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The linguistic challenge of the '80s: Issues in bilingualism

This special issue of *Language and Society* contains a record of the proceedings of a colloquium convened on September 10 and 11, 1982, at Trent University, Peterborough, Ontario by Max Yalden, Commissioner of Official Languages. The theme of the colloquium was The Linguistic Challenge of the '80s: Issues in Bilingualism.

The fifty or so participants included distinguished Canadian business people, academics and journalists, as well as politicians and public servants from both the federal and provincial levels of government. Together they represented all regions of Canada and both official language communities.

In his letter of invitation to participants, the Commissioner noted:

Since the Report of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, a great deal has happened in the field of official languages, starting with the federal and New Brunswick Official Languages Acts continuing up to ... the entrenchment of linguistic rights in the Constitution. Yet there have been few occasions to reflect on where we have got to and where we ought to be heading. I think it is time to remedy that lack.

Following an introductory address by the Commissioner, participants devoted a half day to each of three key fields: the public sector, business and education. At each session, delivery of a principal paper was followed by comments by two designated discussants and by a general discussion. The colloquium concluded with an address by His Excellency the Governor General, Edward Schreyer.

At the opening session, the question of bilingual districts stole the limelight. Proposed by the B and B Commission and provided for in the federal Official Languages Act, bilingual districts have never been formally proclaimed. Has an opportunity been lost forever? Are the political difficulties that proclamation might bring insuperable? Is there another way to get the same result without running into such difficulties? These and other questions were debated with a mix of pessimism and optimism.

A group of distinguished Canadians gathered at Trent University last fall to assess the future of bilingualism in Canada. Thomas H.B. Symons, Vanier professor at Trent University, and Jean de Grandpré, Chairman of the Board of Bell Canada Enterprises, served as discussion leaders. This special issue of Language and Society features excerpts from a variety of the presentations given at the colloquium as well as highlights of the ensuing debates on language reform.

Participants in the second session, which was devoted to language in the public sector, sought to determine the direction that language reform measures should take in the future. Should a major thrust be given to new breakthroughs, particularly in language of work? Should the present system be dismantled? Or should the goal be steady and consistent progress along the lines of current federal and provincial language policies? Opinions were split between proponents of gradualism and those who saw continued reform as an urgent matter that called for concrete action and imaginative gestures of generosity towards the linguistic minorities.

The third session dealt with language and business, and focussed particularly on language of work in Quebec and in other French-speaking regions of Canada. The discussion covered a broad range of issues: the language or languages of corporate headquarters, the responsibility of Crown corporations to act as linguistic trend-setters, the advantages and disadvantages of government intervention in the form of language legislation regulating the private sector, and the overall effects for business and society of Quebec's francization programme.

On language and education, the topic of the final session, the discussion unravelled into several quite distinct threads: the impact on educational authorities of the new Charter of Rights and Freedoms; the need for a national language-in-education strategy; a call for universities to set second-language entry and graduation requirements; and the equally important need for Canadians at large to be better informed of educational options vis-à-vis language education.

While it was not the purpose of the colloquium to reach formal conclusions or adopt resolutions, a number of very specific issues and proposals were given serious consideration. All participants agreed that the task of language reform remains unfinished. But there was far less consensus on the question of backlash among English-speaking Canadians if new initiatives are pressed in the '80s, and among French-speaking Canadians if they are not. Participants became increasingly aware of the fine line that separates consolidation from complacency, initiative

from upheaval. In sum, the most striking single thread that ran through virtually every discussion was the question of the pace of reform.

As co-chairmen of the discussions, we were able to say little at the time. Now, however, our patience is rewarded with this opportunity to set down some of our reflections. First, it seems clear to us that some language reform measures must advance more quickly than others. For example, members of the public have a very fundamental right to receive federal services in the official language of their choice; the effort to provide such services in a proper manner must surely take precedence over certain less urgent questions. At the same time, it should be clear that lasting progress in language reform will depend upon appropriate and effective developments in the sphere of public education.

If, understandably enough, little consensus was reached on the detailed application of the many language reform programmes that exist in today's Canada, the Trent Colloquium served an undeniably useful purpose by helping all concerned to put their respective tasks in greater perspective. The challenge of the '80s will be to ensure that the progress of the past decade translates into a permanent, concrete and essentially natural condition in which English and French enjoy equality of status in government, business and education, three areas of society that directly affect virtually every Canadian.



Thomas H.B. Symons



Jean de Grandpré

Co-Chairmen

Has language reform, a product of the political crisis of the early '60s, established a greater degree of linguistic justice and thereby attained its goal of improving relations between Canada's Francophones and Anglophones? This question was addressed by Maxwell Yalden, Commissioner of Official Languages; Paul Lacoste, Rector of the University of Montreal and Senator Lowell Murray, an active participant in the work of the Special Joint Committee of the Senate and of the House of Commons on Official Languages.

An overview of language reform

MAXWELL YALDEN

A starting point for our discussion might be to ask whether, either individually or collectively, we Canadians give our particular and often precarious linguistic environment the attention it demands. Some people, of course, think that language matters already take up an inordinate amount of time and money and would be better left to find a less conspicuous level among our social priorities. It is not a view I share, but that may be due to professional bias. It is nevertheless worth asking what kind of attention to, and intervention in, language matters Canadian society in the '80s will support.

To answer this kind of question, we need to examine what Canada set out to do in the area of language reform, how realistic our expectations were, and how to modify them in light of experience.

Obviously, not everyone agreed with the various proposals that emerged from the work of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism. But there has been a degree of consensus on a number of principles, starting with the recognition of the two official languages in law and in practice, and proceeding through a wide variety of reforms at both federal and provincial levels. Here I need only mention the Official Languages Act of 1969; the Parliamentary Resolution of 1973 on language in the Public Service of Canada; the 1982 Charter of Rights; the New Brunswick Official Languages Act; the progress achieved in Ontario toward a more bilingual administration; the recent decision of the Government of Manitoba to make services more readily available in French; and advances in virtually all provinces with respect to minority-language education.

If we ask whether this means that governments have accomplished everything we set out to achieve, or even that the major problems have been resolved, the answer is quite obviously in the negative. But if we also ask whether it was reasonable to suppose that this could be done in the dozen or so years we have been involved in this work, the answer is equally clear.

It may well be that progress so far has not been sufficient to convince our French-speaking population, particularly but by no means exclusively in Quebec, that they can have a real stake in this country without sacrificing their linguistic and cultural distinctiveness. Considering where we started from, where we are today is pretty remarkable. But judged against the expectations which many had to begin with, and judged against the profound and legitimate sense of grievance that many French-speaking Canadians felt at the outset, the game is still in the balance.

This should not unduly surprise or dismay us. Leaving aside those who are convinced from the beginning that a bilingual regime for Canada was either evil or impossible, I am inclined to argue that our initial sense of idealism and urgency may have misled us in more than one respect — for example, into the belief that, because the underlying injustices seemed obvious, they could be quickly and easily corrected; or because official bilingualism had a certain acceptance in principle, it could as readily be applied in practice.

There is no question that the years since the end of the work of the B & B Commission and the promulgation of the Official Languages Act have been a school of hard knocks for those who entertained these rather dewy-eyed beliefs. We have learned, I think, to take a more realistic measure of the complexity of linguistic relationships and of our abilities to mould them.

Perhaps, above all, we have begun to learn the limits of what the state can accomplish. We cannot aspire to or impose a kind of bilingualism that asks too much of us as human beings or which is false to the fundamental notion of reciprocity. Like it or not, the effort to make Canada an effectively bilingual nation means steering a difficult course between consent and a certain amount of pushing. And that means presenting a perspective on the progress of language reform which makes some kind of sense to most Canadians.

By that kind of long-term accounting, we have no reason to hang our heads. Much that is positive has happened and better underpinnings are in place. Let me quickly review the situation with you and see what we might learn for our efforts in the '80s.

Linguistic equality – principles and structures

In accordance with its mandate, the B & B Commission frequently referred to the “equal partnership” of English and French communities in Canada. The word “partnership” resonates with overtones of mutual trust, collaboration and a just sharing of benefits. It also supposes practical arrangements that are set down for all to see, and some structure of parallelism or reciprocity to give them form.

The kind of linguistic equilibrium that Canada has chosen to develop over the last fifteen years places a strong emphasis on individual language rights within a concept of limited territoriality. In contrast to the Belgian model, which sets off two essentially unilingual territories (with Brussels as a bilingual area), we have sought to establish a structure that offers not only considerable scope for individual choice within the bilingual heartland, but even a fair degree of minority-language support elsewhere.

Our geography, linguistic demography and even our political system make this structure difficult to realize. That we have done as well as we have is a measure of our will to succeed.

Nevertheless, there is still an abiding scepticism among French-speaking Canadians about the reality and viability of these arrangements as a means of protecting and promoting the French language and culture. The constitutional achievements of last spring are of the first importance, and they remain to be fully tested. The recent judgement of Chief Justice Deschênes is clearly a landmark decision, but it is doubtless only the beginning of a lengthy process of clarification of the impact of the language rights set out in the Charter.

In other words, in most provinces the official-language minorities are still a long way from home and dry. And even if the lot of Anglo-Quebecers is for the moment preferable to that of Francophones outside Quebec, disturbing tendencies in that province have already resulted in a substantial Anglophone exodus.

The federal scene

The federal government, in addition to providing leadership and support, becomes a sort of test case for the workability of institutional bilingualism aimed at maximizing individual choices over large geographic areas. Three things seem to me to emerge with particular clarity from the federal experience in implementing the Official Languages Act:

- being able to do business in two languages in many domains and over great distances calls for much more organization and administrative discipline than many at first imagined;

- even when the institution finally begins to get itself organized to do business in two languages, a key dimension is missing if public servants themselves are merely going through the motions rather than joining in the process;
- for both reasons, it is very difficult but very necessary to maintain the political pressures that alone can produce consistency and conviction.

Today is not the time to present a detailed critique of the federal performance. I certainly think enough has been done, particularly in the area of service to the Canadian public, to show that it can work. But, like any other system, what may be significant for its future are those points at which it works less well.

Two such points are especially worthy of our attention, for they recur wherever language issues are dealt with in this country. They involve the question of significant demand or sufficient numbers, and the related conditions necessary to permit an equitable use of both languages in situations where both language groups are present.

The federal administration has taken a very long time to come to grips with the issue of numbers and demand, and even now its position is far from clear. The problem reminds us that one of the challenges we face in the '80s is the challenge we have been facing all along: how to provide usable, real individual choice without overtaxing the system.

One way the authors of the Official Languages Act thought these issues could be addressed was by creating “bilingual districts”. The virtue of that idea, and one that remains largely unexplored, is that bilingual districts can focus and fix both the legitimate expectations of the minority and the practical obligation of the majority in a given area. Other alternatives may be feasible. But with the federal test case to guide us, can we be sure they will not be more confusing than otherwise? The problem with bilingual districts is not the districts themselves, but what lies outside them: the vague and inconstant area of “demand”, which may or may not be significant, and the lack of clear, consistent criteria for determining such significance.

The point of all these considerations — and one of the themes I hope will command our attention — is that no amount of fine principles will bring about an equitable two-language regime unless we can put some rigour into the concept of demand; or, put another way, unless we can ensure some degree of linguistic justice without endorsing the unrealistic goal of universal linguistic free choice.

The provincial scene

Moving from the institutional problems of the federal government to those of the provinces, we quickly become aware of divergent linguistic realities and divergent approaches to them. If it is a failing at the federal level to want to deal with all minority language situations in the same way, it is equally disconcerting that, at the provincial level, they are almost all handled differently.

I submit that we will not have begun to meet the linguistic challenge of the '80s unless we can induce a greater symmetry into the provincial treatment of linguistic minorities. Canada is an immense country; and we must expect real differences from province to province, region to region. But certain conditions must be more or less the same everywhere and for everyone.

Minority-language education

Minority-language education is a case in point. Conditions, numbers and financial and human resources vary widely in different parts of this country. But some attention to overall standards is essential. If we believe at all in the minority's right to linguistic survival, we cannot do less than assure them a reasonably controlled linguistic environment for their children in their most formative years. This may well involve, where feasible, a degree of physical separation and cultural distinctiveness in our schools. The argument that this kind of arrangement disables the minority for full future participation in the social mainstream is one that I have yet to hear convincingly defended.

A more valid argument may be that we cannot always afford to educate our minority-language children in separate institutions and with a full range of distinct pedagogical facilities. Changes in educational expectations as well as changes in the school population itself certainly present some severe limitations to what would be both practicable and acceptable.

The '70s have recorded both gains and losses on the minority education front. It has taken that long, particularly where Francophone minorities are concerned, to make the point that their needs are greater than those of the majority, not less. Just because they are more scattered and more prone to homogenizing pressures, they should be natural targets for creative use of our most up-to-date educational technologies. Instead, the reverse has more often than not been the case.

Second-language education

Second-language instruction is also a mixed bag. In some respects it is dispiriting to look back to the B & B Report in this area, for one has the impression that precious little has changed. But there is a real difference — not so much in what is happening in second-language classrooms, but in the attitudes and motivation of some parents, children and teachers. There, I think, one finds the sprouting seeds of a transformation that could well bear fruit in the '80s.

It is suggested from time to time that individual bilingualism is at a double disadvantage in this country: it saps the linguistic vitality of minorities and is hard to maintain to any useful degree among the majority. There is some truth in both contentions. But we all know of situations elsewhere in which people happily maintain several languages with neither discomfort nor disability. The explanation seems to lie not in any hereditary indisposition to language learning among Canadians, but rather in singularly narrow and inhibited attitudes. The minority may have reason to find bilingualism treacherous; the majority has no such excuse.

Contacts between languages are probably as varied in Canada as anywhere. Opportunities and human resources for second-language learning are all around us, and yet our general performance is mediocre at best. Even the French immersion boom, while it presents heartening glimpses of the sort of second-language competence that can be achieved, is still not much more than the exception that proves the rule.

Let us not delude ourselves. We will not cause all chauvinistic prejudices to fall away simply by inculcating in Canadians a widespread and functional familiarity with a second official language. Things are not that simple. But what we might reasonably hope and work for in the '80s is to demonstrate the value our country attaches to its language resources and to remove some of the insidious burden of bilingualism that tends to fall unequally on the less advantaged rather than on the more advantaged language groups.

I confess I am not very sanguine about our chances at this time of developing a broad consensus on second-language education — but I would be happy to be persuaded to the contrary. My response to the common view that other considerations take precedence over clearer orientations and better educational structures for second-language instruction is simply that Canada can no longer afford to be without them.

The work world

The status and use of languages in the work world is perhaps the most difficult of all to come to grips with. Nowhere else does the conflict between theoretical equality and natural expediency come into sharper focus. Two main problems are involved: the external environment which conditions our freedom to use our first or preferred language; and the sort of personal linguistic trade-offs people make to obtain the rewards of the marketplace.

These problems have been taken up in varying degrees by the federal government, by one or two provinces and by the private sector. Their approaches have ranged from structural incentives to the provision of general conditions in which, it is hoped, the right human choices will prevail. On the whole, the results have been positive, if limited, in scope.

We have by no means put paid to assumptions that English is the only fit language in which to communicate the mysteries of certain trades and professions. Most of Canada outside Quebec has yet to awaken to the fact that French has professional and commercial currency throughout the world. Nor has an equitable balance been fully accomplished in Quebec. Francization has accomplished a good deal but there is still considerable distance to go in implanting the French language firmly in the business life of the province. And the position of English has been eroded with consequences for the Anglophone community with which we are all familiar. These developments are relatively recent and I doubt that anyone can know conclusively at this point which language-of-work strategies will produce the most lasting and desirable results. On the other hand, we have

found that the status and use of English and French are susceptible to some manipulation in the workplace and the overall relation between our national languages is now much healthier in that respect.

Conclusion

The late '60s and the '70s will surely go down in history as a period in which we embarked upon far-reaching language reform and social experimentation. Whether we will succeed fully is another matter, but I think we can say objectively that what looked nearly impossible a generation ago is now well under way. Some of our hopes may have proved at times utopian, but what has been achieved speaks well of our maturity and readiness to adapt.

In sum, three principal achievements stand out most prominently. First, the reform movement has extended beyond the essential provisions of the Official Languages Act to become a much wider concern of institutional and personal significance. Second, much of what has been achieved has been the outcome of the leadership and support of Parliament and all federal political parties. And third, after no insignificant amount of hesitation, reluctance and at times fear, encouraging changes of attitude have appeared in segments of English-speaking Canada in support of changes which are deemed desirable or necessary.

The most difficult challenge of the '80s, from my perspective, will be to ensure that our political leaders are persuaded of the importance — in practice as well as in principle — of persevering with what may appear a long, emotionally draining and often unrewarding course of action. The temptation is all too real to conclude that the fundamental problems have been resolved and that the details can be left to the bureaucrats. Or that there are other more urgent concerns to which language reform must take a back seat.

Much, of course, has been decided and there is much that the bureaucrats can be getting on with without day-to-day surveillance from their political masters. And who can deny that there are other pressing problems of state besides bilingualism? But language reform will proceed only if we are committed to go on pushing for it and to accept it in all its administrative consequences, however difficult they may appear at times.

I do not myself know exactly how far we are prepared to move in this direction. Indeed, that kind of precision is perhaps not all that important in what is, after all, a profoundly human and therefore unpredictable affair. What is certain, however, is that we still have a long way to go. And without being at all starry-eyed, I do believe we are quite capable of finishing what we started.

Paul Lacoste's remarks

In my view, the basic question with regard to language reform has two parts: are we doing enough, and how far are we willing to go? Before venturing an answer, we should examine the objective criteria involved, our reasons for doing more (or less) and the goals we are seeking to attain.

