guides for those

responsible for language management, a few definitions are in order.

It is no longer possible, in 1979, to speak of *plurilingualism* in an absolute sense. To do so is to risk an impassioned debate, and a vain discussion which will shed no light.

The only valid approach is to begin with simple operational definitions of our terms. Otherwise each of us could use the same words to designate totally different realities and we would soon create a Tower of Babel.

Individual plurilingualism applies to a person who can actively or passively use two or more languages with some skill. *Institutional plurilingualism* is used when the state undertakes to deal with its citizens in the language of each individual, or at least in more than one official language. This plurilingualism does not imply generalized individual plurilingualism.

Language contact is said to exist when peoples of different languages live in the same territory or in neighbouring territories. This is the case of Quebec, surrounded as it is by 240 000 000 Anglophones. It is also the case of Belgium.

Such contact does not necessarily imply widespread individual plurilingualism. It can indeed be argued that all Québécois are at least trilingual, in that they understand universal French, traditional Quebec French and also *joual*. It is, however, false to claim that the majority of Québécois are bilingual in the sense that each individual can express himself with equal facility in

English or French. On the other hand, a steadily growing number of Québécois are learning Spanish, German or Russian.

Environment

Plurilingualism poses many more psychological and socio-economic problems than purely linguistic ones. In discussing plurilingualism and its effects we must, therefore, consider the related socio-economic and sociocultural factors.

Plurilingualism will never provide all the answers to all the problems of a whole people. Indeed, far from solving problems, it creates a problem. Not, once again, merely a Quebec or Canadian problem but a world-wide problem for which solutions must be sought. Those solutions will also differ according to the social status of the language in the environment whether it is a language of prestige or not. Finally, solutions will differ according to the fields of use (business, trade, finance, university teaching, scientific research, or primary education) and the goals pursued (ensuring the survival, extension or disappearance of a language).

It is not enough to ask whether one is for or against plurilingualism. Rather, once the existence of the phenomenon has been admitted, we have to ask how it should be introduced, when, to what extent, for whom, and to what purpose.

Old theory

A scant 15 years ago, plurilingualism was generally held to cause all sorts of problems, particularly language development problems. The few pieces of research carried out in the

first half of the 20th century confirmed the theory that bilingualism in the broad sense had only negative effects.

Bilingual children were, it was believed, backward in school; they scored poorly in intelligence tests and appeared to be socially maladjusted. Pintner and Keller detected language handicaps; Saer spoke of mental confusion; and Pichon found intellectual development reduced by half.

But all of these studies used definitions of bilingualism which were too vague. They did not take into consideration the significant factors we enumerated previously, such as the socio-economic status, the cultural level, and the degree of linguistic proficiency and linguistic dominance of the children studied. Very often they were based on verbal tests given in a single language. Further studies conducted more scientifically have produced opposite results which make it possible to contradict those assertions.

As early as 1937, Arsenian compared bilingual and monolingual subjects, matched as to age, sex and socio-economic level, and reached the conclusion that learning a second language has no apparent unfavourable effects on a child's intellectual development.

Recent research

More recent research has demonstrated that plurilingualism, far from being detrimental, can enhance intellectual development. Peal and Lambert noted the superior verbal and non-verbal comprehension of

bilingual over monolingual children. Anisfeld and Lambert identified a more diversified intellectual structure and greater mental flexibility in bilingual children. Scott found that bilingual children have more divergent thinking, considered by psychologists to be a sign of creativity. A number of other studies pursued elsewhere, among them those of Balkan in Switzerland, Ianco-Worral in South Africa and Ben-Zeev in Israel and the United States, lead to similar conclusions. According to Cummins, the level of bilingual proficiency has been better monitored in the more recent research studies.

Lambert proposes a socio-psychological model of the development of bilinguality which takes into consideration the sociocultural factors of the environment in which the child grows up. According to him, a distinction must be made between *additive bilingualism* and *subtractive bilingualism*. In additive bilingualism, each of the two linguistico-cultural entities contributes complementary and constructive elements to the development of a child.

