

LANGUAGE

and Society

SPECIAL ISSUE

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Proceedings of the Colloquium sponsored by the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages, University of Alberta, Edmonton, May 11 and 12, 1984.

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

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*Official languages:
a western perspective*

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Charles Strong

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A Commissioner's farewell

Readers will find in this issue the proceedings of a colloquium our Office sponsored last May in Edmonton on Official Languages and the West. Four issues ago, we published the proceedings of a colloquium held at Trent University in the fall of 1982, and the report is in some sense an extension of that earlier discussion.

Given the West's unique history and linguistic make-up, we thought it might be useful to assemble a variety of opinion makers, mainly but not exclusively from the West, to explore the complex linguistic scene in that part of the country. The resulting mix of views, the contrast in approach between East and West, and the central issue of squaring official bilingualism with multicultural and multilingual realities, added up to an invigorating two days of discussion. We hope that a distillation of those exchanges, together with shortened versions of the papers presented, will offer the reader a good overview of what the West is doing, and how it thinks about the language question.

As this is the last issue of *Language and Society* to be published during my time as Commissioner, I also want to take the opportunity to say farewell to our readers and to express the wish that you have enjoyed, and will continue to enjoy, reading our review.

Language and Society was launched in the fall of 1979, in connection with the 10th Anniversary of the Official Languages Act, in the hope that it would illuminate for a broad readership and in plain language some of the fascinating interplay between language and socio-political behaviour. Our main focus of course has been the Canadian language scene and the proliferating debates about official bilingualism and language policy. But we also felt it was important to look outward and bring to our readers the perspectives of linguistic life abroad. We Canadians often get so caught up in our own linguistic problems that we fail to realize that others live in similar situations, that we might sometimes benefit from their experience and that, all in all, we do not compare unfavourably with other countries. It may be a truism to sociolinguists that, around the world, plurilingualism is the rule rather than the exception but this fact continues to escape otherwise well informed Canadians.

In the fourteen issues we have published to date, our authors have looked at close to ten bilingual or plurilingual countries and have in many cases compared their linguistic regimes and problems with ours. We have fortunately been able to commission some of these articles from specialists who are also members of minority-language communities, such as the piece on the Basques in Spain or the one on Swedish-speakers in Finland. As a result, we hope to have been able to bring our readers closer to the minority situation as it is lived elsewhere.

Our own Canadian experience has been reviewed from a variety of angles — political, legal, historical, sociological, economic, educational and linguistic — as well as from perspectives that fit no convenient peg. We decided to devote an entire issue — and a double one at that — to the French immersion phenomenon in recognition of its importance to Canadian bilingualism. To enhance the magazine's usefulness as a reference, early numbers included a chronology of language-related events in poster form, a world languages map, and the complete texts of two important Supreme Court decisions together with a commentary. Documentary pieces of historical interest will no doubt feature again in future issues.

Reactions from our readers indicate that the revue is meeting a need for non-specialized information in the field. While we may to some extent be preaching to the converted, we also hope that it has helped to lessen the confusion and rancour of our enduring language debate. Canada's immense geography and scattered population work against people getting to know each other as well as they might like to. Add to this people's sensitivities about language and the possibilities for misunderstanding are legion. It has been one of the guiding principles of my term as Commissioner to make it possible for people of various persuasions to speak to each other about the interaction of languages in Canada in as informed and dispassionate a way as one can imagine. I have no doubt that *Language and Society* has played an important role in whatever success has been achieved along those lines.

Our editorial staff has been assisted by an Advisory Council of seven members whose task is it to guide publication policy and to help evaluate the end product as part of a never-ending effort to improve. The names of the present members appear opposite and I am grateful to all of them for their time, their wisdom, and their great good humour. Staff members involved in producing *Language and Society* have worked extremely hard to keep it interesting and attractive, and I greatly appreciate their efforts.