For example, one of these criteria might be what has been achieved in the language-of-service and language-of-work areas. Are people actually getting more services in French than they used to? And is French now being used more as a language of work in the federal government? In answering these questions, we should refer to the reports of the Commissioner of Official Languages or to those of the Special Joint Committee of the Senate and of the House of

Commons. Generally speaking, the results are often very disappointing.

Socio-political tensions

The main effect of change in the language field over the past few years has been in Quebec, where there has been a considerable increase in the number of young Anglophones who are becoming bilingual. The reason for this clearly lies in the behaviour of the Francophone majority who no longer accept having French treated in Quebec as though it were a minority language. On the whole, the attitudes of a majority, combined with the law of numbers, have exerted an almost irresistible pressure. Of course, there has also been legislation, certain aspects of which are or were going too far, but the progress of French and the very relative decline of English are only incidentally attributable to this fact.

In his presentation, Mr. Yalden very properly emphasized the existence of a certain amount of coercion and incitement from public authorities, and a certain degree of acceptance or assent from individuals and groups. What makes public authorities exert pressure and what leads individuals to join the movement?

Here again we find the idea of pressure. Generally speaking, governments do not like to disturb citizens any more than necessary. In Canada, the creation of the B & B Commission, the Pearson Declaration and the measures that followed were mainly the result of the political crisis of the early '60s. And individuals react in the same way. The stronger the pressure and the fear of some greater evil, the more they will accept being disturbed. An aggravated political

crisis encourages certain linguistic concessions. Conversely, an easing of the crisis is very likely to cause a slackening off.

What kind of country do we want?

In concrete terms, do governments and individuals feel that Canada's very future is linked to language reform? I refer here to effective reform, with all the concerns that this entails for many people. Personally, I doubt it. In fact, I question whether Canada's future is really linked to such reform.

If we think of Canada as a political entity, I doubt whether language issues play a decisive role. I have some reservations about the Commissioner's remark that we must continue the bilingualization process because Canada has no choice — if he means only the continuation of Confederation.

However, if we look beyond the simple survival of Canada as a political entity, the answer is different. We must then ask ourselves: "*What kind of Canada do we want? What kind of country do we want?*" In this perspective, language reform takes on new importance and I would agree with the Commissioner that "Canadians cannot afford not to pursue language reform vigorously."

If we want a country that gives a place to justice and equality, a country based upon mutual respect and understanding among groups, a country that wants to use each person's contribution to the full, then reform is as indispensable as ever. According to this criterion, the answer to the question "Are we doing enough and should we do more?" becomes obvious. We have surely not done enough to make Francophones feel sufficiently at ease outside Quebec and in business circles in Quebec. Thus, incitement, and even coercion in some cases, should be intensified. This is my very deep belief. At the same time, there are already some changes to be made in Quebec so that the required francization movement is not seen as a threat to the minority.

Language of work

Are we doing enough? For those who still believe in language reform, it is

distressing to read in the latest report of the Special Joint Committee that many federal departments cannot even say to what extent language directives are being applied, and that many have no uniform method of monitoring the measures that are or are not being taken. The B & B Commission was right in stressing the need for general and systematic controls.

Perhaps we have done enough to ease some tensions, to provide some reassurance or, at best, to give a glimpse of more or less distant results. We have certainly not done enough, however, if we truly believe that we must at least partly respond to the ideal of Canada proposed long ago, the ideal of a country in which each person feels like a complete citizen. Our determination will be reflected in the fate of the Committee's recommendations, to the effect, for example, that the right to work in French in the federal government be enshrined in law.

The minorities

The Commissioner of Official Languages made some very timely comments on some of the problems presented by minorities. He notes that there should be more symmetry in the way they are treated. At the time of the B & B Commission, the lack of symmetry was shocking. There was more than one way to correct this situation. The Francophone minorities could have been given a status comparable to that of the Anglophone minority in Quebec; or the Anglophone minority could have been given a status more similar to that of the Francophone minorities; or some common denominator between the two might have been sought. The Commission clearly preferred the first approach.

Unfortunately, however, negative or at least restrictive trends have triumphed on both sides. But there is still time to react. The federal Charter of Rights and Freedoms, now entrenched in the Constitution, provides a single criterion for the entire country vis-à-vis access to education in either official language. According to a landmark decision that

has just been handed down, this provision applies to Quebec, notwithstanding a section of Bill 101. The only regrettable factor is that a sufficiently broad-based system could not have been established with the consensus of interested parties.

I am eagerly waiting to see how, in the other provinces, school authorities and then the courts will handle requests for education in French based on the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Will there develop a reasonably uniform and stable jurisprudence to govern the concept of "where numbers warrant"? Only then will we see if the notion of equality between Francophones and Anglophones in Canada is viable.

In actual fact, the fate of the minorities is hardly encouraging. The latest statistics reveal a declining situation for Francophones in almost all provinces, and an astounding exodus of Anglophones from Quebec. Would the situation really be much different if we had different language policies? Can different policies really attenuate both trends in the future?

We thus return to the first part of the question I raised: "Are we doing enough to guarantee language rights?" One thing is certain — we cannot prevent Francophones from becoming anglicized and we cannot stop Anglophones from moving. However, according to one concept of Canada, we should have language policies that allow each person to feel relatively at ease as he is and where he is.

Bilingual districts

In order to achieve this goal while at the same time respecting the dominance of English in almost all the provinces and of French in Quebec, the B & B Commission proposed a much-studied formula — that of bilingual districts. Today, the Commissioner of Official Languages has reminded us that this formula has never been fully explored.

The federal government took a step in the right direction by establishing bilingual administrative regions. However, we are still wide of the mark, because the original purpose

of bilingual districts was to ensure a much more broad-ranging variety of services in many more regions. It was of course difficult to apply the formula. But was this a reason not to launch at least a few experiments?

The language of business

In the business world, how could we not agree that French does not have an appropriate place — even in Quebec? What was done to correct the situation (and what appears to have been one of the reasons for many departures), has already had costly repercussions for this province at the cultural level. More so than some of Bill 101's irritating aspects, which could be removed fairly easily, it is the more complex language-of-work issue that has spurred emigration to other provinces.

The problem is that reform comes up against a wall of well-established interests and deep-rooted preconceptions. People still rationalize and justify resistance to change. The Commissioner cited one of them: "English is the language of business."

Elementary realism forces us to admit that English is the first international language of business and that it is used throughout almost the entire North American continent. This obviously has repercussions, but it does not follow, as we often stubbornly suggest, that English should always and everywhere be dominant in the business world, or even that it should be used almost exclusively.

Clichés die hard, and that one is no different from many others. How often

do we hear that many Francophone minorities do not really care, or that bilingual Anglophones do not have the opportunity to use and thus keep up their French, or that bilingualism is a kind of cultural illness? Or even that language isn't really all that important?

Such clichés are unfortunately part of our national folklore, but they at least have the advantage of reminding us of certain realities without making us stray from our objective. In order for Canada to become the kind of country we want it to be, it must develop and sustain generous and firm language policies. To the pessimists, I would venture the adage: If at first you don't succeed, try, try again.

Lowell Murray's remarks

Let me state at the outset my own conviction that no subject is more important than language to our future as a country. While this statement may not receive universal acclaim, I believe that more and more people do recognize that linguistic justice is essential to Canada and Canadians. Even at a time when many individuals are preoccupied with economic questions, I think more and more Canadians recognize as phoney the argument that, because other issues — inflation, unemployment, interest rates — are pressing, we can somehow neglect language matters. The pace of language reform will vary from time to time, but there is no question of putting it on a back burner or neglecting it.

Linguistic equality being of the essence of Confederation, I think people are beginning to understand that it is not something to which you assign a ranking on a scale of 1 to 10 and then compare it with attacking regional disparity or providing for national defence or whatever. All of

these things are important and require continued attention.

Changes in public opinion

Much of what appeared to be new and threatening some years ago is now being taken for granted. Public opinion is sometimes more sensible on these questions than the politicians. Take, for example, the controversy over *les Gens de l'air* in 1976. I believe that the timidity of the federal government (and of the federal opposition parties) in face of their reading of public opinion was unnecessary. I recall seeing a poll shortly afterwards in which there was majority approval in Western Canada for the simple proposition that French-speaking pilots should be able to communicate in French with French-speaking air traffic controllers in Quebec airspace. In 1979, when the Chouinard Report came along, it was accepted by the government of the day and there was not a ripple in public opinion.

Gallup and the various political parties that commission public opinion

studies would agree that, while fears and concerns about federal language policies were volunteered by a small percentage of Canadians some years ago as a top-of-mind issue, the issue is non-existent today as a volunteered, top-of-mind concern. Gallup did a poll in June of this year which showed that 26 per cent of the respondents claimed to be bilingual and 47 per cent wished they had learned both languages at school. About 25 or 26 per cent had no opinion or did not care. Max Yalden has referred to the changes in attitudes and motivations of some parents, children and teachers about second-language education. All of this is evidence of a more congenial environment on language matters than was the case a few years ago.

Bilingualism and Quebec nationalism

There are clouds on the horizon as well, and I think we do well to identify and discuss them. Many Anglophones thought they heard Prime Minister Trudeau say, when all this began, that if they accepted these new language policies in the federal government and

across the country, Quebec nationalism would go away. Imagine, then, the surprise and chagrin of some to find nationalism growing in Quebec, even while bilingualism spread across the rest of the country.

I don't want to be flippant about this. I do believe that the efforts made towards linguistic equality by the federal government bought precious time for Confederation and prevented a terrible rupture in our country. I also believe that any retreat from the goal of linguistic equality would tip the scales fatally in Quebec against Confederation. And I think that more Anglophones sense this today.

But am I wrong in saying that neither a bilingual federal regime, nor language rights for Francophone minorities in the provinces meet the aspirations of Quebec nationalists? I speak not of those whose goal is separation, but of those nationalists (still, I trust, in the majority) who are federalists. Politicians and the media will have to try to separate the two issues of language equality in Canada and Quebec nationalism, because both will be with us and must be dealt with.

Anglophone perceptions

Another cloud is the perception among Anglophones that while the federal government and those of Ontario and New Brunswick, as well as other institutions and individuals, are becoming more bilingual and are moving constantly in that direction, the momentum in Quebec is in the opposite direction — away from bilingualism, away from minority language rights, and towards a more unilingual province. Over time, these developments are bound to have some impact on public opinion in English Canada and it will not be helpful to the cause of bilingualism in the federal government or in the provinces that have English-speaking majorities.

So we have our work cut out for us to preserve the consensus that has been growing slowly and painfully over the past decade in this country. We must persuade people not to give up on bilingualism, but to deal with it in a positive light and to support it for the right reasons.

Amendments to the Official Languages Act

It is significant that, in the 13 years since passage of the Official Languages Act, the federal government has not brought forward a single amendment to that legislation. The government did bring the Parliamentary Resolution on Official Languages forward in 1973, and there has been a constitutional debate in which language matters were very important. But year after year, amendments to the Act have been advocated by the Commissioner of Official Languages in his annual reports, without effect.

I appreciate that there are difficulties with parliamentary timetables and so on, but I have not much doubt that the government has refrained from bringing in even relatively non-controversial amendments to the Act at least in part because it does not want to open up the Official Languages Act to parliamentary and public debate again.

They have not, as Max Yalden pointed out, proclaimed bilingual districts. They have not come up with an alternative to bilingual districts and so far they have shown no inclination to accept the one put forward by the Joint Parliamentary Committee.

I think one of the problems with bilingual districts is that the criterion seems to be a numerical one. The recommendation of the Joint Parliamentary Committee was to eliminate from the Act all references to bilingual districts and to join in the Act the two concepts of "where there is significant demand" and/or "where numbers warrant" and to require the active offer of services to the public in both official languages.

At the same time, we would eliminate such phrases as "to the extent that it is feasible" which we felt was too convenient an escape hatch for managers who may want to avoid organizing their operations in such a way as to provide services in the two languages.

Max Yalden expressed concern that alternatives to the bilingual districts concept — which, frankly, I don't think the government will proclaim — might be confusing. Well, our alternative is

not confusing at all. It's very simple. How would we define areas where there is significant demand and/or where numbers warrant? We would let the Commissioner decide.

Our recommendation was that the Governor in Council would identify those areas on the recommendation of the Commissioner of Official Languages and according to the criteria of "significant demand" and/or "where numbers warrant".

The need for public debate

To the extent that the government may be fearful of public and parliamentary opinion, I can only say that public opinion now has a somewhat better understanding of what the language issue is about. Of course, some misunderstandings and fears still exist, but I believe it is better to have them out and on the table, discuss them in some public forum and try to resolve them in the Canadian way by achieving some consensus.

The obvious forum for this process would be the Joint Parliamentary Committee. But to play that role, the membership and orientation of the Committee would have to change somewhat. The present membership consists of MPs and senators who have a stronger commitment to bilingualism that is found in Parliament and in the country generally.

The Committee has done a good job in calling ministers and deputy ministers to account for their performance on language policy and we have effectively prodded the agencies and the departments of government to get on with it.

Over the next little while, however, I think the best contribution the Committee could make to linguistic progress in this country would be to provide a forum for the resolution of conflict and the achievement of a consensus on language policy.

In some ways, I believe that the basis is there for further progress on language matters in the '80s. I think we can make some headway on language of work and more headway on equitable participation in the Public

Service without creating new conflict and division in the country or creating new inequities. I am even a little more sanguine than Mr. Yalden about the chances of developing a broad consensus on second-language education,

although I am hardly an expert on those matters.

Progress among the provinces will be very uneven for a while. But the pressures from parents and students which

already exist will, I believe, force the slower provinces to catch up in order to meet the demand from government and the private sector for people who are bilingual.

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION PERIOD

First Session

Although this discussion period was largely devoted to the issue of bilingual districts, the first speaker dealt with the notion that any policies or challenges concerning linguistic equality in Canada should take the individual's emotional and psychological background into consideration. Bilingualism should be approached with moderation; people should be motivated rather than forced to learn a second (and sometimes third) language, and emphasis should be placed on regional strategies and motivational techniques rather than on strictly legal measures. One of the challenges of this decade will be to make all Canadians aware that they do not live in a melting-pot society that assimilates different nationalities.

The next speaker opened the debate on bilingual districts by stating that the future of the official languages regime depends upon the creation of such districts in specific areas. In the past, bilingual districts have not always been effective in dealing with the problem of language rights, mainly because the administrative guidelines and procedures create problems for people living outside such districts.

Max Yalden, the Commissioner of Official Languages, was then asked to comment on the pros and cons of bilingual districts. First, he said that although this idea had been proposed by the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, bilingual districts had never come to anything. Second, two bilingual district advisory boards had been appointed, but the Government of Canada, for political reasons, had disregarded their reports. Mr. Yalden added that unless the Official Languages Act is amended, the Government will be obliged to appoint another board. He had no problem accepting the recommendations of the Special Joint Committee of the Senate and of the House of Commons on Official Languages, but noted that if his Office became a permanent bilingual districts advisory board, he would require additional personnel. Third, a "bilingual lozenge" was likely to arise in certain districts of northern New Brunswick and northern and eastern Ontario. All other districts would become rather artificial even though they would provide a certain measure of certainty and stability. Lastly,

he believed that the minority requires the protection of constitutional and legal guarantees, particularly in New Brunswick, Quebec, Ontario and Manitoba.

The following speaker defended the idea of bilingual districts. He said that the B & B Commission had clearly understood the need for such districts but the difficulty lies in determining the percentage of Anglophones or Francophones to warrant the formation of a district. It is necessary to create bilingual districts in order to establish uniform treatment for minority groups. To be effective, however, Quebec would have to cease to be a *de facto* bilingual district, and certain other regions of Canada would have to become bilingual districts. The creation of bilingual districts is likely to encounter many political difficulties, but avoiding the issue would not give the necessary psychological results.

It was then observed that, in many Canadian communities, French has no real standing other than when it is used between members of the Francophone community.

A member of the academic community wondered whether the concept of bilingual districts was to encourage people to become bilingual or to require that public servants introduce bilingualism into governmental structures. He added that many people are beginning to realize they must become bilingual in order to function or get ahead in the Canadian workplace.

Max Yalden responded to these questions by stating that the idea of bilingual districts has already had a considerable impact. Although the Government has not chosen to proclaim such districts, directives have been issued whereby certain areas have been declared bilingual regions, and senior officials in these regions must become bilingual. The Government's rules and regulations will have an impact not only in the Public Service, but also in universities and other schools. The widespread popularity of immersion programmes, particularly in Alberta, is evidence of this.

To these remarks, another participant added that bilingual districts essentially create

three problems. The first concerns the delineation of the region, the second, the reactions in large parts of English-speaking Canada to these districts and the third, Quebec's reaction. This led to the remark that if an advisory board recommended that Montreal become a bilingual district, it would be making a terrible political mistake.

Another university official thought that in many northern Ontario communities the economic survival of the town is a priority and everything else is insignificant. While he did not believe there would be a strong demand for bilingualism from these communities, he felt the federal and provincial governments should provide the initiatives and responsibilities for bilingualism in these areas.

One participant felt there was no point in reviving the already dead issue of bilingual districts. They had not been popular anywhere in Canada except Manitoba and New Brunswick. This comment was favourably received by the next speaker, who added that a problem arises when the government and the area cannot agree on where the bilingual district should start and end. An alternative solution would be to establish bilingual administrative centres. If the federal government were to decide on such a centre in Quebec, it could provide bilingual services and regulate all businesses.