Subtractive bilingualism is said to exist if the contributions of the two linguistico-cultural entities are not complementary but competitive. Like language, plurilingualism can be the best or the worst of things.

Ethnic identity

Lambert's theory supports the hypothesis of cultural interdependence that an individual can develop favourable perceptions and attitudes towards another culture only if he values his own ethnic identity. This hypothesis has

already been confirmed by the work of Berry, Kalin and Taylor, who found a close relationship among the positive attitudes of Canadians towards other ethnic groups. The hypothesis is also closely akin to the concept of genetic interdependence. Cummins considers that the learning of a second language is facilitated by a good command of the mother tongue. Lambert and Tucker maintain also that deepening knowledge of the mother tongue, by giving a child a knowledge of the structure of language, enables him to learn another language rapidly.

More recently, Hamers has sought to establish a theoretical model of the development of bilinguality by integrating Lambert's hypotheses of cultural interdependence and those of genetic interdependence.

According to his theory, the development of bilinguality does not differ essentially from the development of language, which has its origins in interpersonal relations and in the conversational context; the development of language, like cultural identity, has roots in sociopsychological mechanisms. Sociocultural factors and interpersonal relationships therefore determine the form bilinguality takes.

A similar line of reasoning leads us to speak of the influence of plurilingualism on the quality of life and on the means of attaining a beneficial plurilingualism, desired and accepted by all.

If "quality of life" means the fullest possible development (physical, moral, emotional and intellectual) of

the individual and of the community with which the individual identifies, there is every reason to believe that plurilingualism can enhance the quality of life. That effect will be attained only if the situation created by plurilingualism deprives neither the individual nor the community of a fundamental sense of linguistic and socio-economic security. Such security is essential to the quality of life. I might even say it is a primary need.

As Fishman affirms, a people can be open-minded to more universal perspectives only if it is in full possession of its own culture, if it knows its identity as a society and as a culture.

Quality of life

The full self-realization of both the individual and the group implies the secure identification of the individual with his linguistic and cultural group, without plurilingualism imposed by an elite.

If a people can no longer identify in complete security with its cultural group, it loses confidence in itself, and more often than not, becomes aggressive towards the stronger and more prestigious group. The Québécois in particular feels completely disoriented. His attitude can be as negative towards the Frenchman from France as towards the Englishman or the American. This occurs when he feels that, as a member of a minority, he is disadvantaged and victimized. He is then unable to develop freely, or even to remain himself.

If, on the other hand, a Québécois with full knowledge of the facts

decides to use English in the work environment, the second language becomes a useful instrument of communication which enables his personality to develop more fully. It is an asset which he acquires for himself, of course, but it also gives him the noble feeling of improving the quality of life of his group. Moreover, learning the other language demands a better appreciation of the resemblances and the differences between French and English, or any other language he knows. This results in a marked improvement in his mother tongue.

Better performance in the second language, a better knowledge of his own language, greater productivity at work, greater personal satisfaction, a more favourable attitude toward the other language and the other group, greater motivation for learning, better performance, and so on. That is the sequence and the range of benefits that can be expected. But, as in many other fields, events can be left to take their course or can be accelerated by creating favourable conditions.

Mother tongue enrichment

The research results obtained in the past few years have made educators and those responsible for language management increasingly sensitive to the worldwide phenomenon of linguistic and cultural diversity.

More and more, there is agreement with Lambert's view that the educational system should aim to increase the standing of the language perceived to be the dominated language, to create a context where both languages and cultures have a positive impact on

the child's development. For children of a minority which has little sociocultural standing, this means delaying introduction of the prestigious second language until they have a solid grounding in their mother tongue.

This approach has been taken in an experimental programme for children of the Acadian minority in Nova Scotia. Set up by the Centre de recherche sur l'enseignement du français of Sainte-Anne University, the programme aims at improving the quality of the mother tongue and at presenting the social values in a more favourable light before introducing the second language.