OFFICIAL LANGUAGES A WESTERN PERSPECTIVE

*“Acceptance of two official languages is part of our history, our tradition, our constitution.” Yes, but “let’s capitalize on our cultural and linguistic pluralism.” The harmonious weaving of these two strands of Canada’s tapestry was a challenge willingly taken up by the 85 business people, academics, journalists, politicians, public servants and minority group representatives who met in Edmonton last May to debate western perspectives on language. The two-day meeting was chaired by Louis Desrochers, an Edmonton lawyer, and by Bruce Howe, President of B.C. Resources Investment Corporation. This special issue of **Language and Society** contains the edited proceedings of the colloquium.*

There can be little doubt that the language we hold as our own and the status accorded to that language by the society in which we live are, to most of us, of us, of immense psychological importance. It comes as no surprise, then, that emotions run high in pluralistic Western Canada when people meet to discuss the role of official and non-official languages, and the positions of government toward the promotion, preservation and protection of such languages and the cultures indissociable from them.

From our vantage point as co-chairmen of the Edmonton colloquium, we perceived the emphasis of the discussions as differing markedly from those of an earlier assembly in Peterborough, Ontario, in September 1982 (*Language and Society*, Issue No. 10). The focus of the often lively exchange of views in Edmonton was the role, perceptions, politics, policies and practice of language in the West — in the public and private sectors, in education and at the grassroots community level.

Although it quickly became apparent that participants held a variety of views, we detected the gradual emergence of three major areas of consensus: a general willingness to accept the principles of official English-French bilingualism at the federal level; a recognition of the need to have educational authorities provide increased opportunities for minority- and second-language instruction at all levels; and a widespread belief that, in Western Canada in particular, the notion of English/French dualism should not pre-empt or in any sense

impede the legitimate aspirations of other cultural and linguistic groups.

Virtually everyone, for example, appeared to agree that official bilingualism, of one sort or another, had legal and constitutional validity in the federal sphere. Similarly, it was generally acknowledged that, from a *national* perspective, and on the basis of national demographics and pre-20th century Canadian history, Canada should be seen as a country in which English and French have equal status.

Despite general agreement on these principles, marked differences of opinion were evident on related issues. More than one speaker, for example, questioned the manner in which the federal government had become involved in the Manitoba language dispute, noting that in their view this was essentially a provincial issue that should be settled provincially. Others viewed the notion of the English and French as "founding peoples" and the concept of coast-to-coast official bilingualism as products of the thinking of Central Canada, and as completely out of tune with the demographic realities of Western Canada and its development in the 20th Century.

The message that came across time and time again was that the West is viscerally different from the East in terms of its cultural and linguistic makeup. So different in fact, some suggested, that notwithstanding the need for certain pan-Canadian policies in our federal state, the central government should do more to recognize the distinctive ethnic and linguistic composition of Canada's western

population. Why, some asked, was multiculturalism merely a *policy* of the federal government, and not backed by legislation? How, asked others, can we protect and give concrete support for the rights of the 185,000 Francophones in Western Canada, and how can we ensure that the spirit of the Official Languages Act is fully implemented by all federal institutions operating in the West.

The two days as we saw them were characterized by a potent mix of cogently argued positions and passionately held convictions. More important, perhaps, they were marked by a distinct lack of acrimony and by a sense that minority groups — whether Francophone, Ukrainian, Polish, German, Japanese, Chinese or any other — were allies in a common cause for self-fulfilment in a country where two official languages and a multiplicity of cultures can coexist in harmony. There is little doubt in our minds that everyone came away from this meeting with a sharpened understanding of our differences and a renewed determination to seek out equitable solutions for all.



Bruce Howe



Louis Desrochers
Co-Chairmen

1 /LANGUAGE AND THE WEST

Split images To what extent does the national view of Canada as a multicultural country with two official languages, English and French, coincide with the regional realities of western Canadian society? In the opening session, this question and related issues were addressed by Maxwell Yalden, Commissioner of Official Languages; Patrick O'Callaghan, Publisher, Calgary Herald; and Bill Clarke, Member of Parliament for Vancouver Quadra.