Jean de Grandpré, the Co-chairman of the colloquium, concluded by stating that the discussion reflected reasonably well the attitudes of Canadians toward bilingualism. No one had dealt with what Canada could do to become bilingual or what sacrifices had to be made to maintain political and psychological unity. The discussion had centred around the idea of bilingual districts, a practical but very difficult question. Bilingualism demands an extraordinary comprehension and effort at all levels of Canadian society.

Language and the public sector. Has the federal Public Service, formerly an English-speaking bastion, changed so radically over the past decade that equality between our two main language groups can now be said to have been achieved? Definitely not, was the unanimous response of this session's main speakers — Gordon Robertson, President of the Institute for Research on Public Policy; Tom Wells, Ontario's Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and Serge Joyal, Canada's Secretary of State. What, then, should be done? Force the issue, or move cautiously?

Principle and the art of the possible

GORDON ROBERTSON

This morning Max Yalden has referred to the fact that we have made a certain amount of progress in Canada in language policy, and the same is certainly the case as far as the Public Service of Canada is concerned. In assessing where we are, there is some value in considering where we started.

The Public Service in the '40s and '50s

When I entered the Public Service of Canada 41 years ago, its character was what it had been for a good many decades. So far as language was concerned, there was no problem, none whatever. It was not even a question of looking at a situation and deciding that there *was* no problem: the question simply did not arise. And because there was no language problem, there was, of course, no language policy. The operation of the Public Service in English was as much a part of the natural order of things as the operation of the law of gravity. A question about the propriety of the one was as improbable as a question about the other.

Professor J.L. Granatstein commented on the situation in an article in *Options*, based on his book *The Ottawa Men*, about the "mandarins" of the pre- and post-war period. He said that, among the outstanding figures of the Public Service, there was not a single French-Canadian. He goes on:

Not only were Québécois not represented at the very top, but they were also denied a share of power at the lower levels. For example, a report on employees in Finance noted on January 8, 1940, that there were no French-Canadians in the Deputy Minister's office, only 17 (out of 147) in the Administration Branch, and six (out of 65) in the Accounts Branch. More than a dozen years later, in 1953, John Porter's study of the bureaucratic élite noted that French-Canadians held only 13.4 per cent of the top posts in the public service and a French-Canadian had been Prime Minister for five years.

It was so unusual to hear anyone speak French in the Public Service of the '40s that it was a matter of note. Provincial

public services outside Quebec had no tincture of French whatever, either in language or in officers. Federal Crown corporations operated as if French did not exist. Major national gestures were thought to have been made in putting French on our currency and on our postage stamps.

It was almost incredible that such a situation could have existed in a country in which one-third of the population spoke French and most of that third spoke *only* French. And yet that situation endured for another 20 years before bilingualism, let alone biculturalism, was recognized as a national fact of some significance and as an issue that required some attention because it had been so totally ignored. The character of Canada in its public institutions, including schools outside Quebec, reflected an unstated assumption by the English-speaking majority that French-Canadians would and could be French in Quebec, but that Canada was English in thought, manners and language. So accepted was the unstated assumption — and so unproductive had been protests in Manitoba and Ontario over rights and schools at the turn of the century — that even French-Canadians did not react in any strong or sustained way until the Quiet Revolution of the '60s in Quebec.

Language reform: trial and error

So far as the Public Service of Canada was concerned, the critical outcome of the B & B Commission report was the Official Languages Act, proclaimed in 1969. The Act provided for equality of status of English and French in federal institutions and for members of the public to be served in their own language. It's important now to remember that these ideas were totally new, and the translation of concept into reality was to be long and painful.

Clearly neither service to the public in French nor equality of status could be real unless there was an equitable participation of Francophones in the Public Service. Equally clearly, equality implied that French-speaking public servants had a right to work in their own language. The basic propositions were apparent: the problem was how to put them into practice in an established institution whose

structure and operation had known nothing of such ideas. There was not an equitable proportion of Francophones at senior levels or, indeed, at any level in many departments. The staff that was providing service, even in Quebec, was not designed to provide it in French. And French could not conceivably be the language of work in most institutions since neither peers nor supervisors would understand either oral or written communication in that language. The merit principle protected the basis of appointments and promotions. Except in a few cases, the knowledge of two languages had never been regarded as an element of merit for appointment to, or promotion in, the Public Service of Canada. Without important changes of attitude and method, promotion, transfer and appointment to permit either service or work in French could not be made in a way that would not appear to do violence to the merit system as it had been conceived and applied in the past.

It took much trial and error to meet the complex problems in so large and sprawling an organization as the Public Service. Initial reliance on each department and agency to achieve the necessary changes proved totally inadequate. Except where there was genuine interest and firm dedication to the objectives of language policy, little was achieved, but that little produced much criticism and opposition.

In 1973, a new tack was adopted. All parties in the House of Commons approved a number of principles for achieving language reform in the Public Service. The resolution stipulated the conditions under which employees would be required to become bilingual and when they would be allowed to remain unilingual. A highly structured system of rules and definitions was substituted for the unproductive departmental discretion that had prevailed. The new system did produce results, but at a substantial cost. Requirements that made sense in broad policy terms often produced ludicrous problems in particular situations.

In 1975, it was decided that a complete review of language policy was required. The study, by a special committee within the Public Service, took two years. It recommended a change in method and, in 1977, a third system was instituted. It restored initiative and control to departments, but subject to the production of clear objectives and plans for language, with close review by the Treasury Board and by the Commissioner of Official Languages. Since then a Special Joint Committee of the two Houses of Parliament has been reviewing the progress of language reform in the Public Service.

We have now had some 13 years of trial and error, of serious effort by some and of resentful indifference or opposition by many since the Official Languages Act was brought in. The degree of achievement is less than I had optimistically hoped in 1969, but the Public Service is now a very different place. It would be wrong not to recognize that the achievement has been substantial.

The balance sheet: qualified success

The provision of services in French is by no means perfect, as the Annual Report of the Commissioner of Official

Languages for 1981 makes clear. But it is equally clear, as the report states, that "Service to the Canadian public in both official languages is more widely available than it has ever been."

The participation of French-speaking Canadians in the federal Public Service has improved substantially. In 1965, the proportion among all ranks was 21.5 per cent; in 1981 it was 26.4 per cent: a proportional increase of 25 per cent. At the higher levels the improvement is more striking, although it is hard to get precise comparisons because of the inadequacy of statistics before 1969. However, in 1965 the French-speaking proportion in positions paying \$10,000 and up was only 10.8 per cent. In 1980, in the senior management category, the top management group in the Public Service, Francophone representation was 22.4 per cent. In short, the proportion of French-speaking public servants of all ranks is now roughly equal to the proportion of that language group in our total population, although it is still short of that mark in the higher levels. In Crown corporations the figures are much less satisfactory, ranging from about 15 per cent to around 18.5 per cent.

The most complex part of the achievement of equality of status in the federal Public Service is the establishment for French-speaking public servants of a real capacity to work in their own language. If one accepts the capacity of the '40s and '50s as zero and that of the '60s as virtually zero — even in the federal Public Service in Quebec — there has been progress. There are departments in Ottawa where the two languages are indeed used on a basis approaching equality, but we should not fool ourselves that that is normal. Some recent figures in the "bilingual regions" of Canada, which include the National Capital, are striking. Studies show that, on average, Anglophones use their own language 92 per cent of the time in those regions. Their French-speaking colleagues, on average, use their own language only 60 per cent of the time. In interdepartmental meetings, English is still spoken virtually 100 per cent of the time. There are a few exceptions, but they are rare.

To sum up, great progress has been made since 1969 toward the effective provision of service to the public in the two official languages and toward a balanced participation of our two language communities within the Public Service. We have not achieved anything approaching a general capacity for French-speaking public servants to work in French, although the situation is distinctly better than it was. A further substantial gain has been in the climate and attitudes about language in the Public Service. It is now generally accepted as a legitimate area of policy vitally related to the facts of Canada. The resentment and opposition of the mid-'70s have diminished. It would, however, be optimistic to say they have disappeared, either inside the Service or as an unstated political reality outside it. Where, then, do we go from here? What should be the objectives and the policy for the '80s?

Options for the '80s

There seem to me to be three possibilities. One would be to make a major new effort to achieve everything implied

by the principle of equality of languages in the federal public sector, and especially to remove the significant deficiency in language of work. A second option would be to decide that enough constitutional, legal and practical supports have now been put under language equality, and the three elements that arise from it, that we can dismantle the present apparatus. The third possibility would be to decide that something along the lines of that apparatus, together with the elements of audit and vigilance we now have, must continue and become a permanent part of the public sector in a federation like Canada.

While a counsel of perfection would argue in favour of a major effort on language of work, I doubt if this would be wise and if it would achieve results commensurate with its costs, either in effort or in the danger of renewed resentment about language.

We have, in the last ten years, seen a continuation and an acceleration of the process of territorial polarization of language in Canada. The Anglophone population of Quebec has diminished and probably will continue to do so. Anglophone dominance in the rest of Canada has continued unabated. With the constitutional rights on language of education, the minorities in both parts of Canada will have protections they did not have before. There is a most encouraging interest in many parts of English-speaking Canada in French immersion education for children of Anglophone parents. If that is maintained it will, over time, produce a number of effectively bilingual Canadians of whom some will go into the federal Public Service. However, for the better part of a generation I think it is very doubtful if we are going to see a much higher proportion of genuine bilingualism emerging from English-speaking Canada than we have seen in the last few years. If that is so, it would be optimistic and hazardous to take the measures to establish at an early date a generalized requirement to work in both languages in the federal Public Service and Crown corporations. It would require policies and programmes that would make very difficult the appointment or promotion of many otherwise qualified people from Western Canada and, indeed, from most areas outside the "bilingual belt". There is already in those areas a sense of injustice about what are thought to be unfair limits on opportunities for appointment and advancement in the Public Service. A more vigorous policy in the immediate future could stimulate new opposition on the language front. We might well lose more than we have gained in terms of national understanding and unity.

The argument for the second possibility is seductive. The Charter of Rights now makes constitutional provision for the "equality of status and equal rights and privileges as to their use" of the two official languages of Canada in all institutions of the federal government. There is also a clear provision in the Charter guaranteeing a constitutional right to Canadians to be served in their official language in any head or central office of the federal administration and in other offices where there is significant demand or where it is reasonable because of the nature of the office. Canadians have recourse to the courts if they consider these new consti-

tutional rights to have been violated. Governments, ministers and public servants will be aware of their constitutional obligations in these areas of language — something totally new in Canada. In addition, there is the Official Languages Act and the vigilant eye of the Commissioner. With such provisions, is it necessary to maintain the elaborate system we now have of departmental language plans, scrutiny by the Treasury Board and periodic or continuing review by a Parliamentary committee?

While one would like to believe that our present imposing and expensive system could be dismantled, I doubt very much if it should be. The progress toward language equality in the public sector in the last years has been achieved only as a result of unusual political determination and relentless administrative pressure. The opposing forces of convenience, operational efficiency and sheer inertia will not diminish or disappear. As long as they exist, language equality will, like liberty, be preserved only by eternal vigilance. That vigilance will not be maintained unless we have a system very like our present one with strict standards and requirements and with audits and reports upon administrative success or failure in meeting them. The constitutional provisions will be a major help. However, the courts and the law, unaided, can only go so far in matters where specific policies and programmes are needed to produce results. The Francophone population of Manitoba can vouch for the possible inadequacy of constitutional provisions alone!

We are working our way through the crisis to which the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism referred in its first report. However, it becomes increasingly clear that the essential nature of Canada in relation to language is not going to change in any fundamental way. Our two official languages will continue to be preponderant in their respective areas, with French more secure and more totally the language of Quebec than in the past. With the decline in immigration unlikely to be reversed, English-speaking Canada may become less of a mosaic and more of a melting pot, with a greater degree of linguistic and cultural uniformity and English as its focus. This twofold linguistic polarization will not, however, constitute two territorial unilingualisms. We have been successful in establishing more complete and more secure rights for the official language minorities than in the past or than exist in most multilingual countries. However, we do not yet have a situation in which a significantly larger part of our population is effectively bilingual and it is therefore imperative that our public sector be one that provides service, participation and basic equality for the two languages. Without such a Public Service, there is no way that government can be preserved with the character necessary for the unity of Canada. To put it another way, the factual needs of the linguistic geography of Canada in the future seem almost certain to reinforce what the new constitutional provisions require. This makes it all the more important to ensure that we do not endanger the great gains that have been made toward language equality in the federal service.

The need for sustained effort

Why, then, have I argued against the option of a major new

effort to resolve the language-of-work problem? I have admitted that it is not complete in the Public Service as it stands and even less complete in Crown corporations.

There are basically two reasons for proclaiming and establishing the principle of language equality for the federal public sector in Canada. One is justice to the French-language community. The other is to strengthen and support the unity of the country. The degree of injustice in our history, of which the injustice in the Public Service has been a part until very recent years, was a reproach to Canada and endangered its unity. We have achieved a situation that is much more just than it was 20 years ago. The justice is not complete, nor is equality total. The question we now have to ask is whether the measures needed to achieve perfect justice at an early date would create a new danger to unity. The other question is whether, in a matter of this kind, perfect justice is indeed attainable. It may be that it is not. It may also be that, within decent and tolerable limits, one of the burdens of being in the minority is to bear more of the load of compromise when some course less than perfection must be found.

The facts of our linguistic geography, together with the limited extent of effective bilingualism in English-speaking Canada in the immediate future, are the problem. They seem to me to indicate that a major effort to press for equality in language of work in the near future would give rise to the kind of inequities and resentments that would cause more injury than aid to our unity.

One cannot be totally confident of the inevitability of gradualism, but I suspect it would be wiser to put our faith in that rather than in some new programme to achieve perfection quickly. I have referred to the great interest in

English-speaking Canada in the education of young children in French. There has also been a very substantial change in the parochial resistance to learning a second language. We have not yet seen any energetic or imaginative policies by provincial governments to make effective the assistance that has been provided by the federal government for second-language education. Perhaps the changes in public attitude will encourage provinces and schools to introduce programmes that will produce more real bilingual capacity than our educational systems in English Canada have produced thus far. With more French immersion education and diminished resistance, we might well see by the end of this century a situation in which it will be entirely feasible to have real equality in the language of the workplace in the Public Service.

If we did achieve such equality, that, together with the revolution in the educational system of Quebec, should leave little doubt that we will gradually complete a balanced participation of the two language groups within the Public Service in the areas where it is now deficient. As to language of service to the public, the Commissioner of Official Languages has a new weapon in the Charter of Rights. He and the Courts will see that rights will triumph.

The federal public sector in Canada has been transformed under the language policies since 1969. In my view, the steady pressure that has been a part of those policies should be maintained, but with a careful eye on the realities that sometimes argue for constructive delay or even, if necessary, for accepting less than perfection in this imperfect world. It may well be that, so far as the public sector is concerned, the linguistic challenge of the '80s is to consolidate the gains that have been made and to look to final achievement in the '90s.

Tom Wells' remarks

We have just heard the reflections of a very distinguished Canadian, eloquently describing a period he lived through, beginning at a time when the accepted fact was an all-English public service at the federal level and continuing to the present.

He has characterized this period as one in which great progress has been achieved: federal services in both languages are now more widely available than ever before and many of the goals originally contemplated when this whole program began, particularly with the Official Languages Act in 1969, have now been achieved.

He went on to indicate what he sees as the challenge and the route to take in the '80s. He analysed three possible avenues that could be taken. First, undertaking major new efforts and new initiatives; second, disbanding all the mechanisms and depending on constitutional guarantees; or, third, moving ahead on key decisions that have already taken place. And I think he used the word "gradualism", a word we have used to describe what we are doing in Ontario.

I cannot disagree with Gordon Robertson's final conclusion that the third approach, gradualism, is the one to take in the '80s, particularly in the interests of national unity. However,

in concurring with him on this, I feel a bit of regret, because I know some of us would like to feel that striding off with major new programmes is the route to take.

But I must say, as one who has been involved in this whole process for at least the last 10 years and looking ahead to some of the problems that have to be met and solved in the '80s, gradualism offers the best hope for consolidating what has been achieved and making even more significant gains.

We have always tried to move ahead on language matters in the Province of Ontario, doing those things that

we felt were right, trying to avoid the conflicts and shortcomings that were evident and which came to light in the federal programme, and yet still trying to make substantial progress. We have always believed in Ontario that it was the responsibility of the national government to operate in both languages. Thus, the Province of Ontario has strongly supported the Official Languages Act, just as we very strongly support the new constitutional guarantees of language rights. However, we have always believed there were differences between what was appropriate for the national government and what was appropriate for us. Ours is a province where Francophones account for about six per cent of the population, whereas the national government, in the interests of national unity, has to take into account the feelings and aspirations of a much larger Francophone minority.

Our policy in Ontario, as stated by Premier Robarts in 1967 and reiterated by Premier Davis in 1971, was that we would provide, where possible,

facilities for the Francophone people of our province to deal with their government in their own language. It was also that we would move forward in the educational area to protect the linguistic and cultural background of the Franco-Ontarians, to a total establishment of their own school system. Recently, moreover, we have moved ahead in the courts to guarantee criminal trials and, in a number of areas of the province, civil trials.

All of these things have been done with a fair degree of acceptance. There has been some controversy in certain areas of education. But, basically, we have been able to progress and to legislate in those areas, and we feel we have kept the pledge that Premier Robarts and Premier Davis made. Our government feels it must continue to recognize that Franco-Ontarians are entitled to deal with their government in their own language and to have services provided in their own language, and to have a right to a degree of equality in a number of these

areas. I say "right" because I believe it is a right, even though it is not guaranteed in any legislative manner in Ontario.