Abroad also, there are more initiatives in second or foreign language teaching. Encouraged by the Council of Europe, many European ministries of education promote the teaching of mother tongues to the children of migrant workers. Increasingly, African countries are taking an interest in the vernacular languages both as a subject to be taught and as a vehicle for teaching. In the United States, the Bilingual Education Act enables any ethnic group of more than 20 parents to have their children taught in their mother tongue. And it is appropriate to emphasize the example of Quebec which, while making French the obligatory language of teaching for all non-anglophones, also introduced a programme to teach certain native children their mother tongues.

Sociolinguists and psycholinguists, through their interest in the didactics of languages, have forced teachers to re-assess their methods.

The relative failure of the audio-visual and overall structure methods has contributed to the appearance of more modern methods such as immersion, based on the whole on sociopsychological theories which make better use of attitudinal and motivational factors.

The early immersion programme implemented by Lambert and Tucker for Anglophone children in Montreal served as a launching pad for many similar programmes. Today, a distinction must be made between early immersion, later immersion, total immersion, partial immersion, and so on. And double immersion should lead still more rapidly to plurilingualism.

In general, immersion programmes appear to be superior to the traditional language teaching programmes. This is particularly true when they are designed for populations which identify with a dominant community. In this case, the superiority of immersion and the positive effects of its introduction at an early age can be demonstrated.

Other studies, however, are beginning to suggest that it is necessary to qualify these conclusions. The results are much less convincing when the children in immersion programmes are members of a minority community. Where children of a minority group have no choice but to pursue their education in the prestigious national language, early immersion seems to lead to what earlier researchers called *language deficiency* and what Lambert calls *subtractive bilingualism*. In this sense, the Québécois are not entirely wrong in perceiving early

immersion as a threat to their cultural identity.

In Quebec then, the question remains whether it is possible to implement second language teaching programmes which allow young Francophones to keep their cultural identity intact, while attaining a proficiency in English comparable to that which Anglophone children can acquire in French through early immersion. Lambert would no doubt ask how a school system can be modified so that it leads to additive rather than subtractive bilingualism. Those responsible for the Canadian Public Service would perhaps ask how it is possible, in a socio-economically dominated community, to establish a functional bilingualism which does not threaten the dominated culture but which fosters the development and the expansion of that culture.

Exchange programmes

In addition to the solutions already proposed Hamers suggests that an answer might be found in the exchange programmes between different language groups which are at present in vogue in Canada. Carroll has observed that aptitude, traditionally exploited in the classroom, only accounts for 50% of successes in the second language, and that another group of psychological variables relating to attitudes and motivation has equal significance in learning a second language. The work of Gardner and Lambert has corroborated these theories. Unlike aptitude,

motivation and attitude are products of environment and can be modified. The process is complex and study of it is far from complete.

Assessments of exchange programmes by Clement, Gardner and Smythe, and by Hamers and Deshaies clearly prove that the mere existence of interlinguistic and intercultural contacts does not favourably influence attitude and motivation. The attitude before the exchange, the age of participants and the contents of the exchange, are of particular importance. In a given situation, an in-depth analysis of these variables is crucial before embarking on this sociopsychological approach.

More to be done

In sum it is not yet possible to provide categorical answers concerning plurilingualism. For a long time to come, the question of second or foreign language learning should remain of primary concern to educators, researchers and those responsible for language management.

While possibilities for research in the field are far from being exhausted, it is encouraging to know that in the past 15 years the situation has evolved rapidly and for the better.

To date, the following conclusions have been more than amply demonstrated.

Generalized individual plurilingualism imposed by an elite may

make it impossible for individuals to identify with their linguistic and cultural group and, sooner or later, lead to the destruction of that group. If all Québécois were able to express themselves with ease in English, one of the two languages would lose a great deal of its usefulness. And I fail to see how English could disappear in Quebec.