Some basic issues

MAXWELL YALDEN

Our first colloquium at Trent University in Peterborough a year and a half ago tended naturally to focus on Central Canada, particularly on the so-called bilingual belt stretching from New Brunswick through Montreal to Sault Ste Marie where some 95 per cent of our official-language minorities live. As a result, we did not perhaps do justice to the western aspects of Canada's linguistic make-up, a weakness we hope to rectify in the next two days.

Few of us had any idea a year or so ago that the West in general and Manitoba in particular would be the subject of so intense a linguistic debate. Whether that is good or bad is not an easy question to answer: no doubt we shall hear different views on that score, and on the substantive question of minority language rights in the West. Whatever else might be said, our discussions are certainly timely. Language is an emotionally charged subject; in Canada very few areas of public policy are so replete with mistaken perceptions. If we can assist in uncovering the facts behind the myths, we will have accomplished a good deal. This can only be done, I believe, by a full and frank airing of the issues. I urge you all to speak your minds and not to pull any punches. We are a pretty disparate group — geographically and professionally, philosophically and politically — and our diversity will doubtless generate much lively discussion on how we see language policy in the West unfolding.

"Official bilingualism" is the first notion that needs some clarification, if only to indicate what it does not mean. This is an important matter: in certain places these last few months, the expression has taken on the dimensions almost of a dirty word. Generally speaking, languages are identified as having

official status when they are recognized by statute or constitutional law as languages that may or must be used in dealings with the state and within state bodies. If we look at what the concept means in the Canadian context, we find it involves a minimal set of conditions which apply to the legislatures and the courts. In an expanded version, it also involves certain rights in the area of minority-language education and government services.

The limited version is set out in Section 133 of the Constitution Act of 1867 as follows:

- either English or French may be used in the Parliament of Canada, and the Legislature of Quebec;
- any pleading or process in, or issuing from, any court of Canada or Quebec may be in either language; and
- federal and Quebec statutes must be printed in both English and French.

As you know, Section 23 of the Manitoba Act contains virtually identical provisions, and New Brunswick has accepted the same obligations under the new Charter of Rights.

In the expanded version, we have, first, the question of minority-language education: the right of parents whose language is English in Quebec or French elsewhere in the country to have their children educated in the appropriate language. These provisions, set out in Section 23 of the Charter of Rights, apply to all provinces and the territories. Second, there is a requirement which at this time covers only the federal and New Brunswick governments: to provide service at head offices, as well as "where numbers warrant", and where "the nature of the office" requires it.

This, of course, is not an exhaustive definition of official bilingualism. The federal and New Brunswick Official Languages acts, for example, contain more detailed provisions concerning service to the public. The Quebec Language Charter (Bill 101), while aimed at preserving the *French* language, nevertheless contains provisions that relate to other languages, including English. And various statutes, regulations and policies in other provinces cover a wide range of language matters in such a way as to make them "official", at least for certain purposes.

Myths vs. facts

Today and tomorrow, we will no doubt come back to the question of what is official and what is not. Let me add only that I see nothing sinister in the desire to define some basic rules of institutional conduct with respect to languages. On the contrary, the various elements I have listed seem to be relatively simple and straightforward. Yet they seem to have given birth to a number of ideas on the subject that one can only describe — diplomatically — as surprising. Among the more durable are the following:

- all Canadians must become bilingual;
- all public servants must be able to speak both languages;
- most of the good jobs in a bilingual public service are reserved for Francophones, since they are more often bilingual;
- languages other than English and French are second class and have no legitimate place in Canadian society.

The list goes on. The recent language battles in Manitoba gave new life to some of these notions which, when repeated often enough, became increasingly part of the conventional wisdom, the facts notwithstanding. The federal experience is instructive in this context, for it presents a rather different picture and set of numbers where Francophones and bilinguals are concerned. Out of 10,000 federal public servants in Manitoba, for example, there are only 335 Francophones, well under their proportion of the population. There are even fewer bilingual people actually working in bilingual jobs. And this after fifteen years of what is supposed to be a thorough-going bilingual regime.