I would defend very strongly the approach we have taken. I don't want to go into detail here, but let me point out that the climate in our province is much, much different from what may be found at the federal level or even in some of the other provinces. We have been able to achieve all we have because of gradualism. I know some will disagree with me, but I say we could not be where we are today in the provision of those services if gradualism had not been our approach. In my view, gradualism is the right route to go in our province to reinforce and to move ahead in the provision of increased French-language services.

And, I believe — echoing Gordon Robertson — gradualism is the right path to follow on the national level in pursuing the great achievements that have been made.

Serge Joyal's remarks

Since I should like this discussion to be as useful as possible, I will not address you as a member of the federal Cabinet, for I wish to do more than make an official statement. I have for too long been closely involved with the subject of linguistic equality in Canada to separate my personal convictions from my strictly political duties. If I may then, Mr. President, I should simply like to share with you some of my reactions to the statements made by your distinguished guest this afternoon.

Not for historical reasons, but because of what is happening in Canada today, I was sorry to see that Mr. Robertson's remarks lacked a sense of urgency, which I myself feel strongly. As a Quebecer, I belong to a generation which I believe will make history, since it will soon have to redefine its allegiance to Canada. That is why I believe this issue is a matter of urgency.

The Charter of Rights

I was directly involved in developing the new Charter of Rights and Freedoms and participate regularly in debates about our two official language communities. If things continue at the same rate as in the '70s, I am afraid the number of Quebecers who voted in favour of a negotiation or a new association with Canada in 1980 (40 per cent of the vote) will increase significantly and that the next election in Quebec does not augur well for the future of Canada. Certainly, the current economic crisis works, as it were, in our favour. In today's discussions on national unity, the problems of unemployment, inflation, factory shut-downs, business bankruptcies and all the calamities that afflict us work in favour of closer co-operation. This situation leads many Quebecers, including Francophones, to give a back seat to the fundamental question we

are discussing, even if only temporarily. Call me a cynic if you wish, but the fact is that, as a politician, I must be re-elected if I wish to act in the interests of the society in which I live. However, if we rely too much on the present situation and fail to take the measures required, we will merely be burying our heads in the sand.

I would like to speak to you about the Deschênes decision. I know Mr. Justice Deschênes well, for I was one of those who appeared before him in 1976 to evaluate the repercussions of the Official Languages Act, to which you have contributed. I am not here to judge you, but would simply like us to evaluate together the real short-term effects of this legislation. In appearing before him, I had two goals in mind: the first was to reassure myself of the supremacy of the principle of linguistic equality, and to determine its application on a national scale

in order to define what precise obligations it placed on the federal government. I distinctly remember that it took us six months to determine that the principle of linguistic equality encompassed language-of-work rights and a certain balance in the Public Service. As you know, these points are far from clear in the wording of the Official Languages Act (Section 2) — so unclear, that we asked ourselves whether this section was executory or merely declaratory. You are correct in saying that we have come a long way since 1976. But these efforts were agreed to only because of the conflict that prevailed at the time. The danger today is that some people are getting fed up with making concessions, in particular the minorities, because, as you said, the burden of vigilance always falls on their shoulders.

In Ontario, the minority does not threaten the stability of the Canadian government, regardless of the party in power. In Quebec, however, it not only threatens the stability of the government, but also the unity of the entire country. I therefore believe that amending the principles and provisions of the Official Languages Act is a matter of great urgency, as is the application of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. It is rather paradoxical that the first to pay the price of this Charter, which we sought to make as fair and effective as possible, should be the Francophone minority. It should also be noted that the first legal ruling of national importance made under the new Charter was made in a Quebec Superior Court.

Even though the majority of Quebecers in my view endorse the ruling (I myself hoped that these inherent rights would be applied as soon as possible in Quebec), it is still the Francophones of Quebec who are symbolically the losers vis-à-vis the rights of the majority of Canadians.

The Special Joint Committee of the Senate and of the House of Commons
As a former Clerk of the Privy Council, Mr. Robertson, you are aware of the daily concerns of politicians and deputy ministers, concerns which are

constantly changing. Very often, issues of linguistic equality, and language-of-work rights are, I daresay, reduced to the status of just another administrative matter. When there is no urgency, these problems are put aside. For this reason, I proposed the creation of a joint Senate/House committee, so that these problems would be a constant concern of the government. It took four years of pressure on the Canadian government, both Liberal and Conservative, to win our case. I was convinced that it would do no harm to national unity and that by putting the language question on the agenda, I would succeed in convincing my Francophone compatriots that it was one of our basic objectives.

Of course this new organization may present political problems since it must serve as a forum for debate about infractions of the Act, its shortcomings, or problems of implementation. To paraphrase the statement of the B & B Commission: we are at the peak of the crisis, and the economic situation is providing us with only a temporary respite. Consequently, in my view it is essential that this committee become a permanent body, that its role be firmly established and its educational role broadened. It must hold public proceedings before all Canadians. Just as the constitutional committee was perceived by all as a credible public forum in the major task of drafting a Constitution that reflects and expresses our ideals and objectives, I believe that the on-going debate on linguistic equality should unfold for all to see. Therefore, I strongly recommend that the Committee's sessions be televised and that its work be broadcast as widely as that of the constitutional committee. This would bring the question out in the open. The Canadian mentality has evolved in the past fifteen years, and I think we all agree that this matter should be a national concern.

But to come back to what I was saying, the Committee's mandate should be broadened. It cannot be made a permanent body if its only task is to evaluate the report of the Commissioner of Official Languages. In Canada, the issue of linguistic equality extends far beyond the federal scene. Language

reform must be pursued and adapted to the current reality. The Official Languages Act has served us well until now, but it requires careful study and major re-working. The role of the Commissioner must be strengthened. The Act's provisions must be given the priority they deserve and the rights of French and English as languages of work must be clearly set out. The Act should contain provisions to the effect that our two major language groups be equitably represented in the Public Service of Canada and that there be measures to make imperative staffing obligatory.

Constitutional reform

In a related area, constitutional reform is still incomplete, particularly with regard to language rights. The Charter does contain some provisions, beginning with Section 16, which reiterates linguistic equality, but it does not constitutionalize the provinces' obligations in this regard. As a Canadian living in Quebec and as a spokesman for the federal option in that province, I believe that the Deschênes ruling unfortunately repeats the arguments of our adversaries. As you yourselves have already stated, the burden falls most heavily on the shoulders of the minority. This is something that, as a politician, I would like to work toward changing.

Awareness among Anglophones

If, in the view of some, I have played the martyr's role in the federal government, it has been to show my compatriots that despite everything, the flames are not about to die. We need such people to keep the holy war under control; without them, relations would be even more strained. It is also in the interests of our adversaries that these people lay down their arms. My greatest concern is to determine how the provincial governments can also take up the fight, how they can make Anglophone citizens aware that there is indeed a crisis, a crisis of great urgency for themselves more than for Francophones. In *Le Devoir*, Jean-Pierre Proulx wrote an editorial entitled "*Sous le coup de l'émotion*," (In the heat of the moment) in which he said: "Until they demonstrate clearly their willingness to act, the support given by provincial

premiers to the Constitutional Charter will do nothing but blind Canadians to the real facts. In half the Canadian provinces, this willingness has still to be demonstrated." (Our translation.)

This means that if the entire burden of the new Constitution must be shouldered by Quebec's Francophones, we will have failed. The Anglophone provinces must take concrete and symbolic action. In Ontario, in particular — and I am sorry to repeat this — we must avoid actions which appear to be clear refusals of claims which are legitimate. Take, for example, the proposal for a bill that was passed almost unanimously in Ontario's Legislative Assembly, only to be rejected by the government using its parliamentary majority. I find this abnormal. Another example: an eloquent and positive report recommended this summer that Francophones manage their academic institutions in Ontario. This decision must not be postponed indefinitely.

I demand that the Anglophone provinces do something positive for the Francophones of Quebec. I always have the impression that concessions are made grudgingly, unwillingly, or on the sly. We must encourage gestures of spontaneous generosity toward the Francophone minority in English Canada.

This is critical if we are to establish the credibility of the solutions we are working toward and to which you, Mr. Robertson, contributed in the '60s and '70s. It is necessary in order to meet the challenge of the next Quebec election. I tell you this because it is a serious and urgent question that comes before me every day. Every day, I must return to Quebec, not only to explain what I am doing at the national level, but also to justify myself in the eyes of a large majority of my fellow Quebec citizens. We must open the eyes of Anglophones who have immediate responsibilities in this debate.

We must act immediately and not in two or four years' time. From this perspective, I believe that the next constitutional conference is of critical importance.

We must avoid leading Quebecers to believe that the language issue has been resolved once and for all by the rest of Canada. Anglophones must become aware of the progress that remains to be made and the problems that must be overcome; they must bring these issues to the conference table themselves. This is the only way to make progress. In many cases this will require changes in mentality and attitudes. But the political situation of 1982 is much different from that of 1970. Although Quebec has temporarily postponed the idea of separation and opposition, the problem of national unity still remains to be settled. I repeat: it is even more urgent now than in 1965 when the B & B Commission alerted us to the dangers we faced.

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION PERIOD

Second Session

Keith Spicer opened the discussion by noting that those present had just heard the classic Ontario view of language reform. However, he suggested that, since that province's actions in the linguistic field have a determining effect on the credibility of language reform, Ontario's gradualist policy may not be enough. Recalling an earlier presentation, Mr. Spicer mentioned that, while it was well and good to adopt a crusading attitude toward reform, this approach would perhaps have to be tempered by an understanding of the linguistic majority's position. He also said that words and expressions used in discussing language issues in Canada should be as concrete as possible so that Canadians may obtain a clear view of the real goal of reform — respect between the two language communities.

In response to a question by a fellow participant, Gordon Robertson then clarified his earlier statement which implied that the Commissioner of Official Languages has a new weapon in the Charter of Rights. He had meant that language rights may now be defended in the courts, and not that the courts had been enlisted in the Commissioner's service. However, he did not know where the minorities would obtain the funds needed for a legal defence of their rights.

The next speaker compared the step-by-step and gradualist approaches, the former being more purposive than the latter, which, he held, consists in the use of constructive

delays. He then provided a first-hand account of the effect of such policies on the Francophone minority in Ontario.

Other participants added to the debate on urgency *vs* gradualism. One said that, if too slow, gradualism is a dehumanizing process leading to terminal erosion of the minority community. Another reminded the assembly of the parallel issues for the Anglophone community in Quebec, while a third warned of the cynicism that the gradualist approach may generate.

Max Yalden stressed that gradualism must have a goal and an inherent sense of urgency. He also pointed out the contradiction that, although it is the minority that is directly affected by bilingualism, it is the majority that determines whether the official languages regime is working. The fact that, in many cases, minorities are not militant perhaps suggests that the majority should set higher goals than reform through gradualism.

Another speaker cautioned against attaching too much significance to the word "gradualism". The recent court case concerning the language provisions of the Charter of Rights, coming as it does so soon after the Charter itself, would seem to indicate that progress is being made more rapidly than expected.

A businessman contested Gordon Robertson's conclusion that the linguistic challenge of the '80s is to consolidate the gains made

thus far and to look for final achievement in the '90s. Instead, he felt the principal task is to bring the provincial governments up to a level of bilingualism more consistent with Canadians' aspirations.

Another participant shared his concerns, saying that the proposals amounted to a meandering step-by-step approach that would not lead to positive change. Mr. Robertson answered that this interpretation was founded on a slight misunderstanding of remarks he had made in his opening statement. He agreed that the institutions of the current official languages regime should be maintained and new ones added, and that a certain pressure should be brought to bear to hasten the reform process. He felt, however, that too much pressure would be unwise because there exists a very real danger of backlash, particularly in the West. In the absence of a vigorous new reform effort, certain policy changes may nevertheless be made, for example in the area of imperative staffing. Such changes would, of course, have their attendant political costs.

Following an exchange about Ontario's role and the need for continuing pressure in official languages matters, Tom Symons, the Co-chairman of the colloquium, summarized the discussions and adjourned the session, stressing that the iceberg was moving slowly, but that it was certainly moving in the right direction.

Language and business. Two representatives of business, Pierre Lortie, President of the Montreal Stock Exchange and Jon Grant, President of Quaker Oats Company of Canada, and a journalist, Mark Harrison, Editor of the Gazette, examined the thorny issue of language of work in the business sector. Is their view of language policy consistent with the fundamental nature of Canada and its national and international interests?

The Achilles' heel of bilingualism in Canada

PIERRE LORTIE

Our subject is not particularly easy to deal with: it is explosive and all too often produces highly emotional reactions. And yet it should be discussed in the most detached and analytical manner to enable the subtle and essential elements of the problem to be made clear. It is in this frame of mind that I approach my subject here today. From the very outset I should like to state that I am not a specialist in language matters; my remarks are simply those of an observer and of a member of the business community.

Language issues have always been — and still are — a reef on which many a dream of harmonious relations between the founding peoples of Confederation has been dashed. The problem has now shifted from education and government to the business world. To help us understand the issues, I believe it is essential to speak of “language of organizations” rather than “language of business.” By language of organizations I mean the language or languages used to administer and manage a business, department or agency; language of business more properly means communications with customers or outside parties. As we can see, these two expressions cover totally different issues.

Language of business: significant progress

As a result of private-sector solutions and government intervention, the use of languages in communications with customers is no longer a major problem in Canada. Studies conducted on behalf of the B & B Commission revealed the efforts and desire of Canadian business to serve its customers in the language of their choice. This rational adaptation resulted from the quest for effective economic transactions.

The customer or the citizen is king . . . and is served in his own language. As a general rule, no matter what the language of work and language of internal operations may be, the business sector in Canada tends to serve its customers in French or English wherever such is justified by sufficiently large concentrations of English- or French-speaking people. However, it seems that progress can still be made

in the area of legal documents and other written communications, both of which are closely linked to the language of organizations. I shall return to this point in a moment. Regardless of the opposition voiced from time to time, one fact remains: *the Quebec experience shows that bilingual service to customers is easy to achieve and is not prohibitively costly.* This statement holds true not only for basic consumer goods, such as food products, but for more complex services too.

Thus, either through natural adaptation or as a result of federal or provincial legislation, national and private corporations generally communicate with their customers in the language of the latter's choice. There are, of course, examples of businesses that prefer to lose customers rather than adapt to these legitimate requirements; and there are customers who decide not to press their demands too much. Generally, however, I believe the current situation is relatively satisfactory. Promotion of bilingualism in the business world appears to have had a good track record during the '70s.

In some quarters, this statement is used as an argument for easing the pressure. Victory is proclaimed and the proposal is made to demobilize the army! In my view, such reasoning is shortsighted, and totally ignores the fact that the language of work is a key factor in any genuinely complete bilingualism policy.

This amputation of an essential limb appears to be a normal state of affairs for Canada's bilingualism policy, which so far has virtually ignored the question of language of work in the corporate sector. Even where the federal government has regulatory power (chartered banks, communications, etc.), it has never intervened to ensure that French has an equitable place as a language of work.

I believe that the problem of languages used in the headquarters of national organizations will become a particularly important issue during the '80s. This problem is the Achilles' heel of Canada's bilingualism policy.

Functional organization of businesses

Analysis and experience show that every corporation is structured into two types of units: operations and headquarters. Operations units deal in technical and commercial activities which may be divided into regions, divisions, plants, groups and so on. It is here that most of the staff are employed and it is here we find the future managers. Headquarters provide the overall management and supervision of operations units. Managerial staff are usually appointed to headquarters after spending some time in operations units. In small- and medium-sized businesses, the "headquarters" level is that of senior management.

Language of work in operations units

Recruitment for operations units is conducted at the regional level. The employees reflect the characteristics of the available source of manpower, and their operating language, voluntarily or not, is the language of the majority of their employees. Multinational corporations thus tend to operate in French in Quebec and in English in the other Canadian provinces. Anglophone Canadian corporations will use French in Quebec and Francophone corporations will use English in their operations outside Quebec.

Studies attest to the fact that enormous progress has been achieved in this area over the past twenty years. According to a 1978 study, the mother tongue of 84 per cent of Quebec workers was French. Studies conducted on behalf of the Gendron Commission in 1971 showed that these Francophones use French 87 per cent of their time at work. A 1979 follow-up to the study conducted by Roy Morrison⁽¹⁾ revealed that the major firms' manufacturing and sales activities in Quebec reflected the majority Francophone character of Quebec⁽²⁾.

Francophone participation, already substantial in 1964, had grown considerably by 1979. During that fifteen-year period, French had become the dominant language of work and English, which had been on an equal footing with French in 1964, was relegated to an increasingly subordinate role. Most of the Quebec-based corporations with a heavy concentration of Anglophone managers have modified their language practices over the past twenty years. On the language-of-work front, the francization of Quebec activities has been largely completed, and corporations have also increased their number of Francophone managers. Although some progress still remains to be done in this regard, their under-representation should be reduced over time.

Exceptions

First of all, some operations units located in Quebec continue to use English as the language of organization because most of their clients and contacts are outside Quebec. These are organizational groups that deal in highly technical sectors and work both in manufacturing and in highly specialized professional areas. For such companies, the normal sphere of influence goes well beyond provincial borders. Within these firms, English is used extensively, even in Quebec. Secondly, there are firms located in Francophone regions outside Quebec, but whose management has not seen fit to adapt to the milieu because of the

administrative changes that this would entail. Here I am thinking of Northern Ontario and New Brunswick, where the concentration of Francophones or the social pressures of the milieu are not sufficiently strong to produce language changes in the firms.