A motivated and voluntary plurilingualism can favour the development of the quality of the mother tongue itself, the quality of life, and the full self-realization of the group as a whole. I am thinking here of that type of plurilingualism which, because it opens up the world, leads to honest communication. It also brings the individual a greater understanding of the other language, and a deeper respect not only for his own language, but also for his own system of portraying the universe, and his very identity.

Plurilingualism is a universal phenomenon and will become more extensive. Some of our ancestors could portray their own world and survive with a single instrument of communication. Our children will not be able to do so. In a school without walls and a world without frontiers, more and more individuals will have to master several languages, if only to have access to information about the world. By embracing plurilingualism we can turn enthusiastically towards the future.

(Adapted from French)

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A noted Canadian historian comments on a chronology of language events and reminds us that the focus of our social and cultural concerns has shifted from religion in the 19th century to language in the 20th.

A tale of two languages

BLAIR NEATBY

Any list of events is open to the criticism of being too long or too short. The following chronology, prepared by the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages and presented as a poster, is no exception. It was begun with the modest objective of summarizing the recent legislation, federal and provincial, which affected the status of English and French in Canada.

To appreciate the significance of the statutes and amendments, however, it was necessary to go farther back and to establish what the legal status of these languages had been before the changes were introduced. But there is no starting point in history and so the arbitrary decision was made to begin in 1867 with Confederation. It was tempting to include some of the earlier colonial legislation relating to language usage or even to the earlier French and British patterns, but the line had to be drawn somewhere.

It also proved impossible to restrict the chronology to federal and provincial legislation. Many major changes in the status of English and French depended more on departmental regulations or administrative decisions than on statutes. A chronology would be misleading if it excluded these regulations or decisions. To identify them all, however, would be a major research project and to include them all would mean a book rather than a short list. The compromise was to include those that seemed to be the most significant.

The following highlights, therefore, are in the form of a chronological list of major changes in the status of the English and French languages in Canada. The result is more comprehensive than a mere list of statutes but it makes no claim to be definitive.

Definitive or not, this chronology is much more than a list. It is a fascinating document in its own right because it becomes a capsule outline of our linguistic evolution in Canada. Indeed the changes are so striking that we can legitimately talk of a revolution in our attitudes towards language.

Most of us, for example, will be surprised to learn that in the first thirty years of the federal union no province, with the exception of the newly created Manitoba, passed any legislation which even referred to language usage. Language was apparently not a controversial issue. And yet it almost seems that it should have been. These were years of significant development and expansion of the provincial public school systems and there were major disputes over schools in Prince Edward Island, in New Brunswick and in Manitoba. In each of these provinces there were French-language as well as English-language schools. How was it possible to argue about the nature of the school systems without arguing about the place of French or English in the classroom?

We can only understand this if we remember that our present-day emphasis on language is a relatively recent phenomenon. The issues then, as now, were social values and cultural identity but the focus in those days was religious rather than linguistic. The debates were between Protestants and Roman Catholics rather than between English-Canadians and French-Canadians.

Language seemed so unimportant that the language of instruction was a local option.

The contrast between the nineteenth and the twentieth century can be illustrated by one minor incident in the area of Windsor in Upper Canada in the mid-nineteenth century. Some French-speaking parents in that community were concerned that their children were not learning English because the teacher in the local public school spoke only French. They complained to the equivalent of the Department of Education only to be told that English was not a requirement for a teaching certificate and there was nothing to prevent the local school board from hiring a unilingual French teacher. The department saw nothing wrong in this and had no intention of intervening. It would be difficult to imagine either Franco-Ontarian parents or the Ontario Department of Education expressing similar attitudes today!