National vs. regional perspective

But even if one has a reasonably clear idea of what official bilingualism is and is not, we are left with the question why anyone needs it, especially in the West. Many westerners do not see the French/English question as touching them personally, an understandable reaction given the facts of Canadian geography and demography. Some westerners have probably never bumped into a Francophone or heard a live word of French spoken.

Despite these realities, it seems to me that there are certain issues in Canada that transcend provincial or regional frontiers. They involve the welfare of all Canadians and become Canadian or national imperatives; western freight rates are undoubtedly one of these pan-Canadian concerns, the Atlantic and Pacific fisheries another. And so, to my mind, is the working out of a just deal between the English- and French-speaking communities in this country.

I am aware that the so-called confederation bargain between these two groups, or founding peoples as some prefer to call them, is more meaningful to people in Central and Eastern Canada than it is in the West. I myself do not much like the "founding peoples" concept since it appears to give a special place to part of our history or to certain groups at the expense of others. The Ukrainians, Germans, Scandinavians, Asians and others who homesteaded or laboured on the prairies were also founders.

There remains, however, the overwhelming demographic fact that we are a nation which has more than a quarter of its population, some six and a quarter million, who speak French, and many of them only French. And when one considers that recognition of the French language has been more or less a continuous feature of Canadian institutional life from the beginning through to the present, I see no realistic alternative to a policy of linguistic accommodation in this country. In practical terms, this means putting in place those minimal conditions that make up the infrastructure called official bilingualism.

I think this proposition is now pretty generally accepted by those who want to see Canada continue to exist as one country. Certainly in the federal political arena, all three major political parties have supported minority language rights as a *sine qua non* of Canadian nationhood.

But what of the language situation within the western provinces themselves? The population mix in this part of the world is obviously very different from that in Central or Eastern Canada. Using the statistics from the 1981 census, we obtain a clear picture of the mother-tongue population of the four western provinces (see the table on the next page).

There are of course variations among the provinces, but the pattern is similar: English speakers account in each case for some 70 or 80 per cent; French-speakers from 1 per cent to 5 per cent; and other mother tongues from 16 per cent to just over 23 per cent.

In light of these figures, how does one make a convincing case for French-language rights? What about the speakers of other languages which in their aggregate — and sometimes singly, as in the case of German or Ukrainian — outnumber the speakers of French? Clearly, it is a matter of reconciling national

**Population
of the four western provinces,
by mother tongue**

Mother tongue	Number	%
English	5,566,680	79.8
French	185,865	2.7
Other	1,224,295	17.5
Total population	6,976,740	100

obligations with local or provincial demographics. Not an easy task, but surely not an impossible one.

Official languages and multiculturalism

Recognizing French-language rights in no way implies that the aspirations of other linguistic groups need be ignored. This rubbing together of official bilingualism and what is loosely called multiculturalism brings us to the heart of the western language issue.

While opinion has evolved considerably on this question over the last several years, it is still a fairly common view that having two official languages is not entirely compatible with a policy of multiculturalism. Behind this view is the belief that official languages somehow entail official cultures, which render all others unofficial or subordinate. This is quite false: there are no official cultures in this country. Each of our official languages is spoken by people of many different cultures and cultural traditions.

It is true that Canadian Francophones are mainly of French ethnic descent and can be said to be members of a more or less cohesive cultural group. But there are nonetheless many French-speakers who do not come from France or continental Europe. And even within what is loosely called French Canada, it can certainly be argued that the Acadians or the Franco-Manitobans, for example, represent distinct cultural groups.

Anglophone Canada much more obviously involves a multiplicity of cultural heritages and ethnic groupings.

And with the increasing recognition of this fact, multiculturalism as a policy has become much more widely accepted.

But multiculturalism does not resolve the problem of multilingualism. Or put another way, why do we not have more than two official languages? Because, as I see it, the figures are such that it would make no administrative sense. The 1981 census counted close to 15 million English speakers and over 6 million French.