What does all this tell us? First, in most operations units located in Quebec, the francization process has taken place naturally and probably did not require stimulus from legislative or regulatory measures. Consequently, the formal processes relating to the francization of businesses set in motion by programmes introduced by Bill 22, and adopted and made mandatory by Bill 101, will have little effect on the evolution of the francization process. For these units, the only noteworthy effect of this legislation is the strong encouragement given to the use of French in documents intended for internal use, a sector that took hold somewhat more slowly than other elements of francization in Quebec. The progress in written communications may explain why most Quebecers consider that the language legislation has had a positive and powerful effect on promoting the French language and in advancing the cause of Francophones.

Secondly, it seems likely that the language legislation applied to operations units located within Quebec, but whose normal frame of operation is found outside the province, is going to have somewhat harmful results. These corporations generally have rather tenuous relations with the milieu in which they have established their operations. This is very understandable. When 90 per cent of sales are conducted in outside markets and when the nature of operations calls for a network of intensive and on-going relations with a foreign client, the priorities and dominant influences on business operations are those of the client and not of the immediate environment. To a very large degree, the difficulties of implementing Bill 101 in the corporate sector result from the fact that the Bill's underlying philosophy seeks to impose the model which has developed naturally in most "regular" businesses to highly technical operations units, and does not take into account that the frames of reference and operational conditions of those units are totally different.

Thirdly, the difficulties found in regions where companies have not adapted to local conditions illustrate a weakness in the Canadian legal framework vis-à-vis language of work in the business sector. One wonders whether the provinces should not have at least as much responsibility for resolving these problems as the federal government — and perhaps more. In this regard, the language of work in the business sector provisions in Bill 101 and the experience we have had in Quebec in implementing this legislation could together be extremely helpful in devising ways to correct these weaknesses. It should also be noted that operations units located in the English-speaking regions of Quebec are experiencing difficulties not unlike those experienced by Francophones in other Canadian provinces.

Headquarters of national corporations

The issues are different for the headquarters of national corporations. In order to understand the reasons for this

difference, one must first appreciate that linguistic diversity is a natural barrier to exchanges. We must also understand that the prime function of a headquarters organization is to co-ordinate, manage and give direction. All of these activities are based on the quality of communications among the headquarters employees, between this team, the clients and the economic environment, and finally, between the headquarters and senior staff in operations units. One of the essential qualities that management personnel in a headquarters unit, especially that of a large organization, must have, is the ability to communicate with ease both orally and in writing.

This fundamental headquarters function of being a communications hub has a number of consequences for linguistic behaviour. To the extent that the use of several languages reduces the quality and intensity of communications, the normal tendency is to use only one language. This dominant language will become the language of the organization. Usually, it will also be the language of the "owners", but there are exceptions to this rule.

This pressure in favour of a unilingual language of work in a large headquarters has quite unfortunate consequences in a country like Canada. Managers will hesitate to pursue a career within an organization in which the dominant language is not their own.

Studies conducted by Allaire and Toulouse on Francophone MBA graduates show that these graduates hesitate to accept a job in a firm in which English is the language of work. This is a normal attitude. All other things being equal, a Francophone is placed at a disadvantage vis-à-vis an Anglophone in a work environment where English is the principal language of work, particularly for managerial positions. Since effective communication skills are an important factor for success, the Francophone manager will be placed at a disadvantage for part of his career if he has to operate in a language other than his own. The same phenomenon can be seen for Anglophones; very few of them work in the management category of departments of the Government of Quebec or in corporations where the dominant language is French.

In light of these functional constraints, the most natural solution consists in using only one language at headquarters and in establishing linguistic bridges to communicate with major national clients or with administrative units whose operating language is not that of the headquarters unit. This natural solution has been used for many years in Canada.

Studies have shown that this model is widely used. Francization and "francophonization" still remain essentially Quebec-based phenomena. The Francophone presence and the use of French within headquarters units located in Toronto is still marginal. If we examine the language of senior managers in the 105 largest corporations in Quebec, we find that 20 per cent of managers in corporations with headquarters in the province are Francophone, whereas this figure drops to 4 per cent for other corporations.

Furthermore, we find that Francophone representation within the headquarters of large, traditionally Anglophone manufacturing companies located in Quebec, is less than 50 per cent. Unlike Quebec-based operational units, these headquarters are not becoming Francophone. While Francophone representation in these organizations is certainly not negligible (the average being approximately 40 per cent among management staff), and while the use of French is increasing, the situation is very different from that found in operations units.

The natural solution might be just and equitable if the ownership of Canadian business were shared to a larger degree between Anglophones and Francophones, and if multinational corporations, generally U.S. owned and with large headquarters units, did not play so important a role in Canada. However, things being what they are, this involves considerable friction and numerous difficulties. For obvious socio-political reasons, national corporations with headquarters located in Quebec find it very difficult to apply the natural solution. They must therefore make special adaptations which, competitively speaking, increase their costs. Thus, national corporations with headquarters in Montreal have more Francophones and use official and administrative documents in both languages. These corporations are placed at a disadvantage because of multilingualism, since few businesses with headquarters outside Quebec have to follow this practice.

The existence of language legislation in Quebec and the absence of any federal legislation open the door to decisions that may have serious consequences. The management of a Canadian corporation may decide to move its headquarters from Quebec, thereby avoiding the incremental costs involved in maintaining headquarters in Montreal while benefiting from the advantages of the Canadian economy. This phenomenon has effectively reduced the number of Canadian corporate headquarters in Montreal and has deprived Quebec of a number of management positions, the longer-term effects of which are self-evident. However, it must be noted that these factors have played a major role in accelerating this process.

In view of this, Bill 101 provides the headquarters of national corporations with an opportunity to obtain exemptions, thereby enabling them to operate in English. However, difficulties relating to access to English schools for children and professional language requirements restrict the practical effectiveness of such exemptions.

Given the inequalities in ownership and the use of English in the Canadian headquarters of multinational corporations, Francophone management personnel are competing with their colleagues at headquarters in a language which is not their own. Thus, they have to agree to use English as their principal language of work if they hope to rise to more senior positions. The only companies currently not placed at a disadvantage by remaining in Quebec are those which for a long time have voluntarily accepted the Canadian linguistic duality by introducing an integral form of bilingualism at their headquarters.

Ideal institutional bilingualism may be described as follows: managers at headquarters work either in French or in English. All of them are bilingual. Management documents are drafted and received in either official language. Headquarters deals in French with operations units where French is the language of work, and in English with those where English is the language of work. Generally speaking, the former are located in Quebec and the latter outside the province. All senior managers of operations units are bilingual. One of their criteria for promotion is bilingualism. This state of affairs ensures balanced representation among managers and legitimacy for both languages within the organization.

Unfortunately, Canadian firms which have adopted this innovative model are few in number in Montreal and non-existent in Toronto. Federal departments would do well to study and imitate these private sector models, which have managed to resolve this problem of diversity in the use of languages within a management organization.

Until now, I have not mentioned Crown corporations. The natural solution is difficult for them to apply because ownership is public and therefore shared by both language groups, a situation that requires a different set of rules.

Major policy issues

Let me now raise some of the basic questions that any bilingualism policy should seek to answer.

- Should the Canadian government continue to allow the headquarters of national corporations to leave Quebec without taking some countermeasures? If it appears theoretically possible that federal intervention based on a Charter of Human Rights guarantees equal opportunities for everyone, regardless of the official language used, it must be recognized that there is currently no consensus in Canada with respect to applicable intervention in the private sector.
- Given that the inadequacy of the natural solution results from the weak participation of Francophones in the ownership of national corporations, would it be appropriate to require private Canadian Anglophone corporations to support more bilingualism than the natural balance would appear to justify?
- Given the federal government's lack of intervention in the relocation of headquarters and its respect for the free circulation of capital, should it compensate for the inevitable transfers of private corporation headquarters from Quebec by establishing Crown corporation headquarters in the province?
- There are two solutions with respect to Crown corporations. First, the government could require by regulation that they dispose of a high degree of bilingualism at their headquarters. Such an obligation would involve major organizational change in order to enable management staff, as their careers develop, to gradually learn both official languages before completing their career at head-

quarters. This would mean imposing upon federal Crown corporations the innovative methods used by private companies which have voluntarily decided to reflect Canada's linguistic duality.

- The second solution would be to provide for specialization or linguistic segmentation of Crown corporation headquarters. The headquarters of certain Crown corporations would be set up in Francophone regions and would operate in French, whereas others established elsewhere would continue to use English. In both instances, linguistic bridges would ensure communications with those outside the headquarters unit.

One point is of major importance: there would be no question of giving the managers of these Crown corporations the luxury of defining the major parameters of their language operation. This is a responsibility that belongs to the Canadian Parliament or Government of Canada and it is regrettable that, until now, the federal bilingualism policy has evaded this issue.

The need for innovative solutions

Private or public Canadian corporations are duty bound to reflect the linguistic duality of Canada. This should not even be questioned with respect to federal institutions. A sense of responsibility in this regard requires that changes be made to current practices.

One of the gains of the '70s was the legitimization of French as a language of service to the same extent (or almost) as English. Federal policies on labelling, public documents and signage contributed to this and caused fundamental changes of attitude about language of service throughout the country. Similar measures must now be taken to legitimize French as a language of work within major national organizations.

Beyond the natural solutions of localized bilingualism or linguistic bridges, institutional bilingualism may be a real possibility. Any corporation with sufficient coverage should be able to reflect Canada's linguistic duality among its staff by organizing sectors in which one or other of the two languages is the language of work. At the same time, it should increase the level of bilingualism of its headquarters, wherever located. However, the cost of producing such adaptations to the Canadian reality are sufficiently important that one cannot expect this innovative solution to become generalized in any spontaneous manner. It is currently too easy for large Canadian corporations to evade these constraints, even if this genuine "tax evasion" incurs major social costs for Canadian society.

One of the best ways to integrate a language within an organization is to use it in major management documents. Translation should be prohibited, because where there is a dominant language and a secondary language, it would only draw attention to the accessory role played by the latter. People often use the example of a large multinational firm, with less than 20 per cent of its employees located in Quebec, which drafted in French all the analyses and the report on

the largest investment in its history. The company's chief executive officer wanted to set a precedent and even had the documents distributed to the board of directors in French. This measure had a significant and decisive impact on the attitudes and linguistic climate of the organization.

It would be unwise to under-estimate the cost of current practices of major private and public national corporations for Canadian society. Their effects are seen in the reduced mobility of Francophone managers and their serious and justifiable frustrations. A number of Canadian firms have therefore categorically decided to limit their Quebec activities to their Francophone managers, who are thus not only limited in their career aspirations but also deprived of the opportunity to acquire experience that participation in transfer to other units of the corporation involves.

At issue here is the mobility aspirations of young Francophone Canadians. Surveys reveal that the Francophone population in Quebec makes a clear distinction between

French as a language of communication and French as a language of economic advancement. Although Francophones are satisfied with the situation in the first case, they consider it far less satisfactory and even worrisome in the second.

Although the issue has not yet surfaced as a major point of contention, every day the situation grows more tense since a number of surveys have revealed that career aspirations among young Francophones are clearly higher than among other young Canadians.

This is why I believe that the greatest challenge facing Canada's bilingualism policy during the '80s is to find a just and balanced solution to the use of languages within various Canadian corporations.

1. R.N. Morrison, *Corporate Adaptability to Bilingualism and Biculturalism. A study for the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, Ottawa, 1970.*
2. Secor Inc., *La présence francophone dans la grande entreprise manufacturière du Québec, 1964-1979, January 1980.*

Jon Grant's remarks

Pierre Lortie has focussed on a problem that a lot of us see, but which does not seem to have many immediate solutions. I will come at it from a slightly different tack and see if, in our discussions, we can examine what we can actually do to increase the level of bilingualism in industry in the '80s.

The true language of work is that which allows communication to flow most easily so as to maximize the return on the effort expended. In this sense, there are a number of such languages: the scientific language of work, the computer language, the financial language and, of course, English, French and so on.

Then there is, as Pierre Lortie pointed out, the language of business. No question about it, any sane businessman is going to adopt the pragmatic attitude that it makes sense to communicate with the customer in the customer's language. Certainly this has been true for many, many years in the Province of Quebec. It is also true in some other places — northern Alberta, for example, where salespeople may be bilingual English and Ukrainian. For many years we gave this idea lip service only. Until relatively recently, we would take an

English-language television commercial designed in Toronto, dub in the French words with "lip sync", and then run the same commercial in Quebec. We ourselves knew it was an unmitigated disaster. For most of us operating with national and international brand names, brand development was much lower in Quebec than in the rest of the country.

What we finally realized was that, wherever you want to sell, you tailor your consumer communications to the local culture. And you can best do that by having your advertising designed by people who live in that culture. It took a long time for this realization to come home to business in this country.

Language and the multinationals
I would now like to expand on the global dimensions of language of work. As most of you likely know, North Americans are extremely provincial. If you look at some true multinational corporations like Nestlé and Unilever, both of which are in the consumer products industry, you find a mix of nationalities among top management. In fact, at Nestlé in particular, the nationality of senior executives and the chief executive officer changes as these positions are

held by people who have come from the many countries where these companies operate.

The language of the senior executive suites changes according to who happens to be chairing the meeting. Except when there is a North American around. Then everyone has to move into English to accommodate the poor provincial from the United States or English-speaking Canada.

I have talked to a number of people who find this extremely embarrassing. A reverse psychology is at play: far from feeling superior because others must use their language, they feel they are being talked down to because they are the ones whose linguistic abilities are not good enough. So apart from being bilingual at home, we Canadians have to look beyond if we are going to be contenders in world markets.

German is obviously an important language around the world, particularly because of the strength of Germany's industrial development. Another key language is Spanish because of the fast-growing and exciting, though turbulent, South American market that some companies have picked as a long-term opportunity for Canada.

Let me develop my thinking a little bit. Because of their traditional unilingualism, North American and British companies, even the multinationals, tend to promote their own nationals to top positions. Those are the only people they really understand; they have difficulty trusting people of different national backgrounds at the helm. Companies like Nestlé and Unilever have no problem with this kind of thing. It is a function of the provincial, unilingual traditions that English-speaking people tend to have.

Francophones in management

I don't necessarily agree with Pierre Lortie that Francophone managers are at a real disadvantage in this country. Until recently, young managers coming out of Quebec business schools have not been trained in international management techniques, but that has changed and we are now seeing some exceptionally good people who can and do compete very effectively with Anglophones. To increase this representation, we must be prepared to move more aggressively, even in the short term.

Let me tell you about some things that have happened at Quaker over the past year. Three people were appointed to three important jobs across the country — district manager in British Columbia, district manager in Ontario and a marketing manager at head office in Peterborough. All three positions were won

by Francophones. We did not choose Francophones to "balance the books"; we chose on the basis of education, training and development, experience — in short, on merit.

Managerial mobility

The barriers to this mobility go beyond what we have just been talking about. The problem is essentially one of family culture, a very difficult thing for all of us to come to grips with.

Anglophones, whose ties are generally confined to the nuclear family, can pick up and move much more readily than Francophones, who tend to be part of an extended family that includes grandparents and cousins and uncles and so on in their particular locale. Such ties make it difficult for Francophones to move to the west coast, for example, to pick up some experience, even if it is only for a year.

We had an example of this at Quaker. We were opening up an operation in France and we desperately needed someone with marketing and sales experience over there. Obviously, Francophones were best prepared for the job, but because of extended family relationships we could not encourage any of those on our staff to take what promised to be a very exciting two-year assignment.

By way of concluding remarks, I would like to leave you with a couple of thoughts.

First, I think that the private sector should start to take bilingualism much more seriously than in the past. We should begin to insist that there are promotion advantages to Anglophone managers if they become bilingual. It has been too easy to appoint a sales manager who has responsibility for Quebec and is not bilingual. There is nothing wrong with telling managers that bilingualism may be one of the considerations for promotion along with skills in accounting, advertising or human relations. This is something we as managers share a responsibility for trying to change.

Second, if Canada is to enhance its position around the world, more Canadians must make more effort about language. The first step for each individual is to learn both our official languages, the next, to become multilingual. If Canadian agri-business in the '90s and through the year 2000 is going to export more foodstuffs around the world, it makes sense for us to be able to operate in many languages, and not just in English and French because of our needs at home.

Thus, we must break the inertia among business leaders and start encouraging bilingualism. It makes sense not just because of our two founding peoples in Canada, but because we have to break out of provincialism if we are going to do business around the world.

Mark Harrison's remarks

Like Pierre Lortie, I am not a specialist or expert witness on the subject of bilingualism. As an editor, however, I am made aware almost every day of the strong and emotional reactions evoked among Anglophones and Francophones alike on the issue of language.

I should like to offer a few general observations based on Mr. Lortie's remarks and on my own impressions as a comparatively recent resident of Quebec. Let me try to focus on the

extent to which bilingualism in the business world has been at once helped and hindered by legislation, and especially by the passage of Bill 101 in Quebec.

As Mr. Lortie noted, French has become well established as the language of work in Quebec in recent years. One may argue whether this is the result of natural evolution or of language legislation. I suspect it is a combination of both, though I'm inclined to believe that French would

not yet have taken its rightful place within the heartland of French Canada had it not been for the legislative measures adopted by successive Quebec governments.

I say that because I recall the experience of Bill Tetley who was minister of financial institutions in the Bourassa government when it was decided that new Quebec corporations would be obliged to have French and English names, but that the 120,000 existing Quebec companies would be asked

to comply voluntarily. Mr. Tetley recalls how the official opposition at the time argued that existing companies should be forced to have French as well as English names, but he insisted they would comply voluntarily.