The chronology also suggests, however, that by the turn of the century, language — at least in the English-majority provinces — was becoming more important. The early decades of the twentieth century were years of industrialization and of increasing secularism. They were also years when loyalty to the British Empire was seen as a test of Canadian patriotism. This was the era of massive immigration, when group settlements of diverse ethnic and linguistic origins provoked concern about the cultural identity of the western region. The situation varied from province to province but an over-all pattern can be seen. The

English language is regarded as an instrument of assimilation or at least as a means of forging a community with a common language, and the public school becomes the institution which will impose this "Anglo-conformity". Thus in the twentieth century many of the school controversies were over language rather than religion. By the mid-twentieth century the English-majority provinces all had a definite language policy. English was to be the major or, in some provinces, the sole language of instruction.

This emphasis on English left little place for any other language in the schools. There was certainly no question of French having equal status. Of the languages other than English, however, it is noteworthy that French was singled out for preferential treatment. In many provinces French was permitted as a language of instruction in the first years of school in classrooms where the students were French-speaking. By the end of elementary school, English was to be the language of instruction even for these students but at least there was a period of transition. Students whose mother-tongue was neither French nor English got no concessions. French did not have the status of English but at least it was not as "foreign" as Ukrainian or German.

Lip service to equality

Federal legislation follows a different pattern in these years. English and French were given equal status in the federal legislature and the federal courts in 1867 and in the early years of the federal union this legal equality was extended to

the federally-administered Northwest Territories. Even after the turn of the century the federal authorities did not adopt the linguistic attitude revealed in the provincial legislation. Federal governments did not champion the French language — there was no suggestion of obstructing or disallowing the provincial legislation or territorial ordinances — but they did not diminish the legal status of French directly and they even made occasional gestures, such as bilingual stamps and bilingual currency, to affirm that both French and English were national languages. There were critics on both sides but until the 1960s the federal governments can be described as paying lip-service to the principle of legal equality for the two languages without significantly modifying the status of the languages in practice. English was still the operating language of the federal public service and still the sole language of many of its services to the public.

This brings us to the 1960s and we have still not mentioned the province of Quebec. The omission is easily justified. Our chronology does not include a single statute or regulation from Quebec until 1967, a century after Confederation! Clearly Quebec was not a province like the others. This absence of legislation is still surprising. Here was a province with a large majority of French speaking citizens, a group deeply committed to survival and yet surrounded by an English-speaking world committed to "Anglo-conformity". How can one explain this century of legislative silence on the issue of language?

A tentative explanation is that the French Canadian majority in Quebec opted for linguistic segregation rather than linguistic confrontation. Protestants and Roman Catholics were divided into two public school systems and eventually the Roman Catholic system was itself subdivided into English and French language sections. French Canadians idealized rural society and the rural parish as being the heart of French Canada and accepted English as the language of commerce and big business. French Canadians were a majority in the province but in a sense they were still behaving as a beleaguered minority, hoping to be left alone, hoping only to survive.

Changing ideals in Quebec

The change in Quebec comes in the 1960s with the Quiet Revolution. The changes were revolutionary because French Canadians rejected their rural and clerical ideals and opted for an urban and industrial

society. This meant French Canadian participation in trade and commerce; for some it meant asserting a predominant role in the provincial economy. Whatever the implications, as a minimum it meant affirming equal status for French in the world of business, and a privileged position for French in the public schools. To some extent French Canadians are now advocating a pre-eminence for the French language in Quebec which English Canadians had advocated for English in the other Canadian provinces at the turn of the century.

The linguistic changes in the last few years have not been confined to Quebec. As the chronology shows, there has been an unprecedented interest in the French language at the federal level and in English-majority provinces since the Quiet Revolution. The federal government, with the Official Languages Act, has undertaken the complex task of transforming the

federal administration into a bilingual institution in which internal communications and external services are in either French or English. The English-majority provinces have also shown a concern for the French language which has resulted in French-language schools across Canada and French-language services for the Francophone minorities in some provinces.

This has been variously interpreted as a concession to a militant Quebec or as a belated recognition of Canada's cultural duality. Whatever the explanation, the following chronology does suggest that the status of English and French have undergone momentous changes and that the rate of change has sharply accelerated in our own time. A future list of highlights may well include some items which we have overlooked. It will certainly include a good many new items over the next few years.