The next largest group, Italian, was just over half a million. If the facts were different, if there were several million speakers of Italian or German or Ukrainian or Chinese, we would no doubt have to rethink our language policy. For the moment, however, at least at the federal level, a bilingual regime seems to offer the best balance between contemporary facts and historic obligations.

Common interests

So much for national bilingualism. Here in the West, as I noted earlier, the demographic facts are quite different. Even so, as far as I am aware, most of those who want to preserve their ancestral languages are not interested in making them "official" in the sense of having government forms and services made available in these languages. They are, however, often very interested in having them taught in schools and used as languages of instruction. For my part, I see no problem with this kind of approach.

Perhaps the best argument against there being any inherent conflict between bilingualism and multiculturalism, between two official languages and the promotion of other ancestral languages, is to look at recent history in Manitoba. Amidst all the hostility that many found so saddening was the remarkable extent to which the leaders of the ethnic communities were prepared to support the Francophone cause. I think as time goes on, this commonality of interest among cultural and linguistic minorities will become more evident. The main lesson is to put aside the shortsighted notion that only English should have pride of place in this country and on this continent.

As lead-off batter in our opening session, I have tried to put in perspective some of the issues that underlie the language situation in Western Canada. That situation is anything but simple. I hope we will be able to do justice to it over the next two days, and I know that our speakers and all of you as participants will shed new light and offer new perspectives on the complex linguistic tapestry that is Western Canada.

Patrick O'Callaghan's remarks

In his opening remarks, Mr. Yalden made two very significant points. First, in explaining why a western perspective was given only cursory examination at a previous colloquium on official languages, he said the neglect may well have been because less than 5 per cent of the official-language minorities live west of the Sault. Second, while noting that many westerners do not see the French-English question as touching them personally, he agreed that most of them have probably never met a Francophone or heard a live word of French spoken.

You could wrap both of those points around the Manitoba language issue and have a fairer understanding of why there is so much uproar in the West: it has nothing to do with animosity towards French-Canadians; it has everything to do with the belief of westerners that they are nothing more than a colonial appendage of Central Canada.

When Prime Minister Trudeau told Joe Clark, "I came to Ottawa to save Quebec; somebody else will have to worry about the West," it said more about his limited horizons on Canada than anything else. And when he recently stated that he had made sure that French power was now a permanent fact on the federal scene in Canada, he added another wrinkle to the furrowed brow of westerners.

It put politics on a racial basis and regionalized the governing of Canada.

There is a tendency to interpret the Manitoba reaction as nothing more than a manifestation of red-neck indignation. Nothing could be further from the truth.

The reality is that Western Canada cannot escape the image of two Canadas: a Canada east of the Lakehead concerning itself with an issue of bilingualism that has not

been a factor in Western Canada in this century.

When bilingualism is cemented as federal policy, enshrined in a charter and a newly-minted constitution, Western Canada shrugs in disbelief, knowing that 19 out of 20 westerners are outside the picket fence of language that surrounds Central Canada.

And when the defenders of federal bilingualism, of whatever party, ride out on their white chargers to convert the heathen in this vast redneck wasteland beyond the Great Lakes, the gospel gets somewhat twisted in the translation.

The assumption has always been that Canada can be roughly divided into two nations, one consisting of Francophones and the other of Wasps. But that is an assumption that died on the waves of immigration that opened up the West at the turn of this century.

Manitoba's dissatisfaction

The image of Manitoba as a province of bitter Wasps and rednecks holding back the French tide is totally false and unfair. But it is an image fostered by a prime minister and a government that have made bilingualism and French power the keystone for a united Canada without understanding that there was a totally different Canada that saw that keystone as more of a boulder, blocking progress to unity.

Manitoba's resentment has little or nothing to do with the principle of bilingualism, or with a struggle for racial supremacy between Wasp and Francophone. And it has very little to do with Section 23 of the Manitoba Act, the Riel compromise, that some insist hinges on the ambivalence of whether some provincial legal functions should or should not be in both official languages.

The resentment flows more from a federalism that holds little comfort

for Western Canada. It flows from an improper assumption on the part of Manitobans that their province, because of its minor-league status within Confederation, is having the duality of language forced on it, while the two major founding provinces, Ontario and Quebec, go their merry ways, each still unilingual.