When notices were sent to each of the 120,000 companies, fewer than 25 complied. Mr. Tetley then wrote a personal letter to the presidents of the 500 major Quebec companies, asking them to comply. Nine volunteered. Later, a survey was taken to find out why the response had been so negative. The most frequent reply, perhaps understandably, was that the proposed change was simply not seen to be in the companies' interest.

Only a small episode, perhaps, but it sheds some light on why legislation was deemed necessary to compel some measure of bilingualism in the commercial life of Quebec.

One can easily understand the resentment and frustration of Francophones, especially in Montreal, who for so long lived in a society where most commercial signs were unilingual English, where the language of the workplace was often English, and where service in many stores and business establishments was available only in English.

Since August 26, 1977, when Bill 101 was enacted, a single language, French, has been established by law — rightly — as the paramount language, and in many areas, as the only language of business, of education, and of public services. This process is probably unparalleled in the Western world, and is part of a broader social evolution which has transformed Quebec in recent years. In the business world, Bill 101 is obliging companies, with few exceptions, to conduct their affairs not bilingually but in French, from the shop floor to the boardroom.

The legislation has inevitably bred some frustrations and annoyance. But as of April 30, 1982, according to the Office de la langue française, more than 66 per cent of the 1,614 largest Quebec companies — those with 100 or more employees — had their francization certificates, attesting that they

were operating in French or had a programme under way for that purpose. Of the 2,269 companies with 50 to 100 employees, 49 per cent had certificates. We may expect total compliance by the deadline of December 31, 1983.

Claude Aubin, the new president of the Office, reported recently that the establishment of French as the language of work has led to an increase in the creativity, initiative, participation and productivity of Francophone employees, particularly at management levels.

These are among the positive results which have flowed from Quebec's language law. There is no doubt that it has also created a greater sense of cultural and linguistic security among Francophones in Quebec and has led to a greater sense of social tranquillity within the Francophone community than existed a few years ago. All of us can welcome these trends.

Regrettably, however, the pendulum has swung too far in some respects. Several aspects of the Quebec language law seem excessive, punitive, even vindictive in their impact on the use of English, and have aroused widespread resentment within the Anglophone and Allophone communities.

Some of those excesses are in education and social services which are outside the scope of my remarks this morning. However, reference has been made to the recent landmark judgement in the Quebec Superior Court in which Chief Justice Jules Deschênes ruled that certain aspects of Bill 101, restricting English-language education, were unconstitutional and that the Quebec government in defending these aspects of the Bill reflected a "totalitarian" concept of society.

I believe that similar criticism can be levelled against several other provisions of Bill 101 that affect the business community.

In some of its regulations and in the insensitive way they have sometimes been applied, the language legislation has been arbitrary and on occasion intolerant. This can only undermine

the efforts of those trying to extend and strengthen the cause of bilingualism throughout Canada.

I refer primarily to the impact of Bill 101 in areas affecting the use of signs, posters and advertising, in language tests for professions and to some extent in the language of work. No aspect of Bill 101 is resented more deeply than Section 58, which has required the abolition of all English words on most signs, posters and commercial advertising. It is hard to think of any other jurisdiction in the Western world where it is deemed necessary to expunge a whole language from public view.

It implies that the mere sight of a few English words — even if accompanied by their French translation — constitutes an affront to Quebec's majority. In some respects, as Claude-Armand Sheppard noted recently, the use of English is now a crime in Quebec.

No social revolution, of course, can be entirely free of injustices and abuses. In a democratic society, one can even justify some degree of coercion in the general interest. But to use the power of the state to abolish minority rights, on the ground that this is necessary for the security of the majority, is a most dubious proposition. The legislative attempt to stamp out the use of English as a public presence sometimes leads to bizarre incidents.

One recalls the case earlier this year of a broker in Hull, a unilingual Francophone, who was warned he was breaking the law because the sign on the door of his family firm contained the word "realtor." Although he explained that the word was a registered trademark of the Canadian Real Estate Association, he was told to remove it nevertheless.

One recalls how, in Montreal, a real estate firm was recently convicted and fined \$100 for posting two small signs in front of two houses in a predominantly English-speaking suburb of the West Island. The signs contained the offending words "For Rent".

Then there was the case in the heavily Anglophone West Island of Montreal

in which a lawn-care firm owned by Mr. Claude Larochelle was ordered to remove the word "lawn" from his bilingual truck signs, leaving only the French word "pelouse". His chief competitor, an American firm, carries the name "Chemlawn" in three-foot-high letters on its trucks. Because "Chemlawn" is a trademark registered before Bill 101 came into effect, it is legal. That left Mr. Larochelle asking why he, a Francophone, operating a company that serves primarily an English-speaking area, cannot announce in English the business he is in but his American competitor can. He is still awaiting a reply.

Last March, when the section of Bill 101 requiring commercial signs to be in French only was challenged in Quebec Superior Court, Judge Jacques Dugas held that the Province had the power to restrict the use of English in business, just as Ontario had restricted the use of French in education until 1924.

"Freedom of expression," he wrote, "does not include freedom to choose the language of expression," a view which may strike some people as rather odd. One wonders what use freedom of expression is without the means to express it. It is as though freedom of religion were defined as the right to worship, providing it is only in an Anglican church.

The resentment engendered within the Anglophone community by the prohibition on signs is directed, of course, against the Quebec government, not against the Francophone community, because it is recognized that many Francophones themselves feel this part of Bill 101 to be excessive.

A survey conducted last year by Sorecom, a highly respected polling organization in Quebec, showed that 64 per cent of Francophone Montrealers and 95 per cent of Anglophone Montrealers felt Bill 101 should be amended to permit bilingual signs.

A second area of concern is in the language tests set up under Bill 101, whereby non-Francophones, graduating from professional schools in Quebec, cannot practise their profession

without passing special language tests in French. Francophones coming up through the French school system, of course, are not required to take the test because they are automatically deemed to be proficient in French.

The tests have deprived competent and even bilingual people of their right to work in their chosen field simply because of their inability to pass a written test. Some of you may be aware of the case of Joanne Curran, a fluently bilingual Anglophone nurse, who was deprived of her job because of her failure to pass a written test.

The testing program has been criticized by the Quebec government's own agency, the Conseil de la langue française, which advises the government on language policy. It has urged that the tests be abolished. But as of today they remain, with a few minor changes.

In Montreal today, it is almost impossible for a unilingual Anglophone to find a job except in high-technology industries with international markets, such as Northern Telecom. Most jobs now require, properly, "a minimal knowledge of French," at least written and oral, according to a study undertaken last spring for Alliance Quebec, the newly-formed umbrella group set up to defend the rights of non-Francophones.

The survey of 32 large, Montreal-based firms and 11 smaller companies indicated that below the upper management level, local companies now tend to operate almost entirely in French.

Since 1977, the cost of francization incurred by Quebec companies has been estimated by the Office de la langue française to be more than \$100 million.

Another study, conducted for the C.D. Howe Institute in 1980 by Yvon Allaire and Roger Miller, who teach business administration at the University of Quebec in Montreal, reported that 330 of the largest firms, with 500 or more employees each, had spent an average of \$105,000 each to accommodate French as a working language since 1977.

The study reported that French-speaking employees continued to be under-represented at top management and even middle management levels, a finding that supports Pierre Lortie's observation this morning.

But the evidence is sometimes conflicting, and we have no reliable and up-to-date data on the progress of francization at the management level.

One linguistic expert, Monica Heller of the University of California, spent three months last year studying the process of francization at a major Montreal beverage manufacturer that was traditionally English until the 1960s. She found that at top or middle management levels, Francophones were recruited, trained and quickly promoted as part of company policy.

Remaining Anglophones tended to be older workers, with more seniority and experience than their young French-speaking superiors, which sometimes caused tension at meetings. In some departments, the use of French in meetings was decreed at the risk of alienating older Anglophones — a relatively new phenomenon, perhaps.

Yet, she found, most Anglophone workers accepted francization as reasonable, and instances of open hostility were rare.

I think the majority of Quebec Anglophones have the same attitude — an acceptance of the paramountcy of the French language and a readiness to ensure that their children, at least, must be fully bilingual to function within a predominantly French-speaking society.

But I think there is a sense that it ought to be possible to encourage and to welcome the assertion of French-language rights without the kind of excessive and coercive measures which deny the existence of English and which go far beyond the kind of "pushing" that Max Yalden referred to yesterday.

Three years ago, on the 10th anniversary of the Official Languages Act, Davidson Dunton, a co-chairman of the B & B Commission, wrote that "the

concept of equilingualism," as he called it, was not only fair but must be seen to be fair.

In Quebec today, it is not always easy for Anglophones to detect fairness in a language policy that reflects neither bilingualism nor equilingualism.

While our attention in the '80s must be focussed primarily on the extension of Francophone rights across Canada, and with all deliberate speed, I hope the legitimate concerns of Anglophones in Quebec, who often feel themselves beleaguered these days, will not be ignored.

There is a linkage here, I believe, because the long-overdue extension of Francophone rights across the country can only be accelerated if the excessive aspects of Quebec's language legislation are eliminated.

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION PERIOD

Third Session

A representative of the business community noted that companies are moving their head offices out of Quebec not only because of the language issue, but because senior executives are taxed more heavily than their counterparts elsewhere in Canada. He added that bilingualism would not succeed if senior managers were not convinced of the importance of equal opportunities for Francophones and Anglophones.

Another businessman expressed the view that the federal government intervenes enough already in the private sector, and that asking it to fill the gap left by departing companies is not the best solution. Nor is it wise to force companies to keep their head offices in Quebec. Taxes are too high and senior executives have problems educating their children in the language of their choice.

Jean de Grandpré pointed out that Bell Canada has adapted to the situation and uses French and English where appropriate. Communications in the Quebec region are in French, and those that pertain to the company in general and to other companies are in English, with translations for the Quebec region. Bell Canada's policy is that English is the main language of work at head office because the technology in this field is almost exclusively in that language. It has nevertheless been able to attract very competent Francophones.

A senior public servant saw Ottawa and Montreal as pairs in the bilingual zone, and Quebec City and Toronto as pairs outside the zone. He would like to set up units working in the minority official language in other major centres within the bilingual zone.

Another participant stated that, regardless of where a company's head office is located, its highest priority must be effectiveness and efficiency. For this reason, he was not sure how fast Canada's business community could move toward the model proposed by Mr. Lortie although he agreed with it as a long-term objective. He felt that Francophones should not expect a bilingual situation to exist soon in head offices outside Quebec.

One businessman said that in expanding his company he had tried to set up a partnership between Quebec and Ontario to

prove that Francophones could succeed outside Quebec. He discovered that Ontario had a completely different culture. For a true partnership to exist, the partners have to get to know each other, the first step being to learn each other's language.

The next speaker noted that most of the discussions had revolved around linguistic rather than cultural differences. In his view, the cultural aspect was what should really be emphasized. He wondered how one could prove that language legislation in Quebec has had a negative impact. Given the increased sense of cultural security and opportunities for advancement that the Charter has produced for Francophones, the legislation should not be judged too harshly. He questioned the reliability of Mr. Harrison's statistics from a study on bilingual signage, stating that according to other data, the majority of Francophones are in favour of Bill 101's provisions regarding unilingual French commercial signage. Over the past ten years, the professional and economic expectations of young Francophones had been rising and were higher than those of their counterparts in the rest of Canada. Unless large companies made significant linguistic changes, they would be unable to meet these expectations and the resulting dissatisfaction could have serious political repercussions.

This speaker was asked if he believed Francophones had higher aspirations because they had started out so far behind Anglophones. As regards the education provisions in Bill 101, did not Francophones think that Anglophones should have the opportunity to be educated in English provided they were able to communicate in French?

He agreed that Francophone Quebecers appeared to be generally in favour of loosening the Charter in that area, and that the Canada clause was a popular option. He was unable to say why Francophone expectations are what they are.

A member of the academic community felt there was too much optimism about language of service in the business world. He cited the example of the private sector in New Brunswick, where private companies appeared to be waiting for government to legislate on language.

A public servant said the private sector should be more involved than government in making people aware of the advantages of bilingualism. She noted that her department was trying to change people's attitudes with programmes such as Open House Canada which helped reduce prejudice and create a more positive atmosphere, two essential conditions for the promotion of bilingualism in the private and public sectors.

Mr. Lortie was asked to clarify his statement that the federal government had not intervened to give French an equitable place as a language of work, and had not made the people in the business world aware of this question. He replied that the federal government had not issued regulations that changed the actual behaviour of organizations, as Bill 101 had done. In his opinion that was the only way to make any real change.

A representative of a Francophone association asked if business should be unilingual French in Quebec and unilingual English outside Quebec, or bilingual across Canada, or if demand should be met as it arose. What policy should Canada adopt in the '80s?

In Pierre Lortie's view, any solution involving making certain areas in Canada unilingual was doomed to failure; Canadians are a mobile workforce and many firms go beyond territorial boundaries.

When asked whether one should speak of the "founding peoples" in a country that has Indians, Inuit and many other nationalities among its population, Pierre Lortie answered that the Constitution referred to the founding peoples, and that while other cultures had certainly enriched Canada, these two groups had been singled out. However, there was nothing to prevent organizations from operating in languages other than English or French.

Jean de Grandpré, the Co-chairman of the colloquium, concluded the session with a summary of the main contributions, such as the statement that tax disparities and attitudes vis-à-vis Anglophones would have to change in Quebec.

Language and education. With responsibility for passing on knowledge, revealing the present and exploring the future, do our educational institutions help prepare young people to give the best of themselves in a country that is irreversibly bilingual and in a world where English and French are not the be-all and end-all of everything? Robin Farquhar, President of the University of Winnipeg and David Johnston, Principal of McGill University, attempted to determine whether our schools provide our official language minorities with the means to excel without having to give up their own language.

Full speed ahead, apply the brakes, or change course?

ROBIN FARQUHAR

After sitting through the past day and a half, I have become more convinced than ever that education is a very major source of any solutions to the problems we have been talking about.

My task is to provide an overview of language and education. Obviously I must be selective in my foci, and I shall organize my remarks accordingly. First I shall sketch the range of topics and issues involved. Then I shall identify a few basic assumptions, and finally I shall propose some thrusts for possible incorporation in subsequent action.

Fundamental issues

Language and education are both extremely complex phenomena and so are their interactions with each other, especially in the context of our national development in Canada. The factors involved are too numerous to mention in total, but I would like to offer an idea of the scope of the subject by posing some of the pertinent questions.

The first is: **Who constitutes our target group when we talk about language and education?** Are we talking about Francophones in Quebec learning English? Francophones elsewhere in Canada learning English? Francophones elsewhere in Canada maintaining their French? Are we talking about Anglophones in Quebec learning French or Anglophones elsewhere in Canada learning French? Either Francophones or Anglophones learning a language other than English or French? Native people or immigrants anywhere in Canada learning English or French or maintaining their indigenous or mother tongues? A whole range of very different populations is involved, and the issues differ substantially according to the target group in question.

What is the status of a language for a particular target group? Does education in a language involve first-language maintenance for minority groups? Does it involve second- or third-language learning for majority groups or for minority groups? The status of a language for a particular target group affects both the pedagogical and political approaches to language education, and all these possibilities must be

addressed in a country that aspires to official bilingualism within a context of multiculturalism.

When and how should language education take place?

Should it take place in bilingual schools, mixed schools or unilingual schools? It has been argued, with some research support, that, at least for minority groups striving to maintain their first language, education should take place in unilingual schools that they control.

Should second-language education be presented as a language of study, as in the core approach or the conversational approach — that is, “We are studying French” or “We are studying English”? Or should it be presented as a language of instruction, as in the immersion or the transition approach? Of course there is no answer to that. It needs to be presented both ways, depending on the aspirations and the situations of the students involved.

It has been argued that where a second language is the language of instruction, immersion for majority groups is additive in that the second language is gained, whereas the transition approach often used with minority groups is subtractive in that the first language is lost. With immersion, we also have to decide whether it should be full or partial, early or late. Research demonstrates that effective language education requires different approaches for different groups in different demographic circumstances.

Do we have the educational technology to teach languages effectively? Do we know when to use the communicative approach and when the structural — two very different approaches to language instruction? Each is probably appropriate under different circumstances. Do we have adequate instructional materials and equipment available? Are we training enough qualified language teachers? The answer to all these questions seems to be: “No, but we’re working on it.”

A fifth question that helps define the complexity of this topic is: **At what level and to whom should language**

learning opportunities be offered? Should they be offered both at the elementary-secondary and post-secondary levels? During school hours, after school, on weekends? For credit or on a non-credit basis? In compulsory or optional programmes? Should they be for children and youth only or for adults as well? Should they be offered in an instructional setting only or rather in an entire cultural milieu involving the media, publishers and the arts, religious and community agencies?

I think it is evident that an exclusive focus on young people in the schools is inadequate for effective language learning. It must be supported by supplementary opportunities to learn and use the language with other people in other settings, and these opportunities need to be coordinated and articulated to the fullest extent possible.

Is language education largely a matter of pedagogy? Pedagogy involves instructional technology, which means methods, materials, equipment, trained teachers. It also involves learning behaviours, which means the abilities and attitudes of the students concerned. Without adequate pedagogy, effective language education cannot take place. Pedagogy is necessary but it is not sufficient, for there are other factors that may be even more significant in language education.

Some of these factors are philosophical. Is the primary aim of language education survival — for example, survival of a minority culture or survival of an individual in terms of access to employment? Or is the primary aim enrichment in the interest of developing a new skill or simply in the interest of a good liberal education?

Others are political. What are the respective roles of the federal government, of the provincial governments (both independently and together) and especially of municipal governments, which in my judgment have been largely overlooked so far?

What is the role of individual schools, compared with that of school boards and provincial departments of education? Does it make a difference to what you do in language education if a jurisdiction is designated officially bilingual? Should English-language education and French-language education be managed separately?

Should first-language instruction and second-language instruction streams eventually merge when the language involved is the same even though the groups served are, of course, different? For example, should Anglophone students in French immersion programmes join with Francophone students in first-language programmes at some point in their educational development? If so, at what level?

Of course, some factors are financial. They relate to the question: Should language education be viewed primarily as a benefit to the individual and supported through private means, or should it be viewed as primarily a benefit to our society and supported through taxes and, if so, from what level of government? Or should it be viewed as some combination of both, and in what financial proportion?

Finally, some of the non-pedagogical factors are contextual. Language is embedded in culture, and language education must, therefore, bear a relationship to such characteristics as religion, social class, ethnicity, geography and demography.

Clearly language education is not a matter of pedagogy alone. Many of the other factors I've mentioned have strong ideological components and must, therefore, be sorted out at the level of theory and values before policies can be developed leading to concrete and effective action in the teaching setting. Given that this has not yet been done satisfactorily, it is remarkable that language education has progressed as far as it has in Canada.

What is the federal government's primary purpose in promoting official bilingualism? Is it to encourage the use of both official languages by as many Canadians as possible? Is it to ensure access to governmental and legal services for all Canadians in the official language of their choice? Or is the primary purpose to provide equitable representation in government jobs to both Anglophone and Francophone Canadians?

My impression is that representation has been given top priority and that the first purpose, an increasingly bilingual population, has been somewhat under-emphasized — especially, though certainly not exclusively, in Quebec. This may be understandable, if it's true, in that representation is more quickly and more directly attainable by government action. The three purposes I've mentioned are somewhat interdependent anyway. However, I wonder if the federal government has been truly open with the general public in terms of its long-range plans and objectives in this regard. In fact, I wonder if it has really decided which purpose is primary.

Is language education an end in itself, or is it an integral part of other, larger concerns? My answer is that it is the latter. Within the context of education, the learning of Canada's official languages may be viewed as an essential component of Canadian studies. Within the setting of Canada as a whole, it may be viewed as basic to the much broader development of the ephemeral Canadian identity. And in the world at large, Canada's official languages policy may be viewed as essential to our interface with the United States, our relationships with other nations and our immigration policies, for example.

Finally, what are the appropriate or intended roles, with respect to language education, of the federal government, the Commissioner of Official Languages, and the Council of Ministers of Education? Is it their role, or the role of some of them, to advocate and promote? To make available supporting services — financial, legal, moral or logistic, for example? To monitor and report? To serve as ombudsmen or as policemen? In other words, are these official agencies supposed to be initiatory or responsive, proactive or reactive, sources of expertise and assistance or bases of power and control? Personally, I'm not sure what to expect from whom. And unless I'm alone in this confusion, I fear that

the development of language education in Canada may be retarded unnecessarily and undesirably.

These questions at least show just how vexatiously complex the topic of language and education is. I wish I could answer them all, even to my own satisfaction. I doubt anyone can at present. Nevertheless, let me try to extract some order from the chaos by indicating a few of my own hopes. I must mention three important assumptions from which my suggestions are derived.

Key assumptions

First, I assume we mean it when we say that Canada is an officially bilingual country. This means not only that Canadians can be served by government agencies and the courts in either official language from coast to coast, but also that ultimately they should be able to meet the basic needs of daily life no matter which official language they use.

If this is to become the case, we should strive towards an ever-increasing proportion of our population being functionally bilingual in English and French. The provinces, at least in English-speaking Canada, seem to be acting in accordance with this objective — though some more enthusiastically and effectively than others.*

My second assumption is that, thanks to the devoted work of our linguists and language educators, we are learning how to teach languages increasingly well. French immersion programmes for Anglophone children are proving particularly effective. Not only are their French skills better than those of other Anglophone children (although not quite so good as those of Francophone children); after a bit of lag time, their English language skills, their academic achievement generally and various affective kinds of learning are at least as good as, in some cases better than, those of other Anglophone children. The rapidly growing number of Anglophone children in French immersion programmes coast to coast indicates that the general public not only recognizes this but favours its purposes as well.

My third and last assumption, a key one, is that learning benefits from positive motivation. People who are engaged in a particular kind of education because they want to be (or in the case of young children, because their parents want them to be) are more likely to achieve really successful, long-lasting learning than those whose engagement in education is coerced. You can lead a horse to water, and you can even get it wet, but you can't make it drink unless it wants to. With respect to official bilingualism, many civil servants will get wet if they have to, but the real thirst, I believe, resides with an impressively large proportion of the general public from coast to coast — especially, but not exclusively, with the children. I find it lamentable that we have not yet made a determined effort to quench this thirst, or at least we have not made many people properly aware of such an effort if there is one.

Future priorities

On these assumptions, then, I would propose certain priorities for the immediate future of language and education

in Canada. All relate to my belief that the federal government should adopt a much higher profile in this field.

My first proposal concerns goals. I would suggest that we are making considerable progress towards the first of the three goals I mentioned earlier, that of access to government and legal services in both languages. This progress should be allowed to proceed on its own momentum, with all the support now available in legislation and regulations. I do not know what kind of progress we have made toward equitable representation in government positions for both language groups. But I would suggest that this goal be downplayed, because I would like us to avoid a potential explosion, especially among Anglophones in Western Canada.

With respect to the third goal, increasing functional bilingualism nationwide, I suggest that the federal government acknowledge this openly as a primary objective, explain its desirability from both rational and emotional perspectives, and outline a clear and careful plan for achieving it, based not on the coercion of the unwilling but on the support of the self-motivated. I believe there is a largely untapped reservoir of will among Canadians to become functionally bilingual — a potential for national bilingualism that could be realized if the rational and emotional arguments in its favour were convincingly communicated, if evidence of the growing effectiveness of our approaches to bilingual education were broadly and effectively disseminated and if opportunities for language training were made much more widely and easily available.

My second proposal concerns strategies. Opportunities for language training that currently exist should be made much better known. There is an excellent federal government publication called "Where to Learn French and English," of which I was unaware until I began looking into this subject — and I'm running one of the institutions listed in it. What likelihood is there that members of the general public have ever heard of it, let alone used it? Beyond making known existing opportunities, I believe the federal government should do more to stimulate promising new approaches to language training and national bilingualism generally. Support — moral at least and financial if possible — should be given to such developments as:

- New arrangements for language training that is easily accessible to adults, including provisions for leave from work.
- Increased assistance to voluntary organizations which exist primarily to promote bilingualism.
- Establishment of second-language cultural centres and conversation areas in office buildings and other public facilities.
- Creation and distribution of language-learning materials and equipment.
- Promotion of exchanges among Anglophone and Francophone communities, with greater emphasis on adults.

- Provision of community-based continuing education opportunities in language learning.
- Development of language programmes offered via home computers.

Numerous other examples could be given, but let me conclude with a word about universities. Our institutions of higher education could contribute much more to national bilingualism if they were provided with stimulation and support for such things as language courses for credit (as they are now subsidized for non-credit offerings), second-language teacher training (especially in-service retraining of otherwise redundant teachers), non-language courses (social studies, science, math, English courses . . .) taught in the second language, policies to accept written assignments in either official language, establishment on campus of second-language cultural centres and conversation areas, functional bilingualism as a requirement for majors in Canadian studies, and a variety of other developments.

I have not mentioned a second-language requirement for either admission to or graduation from university, except for those who choose to major in Canadian studies. This derives from my assumption that learning is most effective when it is self-motivated; second-language requirements can be self-defeating if the ultimate objective is increased bilingualism.

Underlying all the strategies I have mentioned are three very simple principles: First, language-learning opportunities should be generally known and widely available. Secondly, they should be voluntary, thereby becoming more attractive to more people. And thirdly, they should be comprehensive: While we must continue to expand such opportunities for young people in our schools, we must also place greater emphasis on adult education and on a supportive general milieu for language learning.

In pursuing these three principles, I believe that much more initiative must be taken by the federal government, and perhaps by the Commissioner of Official Languages. It is not enough for those in Ottawa to say "Tell us what you'd like us to do, and we'll see if we can support it." If Ottawa really believes in the desirability of national bilingualism, it should take much more initiative in originating language-

learning strategies and encouraging institutions and groups across the country to try them out. To the extent it is constitutionally necessary for Ottawa to do this through the provinces, it should insist on accountability in the provincial allocation of federal funds provided for these purposes.

My third proposal, as you might anticipate from an academic, concerns research. The complex and intricately inter-related questions I raised at the outset need to be answered if we are to have full confidence in what we are doing with respect to language and education. Answering them will require a comprehensive, long-term programme of applied research and experimentation, buttressed by continued expansion of the more basic research in linguistics and language education that has been under way for some time in such places as OISE's Modern Language Centre.

Again, I believe that this calls for initiative from Ottawa. Merely responding to unconnected research proposals generated by individual scholars across the country will not do the job. A comprehensive programme of coherent studies, carefully planned, closely coordinated and adequately funded by the central government, is essential.

So the common plea in all my suggestions is for more leadership in language and education from the national level. Ottawa must become bolder in establishing and communicating its objectives, in originating and supporting programme strategies for pursuing them and in initiating experiments and research studies to answer the complex array of questions that arise.

I believe we have been making gradual progress in the field of language and education, and my personal feeling for the future of this country causes me to plead that we not apply the brakes now. Rather, what I propose is full speed ahead with some changes in course to approach more directly a brighter beacon — a beacon which doesn't give up to push strategy but which gives much more attention to pulling, through education.

*Let me emphasize that this view of official bilingualism does not rule out multiculturalism. There is evidence that those whose mother tongue is neither English nor French learn one of our official languages more effectively if they are educated at least during the early years of schooling in their mother tongue. Moreover, the skills they learn, and the skills their teachers develop, from that form of bilingual education may help in the teaching and learning of official languages.

David Johnston's remarks

I applaud and support the direction Robin Farquhar proposes, in particular an increasingly functional bilingualism premised on the noted assumption that it has a growing reservoir of support across the

country, fed by that most splendid of all fuels, self-motivation.

I think, however, there are some tough obstacles in the way of functional bilingualism and increasing multiculturalism.

Let me illustrate this point with two examples I know best — my family and my university.

It is three years ago this month that my family and I left London, Ontario,

for Montreal and McGill. My five daughters are in French school. The little ones (aged four, six and eight) had some hesitations at the outset, but they are now almost perfectly bilingual. The 10- and 12-years-olds now verge on bilingualism. And my wife, who has taken an imposing number of courses, can get along well in both languages now. For my part, I have been to McGill's summer French school and have taken the immersion courses offered staff. I am still taking private lessons and, I think, have made good progress. It has been for us a very rich experience, and we now have two great linguistic traditions in our family.

Let me turn now to the experience of my university.

Toward the end of his paper, Robin Farquhar sets out a framework of programmes and efforts in universities. I think McGill fits into that framework and has in place most of the programmes he suggests. However, our ability to carry them out is impaired by increasingly constrained resources. We are able to struggle on with some of these programmes not through the use of regular resources, or indeed even resources directed towards the promotion of bilingualism and multiculturalism, but rather through entirely extraneous sources, some of which occur just by happenstance.

Let me give you the profile, first, of our university's 17,000 full-time students. Twenty-one per cent are Francophone, 20 per cent are students whose mother tongue is neither French nor English, and 59 per cent have English as their mother tongue — almost the image of Canada. Just under 80 per cent of our students come from Quebec, 10 or 11 per cent from other provinces in Canada and the balance from 120 countries around the world.

We teach primarily in English at McGill, save for those language and literature courses where the language of instruction is the language of the department, be it French, Spanish, Italian and so on. We teach 35 different foreign languages in the university, besides English and French. But there

is a small and increasing number of faculty members who offer lectures or section meetings in both French and English so Francophone students can ease into the new environment and Anglophones — an increasing number of them — have a chance to learn their course material in both languages. For many, many decades, our students have been allowed to present written assignments and write their examinations in either French or English.

Now our difficulties. The cultural and linguistic enrichment our university provides through these programmes is severely threatened by budget compressions. Over the past five years, these compressions have amounted to 13 per cent in real dollars at McGill. Over the same period, our enrolment has increased by 11 per cent. So a 13 per cent contraction in the services we offer, an 11 per cent bulge in the services that are needed. Indeed, for the next two years, cuts are expected to be 15 per cent in real dollars and enrolment shows every sign of continuing to rise.

It is increasingly difficult to maintain our rich resource of 35 languages and multiculturalism with these financial constraints. If, indeed, we are going to be able to do some of the applied work in multiculturalism, in teaching and in research in the many languages of Canada over the next 10 or 20 years, we must base our action on an understanding of the fundamental principles of those languages as they occur within a university environment. In short, if one is to have application and applied research, one must have theoretical and fundamental research.

To illustrate my point, I might mention one of McGill's great stars, Sir Ernest Rutherford, who was with us from 1895 to 1906, during which time he developed the theory of nuclear fission. It was simply a theory at that time, and it was 30 or 40 years later that the practical applications — some important and peaceful and some, of course, very war-like — were developed.

Another example is one of our young biologists, who began working 10

years ago on a particular enzyme that was found in certain legume plants. As his theoretical research continued, he realized that this enzyme, which could be reproduced in certain hybrids of legume plants, such as soya beans, had the capacity of fixing nitrogen from the air. Eighty per cent of our atmosphere is nitrogen, a very important fertilizer. We manufacture it artificially with very large quantities of electrical energy, spread it on the ground as a solid material, and perhaps 15 or 20 per cent finds its way into the roots of plants. He is now testing a soybean plant that by itself can take nitrogen from the air and increase its productivity at very little expense.

That is a very short bridge — only 10 years — between fundamental research and applied research in the field of science. And if we are going to do applied work with language theory in years to come, we must continue to have a reservoir of basic research within our universities and others.

Our French summer school at McGill was established in 1904, long before most other immersion programmes were developed around the country. In 1979, it had over 200 full-time students for its six-week course. But it almost closed down the next year, owing to lack of resources. It has survived only because we have made arrangements with a recently-retired professor who hires part-time instructors for the summer, all of them on relatively modest stipends.

Secondly, our 12-year-old Second Language Training Centre for French and English has grown from 820 students five years ago to almost 1,500 students today. Since the teaching of English as a second language was added to the Centre's programme in 1979, the drop-out rate of our Francophone students has declined. But, despite a disproportionate amount of special support from our Arts Faculty, a long series of budget cuts to the university has resulted in class sizes too large for optimum learning.

Thirdly, our French Canada Studies Centre has been in existence for more than 15 years. It offers some 25

courses, all taught in French. And yet it is staffed by one and a half full-time professors, with people drawn from elsewhere in the university to permit it to function. That Centre was unable to replace its director, Jean-Louis Roy, when he left us two years ago to become publisher of *Le Devoir*, not because we did not wish to maintain its staff complement but simply because budget cuts have forced us to seize opportunities for savings when they arise through natural attrition and retirement.

Two years ago we signed an exchange agreement with Peking University, and the University of Montreal has subsequently done the same. Peking's first priority was to send us several of their professors of English to study our methods of teaching English and French as second languages. We simply could not fund these exchanges until a group of Montreal businessmen decided to fund this first priority in the exchange with Peking.

Another example. McGill's Northern Studies Centre recently received a Donner Foundation grant of \$500,000 to expand its work to teach and develop Inuit language instruction methods for Inuit teachers in the Eastern Arctic, so that native children can study in their own language and then learn English or French. At the same time that this Centre received the grant, which covers only external costs, it was denied further research funding from the Province of Quebec's research council fund and given a one-year phase-out.

Then there is our graduate programme in communications, which currently has 55 masters and doctoral students. It is supported by operating grants for two full-time faculty and is quite literally starved of resources, despite a half-million-dollar grant from the Inuit people on the north slope of Alaska, a country beyond our own, who have agreed to fund a chair in communications in recognition of the effort made by McGill to support their aspirations for multiculturalism. The programme has also received some Quebec Research Council money, but

very narrowly focussed to study the communications in and around the Quebec Referendum. In short, money is available to study the referendum process but not to develop more effective communications teaching programmes.

Our law faculty has a national programme in which our students either study for the civil law degree for practice in Quebec or common law for practice in Canada's other nine provinces. By doing four years rather than three, the student can take both degrees, common and civil law. A recent review and external appraisal showed quite simply that the faculty has an operating budget insufficient to staff only one of the two law programmes, let alone both.

In the area of research, Dr. Wilder Penfield's work demonstrated some decades ago that second language training should begin almost as early as first language training, and that it increased learning capacity generally. It was funded largely not from Canadian grants but from the Rockefeller Foundation.

Finally, our Centre for the Teaching of Children with Learning Disabilities which, among other things, treats children from all over the Island of Montreal who are experiencing difficulties in learning a second language, is funded almost entirely from private monies. No government support is available for that service, and it is in danger of being phased out.

My point is not to say simply that the universities are hurting. What I am trying to illustrate is that internal resources do not exist to support these natural, legitimate and imaginative university activities. Secondly, there is a lack of resources focussed for these types of programmes, and we have had to look to rather unusual sources to find them.

There is a certain irony in this. Our university's external competitive research funding has grown remarkably, from \$43 million to \$56 million in the past year alone.

Our scholars have been successful in competing for scarce external dollars, but not for those programmes which support bilingualism and multiculturalism in a university setting.

Now let me return to Robin Farquhar's proposals for a more focussed strategy, perhaps one that borrows from the example made in Canadian universities for Canadian studies programmes over a decade ago, under Tom Symons' inspiring leadership. And let me add these modest suggestions to his.

First of all it seems to me that teaching and research in the area of bilingualism and multiculturalism should be the subject of a major Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council theme grant. The SSHRC has identified aging, working women, Canadian and native studies for such theme grants in the past. Surely it is appropriate that we focus on the subjects of bilingualism and multiculturalism.

Secondly, we must work earnestly to reduce the barriers for out-of-province study so that more English and French students may study elsewhere in Canada. Much more work could be done in one-year or one-term exchanges.

Thirdly, summer school experiences — especially for our more gifted high school students — could be greatly expanded to evolve naturally from the remarkable increase in French immersion courses and programmes across the country and to reinforce bilingualism among Francophone students in Quebec.

And finally, I think we must develop much more effective federal-provincial co-ordination and co-operation to promote this movement and not simply see it as a federal initiative. The provinces have a primary responsibility in education — one about which some of them are very sensitive — and at least a shared responsibility in research. This conference should be the catalyst for a more focussed strategy in federal-provincial co-operation.

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION PERIOD

Fourth Session

This session began with a discussion of the progress made in language education in Alberta, particularly with regard to immersion programmes.

It was noted that Franco-Ontarians have not always had access to French-language education. A sound educational system is in the national interest, and federal-provincial co-operation and action are needed immediately to ensure that this objective is met.

A public servant addressed the question of the relationship between language competence and the merit principle, showing that the two need not be in conflict. Another participant then took a new look at demographic trends and made a number of remarks about the Francophone community of the '80s. Expressing pessimism about the future of Francophone minorities outside Quebec, he urged that the linguistic concepts of the '70s be avoided since they no longer reflect the current situation.

In this last opinion, he found common ground with a co-participant, who felt that present circumstances require that we bear in mind the linguistic, ethnic and cultural diversity of Canada. He suggested that, unless Canadians are sensitive to and respectful of their multicultural heritage, it

will be extremely difficult to maintain interest in the two official languages.

A language professor described what his university and department are doing to advance the cause of official languages. He, too, found it unconscionable that the provinces are not held accountable for funds allocated for language instruction.

The discussion then moved to training for language teachers and the value of educational exchanges to enhance bilingual educational opportunities. It was noted that Francophones outside Quebec do not have control of their educational institutions and one of the participants asked about the implementation of the Official Languages Act in the 1980s, the role of the Commissioner of Official Languages and the possible formation of a task force to study the future problems of Francophone minorities.

In response to these three questions, Max Yalden said that the language-of-work problem would be the biggest stumbling block to the Act's implementation, that his own role would probably not change and that he approved of the task force idea. He also spoke about "window-dressing bilingualism" in some areas of government and stressed the need for educational institutions to reconsider language course requirements.

Two participants described the difficult situation faced by university presidents. Universities cannot do things for which they have no money, and it is pointless to criticize them for not doing the impossible. Furthermore they cannot, at the post-secondary level, remedy problems created at the lower levels. Speaking from a western point of view, one also supported Mr. Yalden's call for universities to consider reinstating second language requirements.

The last speaker emphasized the value of language immersion while stressing that this solution is only one of many. She also pointed to the need for new data on immersion and other language education programmes, something which in turn underscores the need for ongoing research.

The fourth session was concluded on a note of guarded optimism. While Tom Symons, the Co-chairman of the colloquium describes the Canadian milieu of language education as tantamount to a backwater, he strongly believes that there is no reason why Canada cannot become a major world centre for language education and research.

The construction of this reality, however, will stand as an enormous challenge to all Canadians, a challenge he feels must be met – and overcome – within this decade.

“Our objective is clear: official bilingualism adopted through legislation, but implemented with care; promotion of multiculturalism and encouragement of ethnic languages; appeal to good will without the intervention of lawmakers.”

Reflections of the Governor General

EDWARD SCHREYER

Let me begin by saying that even persons like Sir John A. Macdonald, Sir Wilfrid Laurier or Mackenzie King might feel just a bit apprehensive, faced with the challenge of being wind-up speaker before such a motivated and committed audience. The way you are giving your time and expertise to this colloquium is one of the many and continuing indications of your commitment to Canada. I would be remiss if I did not convey to every one of you the gratitude of Canadians for the active exercise of that obvious commitment.

Your commitment is founded on recognition of the fact that Canada has developed over the years on the basis of two major cultures and language communities. This historical fact did not receive all the attention it deserved prior to the creation, in 1964, of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, and to the subsequent passage of the Official Languages Act in 1969. Some well-intentioned efforts had of course been made long before then, but never such positive, broadly-based and systematic efforts. During the '60s, Canada and Canadians finally realized the danger of prolonging the state of inequality that existed between the two language communities.

We are all aware of the progress achieved since our awakening to the bilingual nature and reality of Canada. The B & B Commission's preliminary report stated that Canada was, without being aware of it, "passing through the greatest crisis in its history." Of course, the measure of progress in the past decade will be gauged differently by different people, and their assessment will perhaps be guided by considerations such as their ethnic and cultural grouping, current or ancestral, regional nuances, their occupations, and their past and present prejudices too.

Changes in legislation and practices vis-à-vis language rights and the use of both official languages in the Public Service and in services to the public may seem excessive to some but inadequate to others. Still others view the changes as judiciously calculated progress that prudence dictated should not move too far too fast.

Considering that Canada's linguistic challenge of the past decade and a half involved redressing more than 100 years of what has been called benign neglect, there is more than a little justification in feeling considerable satisfaction at the progress achieved. My years as a federal member of Parliament and in senior public office in my home province give me a special appreciation of the practice of the art of the possible. In this sense, we can understand Gordon Robertson's reference to the application of "unusual political determination and relentless administrative pressure" as the main reasons for progress toward a greater degree of language equality in the Public Service. I take this opportunity to commend all those, the two Commissioners of Official Languages and others, who have worked so hard and spoken so frankly to the Canadian people about the linguistic reality within the Public Service over the past 50 or 100 years.

I think it is clear from the historic pattern of virtual, perhaps even growing, unilingualism which was so pervasive not that many decades ago, that only steady and concerted effort would overcome and reverse the trend. Certainly, I think this is the case for many areas of the Public Service.

It is certainly very clear with respect to communities where Francophones are in the minority. Consequently, by recommending maintenance of the present policy while taking reality into consideration, Mr. Robertson adopts a viewpoint that has some validity. In accepting the language challenge, we must pursue our national objective without losing a sense of reality. This determination is founded on a justifiable prudence and shared by many of us here, perhaps by the majority of Canadians. And Robin Farquhar advocates that we continue to move full steam ahead with the bilingualism programme. Dr. Farquhar's remarks, which apply to the language situation in education, and Mr. Robertson's regarding bilingualism in the Public Service, are in fact very similar, given their respective institutions and subjects.

Indeed, although accompanied by words of caution about the pace to be adopted for the '80s and the approach to

be taken, the general tenor of this colloquium has been one of faith in the ability and willingness of Canada and Canadians to keep pursuing equality of opportunity without prejudice to any language community. Such an attitude is, in my view, one that we must have if Canada is to survive in its present form. As one of your speakers has intimated, we have largely overcome the initial crisis referred to by the B & B Commission. It is my belief that a majority of Canadians generally accept and support the laws and programmes that underpin the concept of bilingualism. In our federal country, there are still — and probably will remain for another generation — some significant differences of view as to the precise nature and extent of bilingual obligation and realistically attainable goals, even among those of relatively positive attitude and considerable goodwill. In our future course, the Canadian characteristic of compromise will make itself felt again and again, I have no doubt; but as is also characteristic of Canada and Canadians, compromise will allow us to bridge difficult situations and move toward our goal.

Canadians know from history that, although dissatisfaction may be the child of compromise, it is a much more welcome offspring than fragmentation, the parting of ways which comes from deep-seated resentments that derive from rigid, uncompromising, opposite positions based on absolute principle. At first, I thought there were contradictions in the conclusions arrived at by Messrs. Yalden, Robertson and Farquhar. But, on reflection, is there not in some salient points a converging of views as to alternatives? When, for example, Dr. Farquhar urges in his concluding paragraph that “My personal feeling for this country causes me to plead that we do not apply the brakes now but rather move full speed ahead,” I assume he means principally with respect to language in education. If so, it is not necessarily in contradiction with those who have witnessed 12 years of application of the Official Languages Act and nine years of application of the Parliamentary Resolution of 1973 on language in the Public Service of Canada.

Those who have seen the progress regard it as a difficult process, but necessary and worthwhile, with tangible results. I am not surprised by differences of opinion as to whether we could have done more, gone more quickly, as to how much remains to be done. Many of those who have seen this progress now counsel moderation and careful analysis before we proceed much further, much faster. After all, if there is to be a change in direction, it is really quite reckless to make it while going at full speed. It remains, however, that the domain of education and second language competence and, most important of all, the right of mother-tongue language instruction for those in the minority, call for us to proceed at a fuller, faster speed.

There are as many reasons to encourage bilingualism in education, as in any other sector. Bilingualism programmes in schools are better accepted than elsewhere even though they began later, or more slowly, than bilingual services to the public or bilingualism in the Public Service. In many respects that is ironic. Bilingualism in schools is more widely accepted by the public and desired by hundreds of thou-

sands of Anglophone families. The percentage of Francophones in favour of bilingualism, whether in schools or in the population in general, is certainly as great. What, then, this all comes down to is that the general reaction is all the more impressive when we consider what it was a few decades ago.

Another irony is that the parents’ desire is supported by educators. I think there is more agreement — perhaps almost unanimity — in this area, that the maximum effectiveness of language learning is in the kindergarten and elementary-grade years. But with so many parents and educators of that view, with most, if not all, provinces willing for a decade or more now to foster minority language of instruction and immersion schools of various combinations, and with the federal government standing ready to augment provincial funds for that purpose, why has there been such slow progress to that end? Today, these offerings are still modest, if encouraging, even when some of the more vocal opponents of the bilingual effort in Canada generally accept the approach through the schools, especially in the early years. So, why the apparent lethargy? This is where we encounter some of the realities of life, of human nature, of political democracy, including political democracy at the local and regional levels.

In the West, and in most of English Canada, part of the problem stems from the lack of teachers capable of giving instruction in the second language instead of being content simply to open a textbook as was the case in the past. A most thankless and unproductive task when we see how a second language was taught a dozen years ago in Holland or in Denmark, for example, but the lack of bilingual teachers is not the only reason a lot of local and regional school boards hesitated to take on more than 10 or 20 per cent of the cost of immersion classes.

Of course, some provinces have passed legislation that require and expect school divisions to meet the maternal language of instruction requirements made known by parents. In at least one province this intrusion on local autonomy was justified in order to right an historical wrong, to show language was to be encouraged and used in Canada wherever sufficient and reasonable numbers warranted the extra effort and expense. But in the first few years after the B & B Commission, the main effort and the legislation were aimed at the first language, the mother tongue of the minority. It was not initially focussed on those who wanted to encourage the spirit and effort further by asking for immersion instruction for pupils. The federal government and a number of provinces quickly offered financial support, but some school boards could not or did not want to institute the programme and implementation was delayed.

I have direct experience of some of the points discussed by quite a number of you earlier today. About, for example, legislating in one province to deal with a 90-year-old statutory prohibition on the use of the mother tongue of the minority as the language of instruction in the schools. This inequity is now a matter of record and some of the architects of the statute of repeal are present at this colloquium.

This was an interesting episode, psychologically crucial at the time. But it was nothing more than an episode. In my view, the problem is diminishing with the passing of time. Despite the prophets of doom, the reforms of 1970 have not provoked a storm of hatred. Immersion classes for everyone living close to an area where the second language is in common use are much less contested than expected. The problem is one of implementation. I must say that in the days immediately following passage of the Official Languages Act in 1969, no matter how much I supported the legislation, I was always nervous and unsure about its application in the various regions and administrative districts of the country. And I say that as one who supported the Official Languages Act and who declared in 1969 that he would not only withdraw his province from a joint Prairie province challenge to the Official Languages Act in the Supreme Court of Canada, but would positively support it as necessary to Canada's long-term national interest and as a means of redressing long-standing minority grievances. My view has not changed, but I worried then and worry still about regional applications and definitions. It is easy to declare official bilingualism and still remain realistic if the nation, province or region in question has a minority that approaches 50, 40, 30 or 25 per cent. It begins by degree to become difficult at 20 per cent or 10 per cent, although that was the number used in the statute itself; and it becomes very nearly impossible, at least in the short term, if in a given part of the country, the minority, small as it is, is geographically scattered rather than concentrated in an easily definable area, such as a city, town or municipality.

The second complicating factor which is part of the Canadian scene is that there are other cultural minorities with populations larger in certain areas than the official language minority. The guiding principle of government policy is then difficult to understand and even harder to explain with conviction. The major parties involved are rarely convinced. There is no problem at the national level, in New Brunswick, in the other Maritime provinces, or in most of rural Ontario, but there certainly is a problem in urban Ontario, especially in Toronto, and in the western provinces. In the Arctic and the Mid-North of Canada the problem is different since there are 10 or more Amerindian language families and,

of course, all the variations of Inuktitut spoken throughout the region. I stress this because a number of native groups have been making an effort in the last few years to preserve their ancestral language and culture, with some success among the young people. What should our attitude be regarding these groups and their efforts? One of interest but otherwise benign neutrality? Or one of encouragement of the language as a necessary cultural tool for the retention of their cultural heritage? Encouragement, I think, at very least, in the same way we encourage any ethnic group of our multicultural mosaic to preserve its ancestral language, not as an official language but as a language that is at the very foundation of their heritage.

No ethnic group, with the exception of the two official language communities, accounts for more than 20 per cent of the population in Canada or in any province; and even in the case of the two majority groups, this percentage is only exceeded in a few provinces. But there are certain regions, for example the Arctic and other districts, where certain ethnic groups far exceed 10 or 20 per cent of the population and are more numerous than the local English- or French-speaking population. This is yet another reason why we cannot expect to find facile solutions to the problems of defining rational and reasonable criteria suitable for every province and region.

Our national objective is clear. Official bilingualism adopted by decree but applied with certain refinements, the promotion of multiculturalism and encouragement of ethnic languages, and appeals to goodwill without specific legislative action. We should have no regrets about what we have done to make bilingualism and multiculturalism a reality in Canada. We should have absolutely no regrets about the changes that have come about in relations between the two official languages in Canada. In the past decade and a half, there has been a good deal of progress. Our goal is to provide those who are in the minority in different parts of the country with greater opportunities to live and learn and work in their mother tongue. This makes for a Canada that is better, more broad minded and tolerant. Having come this far, we must guard against slippage and we must guard against impatience. Dramatic short-term solutions may not be very tenable.

List of participants at the Trent Colloquium

- Edwin C. Aquilina**
Deputy Secretary
Official Languages Branch
Treasury Board of Canada
- Charles N. Armstrong**
President – Canadian
Operations
Metropolitan Life
Insurance Company
- Michel Bastarache**
Dean, School of Law
University of Moncton
- Stuart Beaty**
Director of Policy
Analysis and Liaison
Office of the Commissioner
of Official Languages
- Henry Best**
President
Laurentian University
- John Chambers**
President
Implementation Committee
for the Cultural
Communities Action Plan
Quebec
- Gordon M. Clark**
Vice-President
General Counsel
and Secretary
Crown Zellerbach Canada
Limited
- Gail C.A. Cook**
Executive Vice-President
Bennecon Ltd.
- Philippe de Gaspé Beaubien**
Chairman of the Board
Télémedia
Communications Limitée
- Jean de Grandpré**
Chairman of the Board
Bell Canada
- Louis Desrochers**
Barrister and Solicitor
McCuaig, Desrochers
- Gordon Fairweather**
Chief Commissioner
Canadian Human Rights
Commission
- Robin Farquhar**
President
University of Winnipeg
- Pierre Franche**
President
Via Rail Canada Inc.
- Philippe Garigue**
Principal
Glendon College
York University
- Jean-Robert Gauthier**
Member of Parliament
for Ottawa-Vanier
- Jon Grant**
President
Quaker Oats Company of
Canada Ltd.
- Roger Guindon**
Rector
University of Ottawa
- Mark Harrison**
Editor
The Gazette
- William Johnson**
Journalist
The Globe and Mail
- David Johnston**
Principal
McGill University
- Serge Joyal**
Minister of State
Canada
- Douglas Kenny**
President
University of
British Columbia
- Huguette Labelle**
Under Secretary of State
Canada
- Paul Lacoste**
Rector
University of Montreal
- Robert Landry**
Vice-President
Imperial Oil Ltd.
- Pierre Laporte**
Director of Research
and Evaluation
Office de la langue française
- Gérard Lécuyer**
Member of the Manitoba
Legislative Assembly
for Radisson
- Laverne Lewycky**
Member of Parliament
for Dauphin
- Pierre Lortie**
President
Montreal Stock Exchange
- Brian Merrilees**
Chairman
Department of French
University of Toronto
- Alfred M. Monnin**
Judge
Manitoba Court of Appeal
- Lowell Murray**
Senator
- James Page**
Acting Director
Association for
Canadian Studies
- Jean Pellerin**
Regular Contributor
La Presse
- R. Gordon Robertson**
President
Institute for Research on
Public Policy
- Edward Schreyer**
Governor General
of Canada
- Jeannine Séguin**
President
Federation of Francophones
Outside Quebec
- Sam Sniderman**
Sam the Record Man
- Keith Spicer**
Journalist and former
Commissioner of Official
Languages
- Robert Stanfield**
Former leader of the
Progressive Conservative
Party of Canada
- Don W. Stevenson**
Deputy Minister
Intergovernmental Affairs
Ontario
- Merrill Swain**
Head
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The Ontario Institute for
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