The Manitoba crisis — and that is what it is — has bilingualism only as a symptom of a much more dangerous malaise, the belief of the West that it is only a cipher in Confederation.

The Manitoba crisis is the reflection of the insecurity of the West, of its irrational fear that it is about to be swamped by French power. It is a reflection of western impotence in the face of the overwhelming demands of Central Canada for absolute dominion over the lesser provinces. It is an understanding, misplaced if you like, that Trudeau's constitution preserves the integrity of absolute rule by Central Canada where the seats of either Quebec or Ontario can offset the voting pattern of that half of the country lying beyond the Lakehead.

The Manitoba crisis implies to westerners that provincial rights can always be overridden by the intervention of a central government in Ottawa, but that when Ontario and Quebec ignore such policies as bilingualism they do so in the knowledge that no action will be taken against them. Manitoba's fear stems from the belief that the western provinces are not full partners in Confederation, that they are merely tolerated paying guests in somebody else's house, and that if they don't acknowledge the house rules they will be confined to their room or have the rent raised and their furniture seized.

It is difficult to convince Manitobans that Mr. Bilodeau's parking ticket takes precedence over

the wishes of the majority of Manitobans, just as it is difficult for those who live in the territories to understand why John Munro deems it essential to spend millions of dollars in an impoverished region of the country to provide unwanted bilingualism for the 200 or so Francophones who are scattered across an area in which the whole of the British Isles could geographically be lost over and over again.

A Manitoban might well ask: are our 30,000 Francophones of more importance to the federal scheme of things than the million or so Francophones who live in unilingual Ontario? It is the lack of proportion that irks Manitobans. I don't believe Manitobans are rednecks, any more than I would accept that the 19 out of 20 western Canadians who don't embrace with enthusiasm the principle of bilingualism could be classed as reactionary cowboys.

The Manitoba question was badly handled by the government of that province. Had it accepted and followed through on its responsibility, there would have been no national outcry, there would have been no resurgence of western bitterness in response to perceived bullying by Central Canada. There would have been no necessity for Parliament to involve itself in what is a provincial affair. There would have been no opportunity for John Turner to impale himself on his own convoluted logic of political pragmatism.

The place to settle the Manitoba question was in Manitoba. Democracy and the will of the majority must always prevail. The NDP had a majority in the Legislature. It had an obligation to test that majority by forcing a vote on its programme.

It should have ignored the petty politicking of the Tories, and their childish refusal to sit on their benches while the bells rang out. It should have brought its policy to a vote and put its political neck

on the line. But the NDP, the party of pure principle, proved in the end to be just as conscious of its standings in the polls as the other, allegedly more cynical, parties.

The whole incident was not a memorable political occasion: democracy was ill-served by an opposition that allowed hysteria to consume logic, and by a government that abandoned its right to govern.

The Francophone minority in the West

Mr. Yalden pointed out that one quarter of Canada's population speak French as their first language or the language of their birthright. But of those 6,500,000 people, only 185,000 live in this half of the country — that is 2.7 per cent of the population of the four western provinces and the territories.

One hundred and eighty-five thousand snowflakes do not constitute a Prairie winter, but many westerners see the apparent urgency of federal policies on bilingualism as a panic response to a blizzard that never took place.

Parliament brought out the snow shovels and bewildered, antagonized and offended Manitobans in the process. As a result of a storm that was tracked only on radar sensitive to Central Canada, the Francophone population of Manitoba now finds itself unjustly isolated and beleaguered.

It is not a happy situation, and certainly not one that makes westerners any more comfortable within a confederation that makes them feel like outcasts.

Like Mr. Yalden, I see no realistic alternative to a policy of linguistic accommodation in this country, on either side of the Lakehead. But putting such a policy in place requires more patience, finesse and understanding than has been demonstrated in the Manitoba situation.

Manitoba is not a province like the others. It had bilingualism and rejected it, probably improperly in the constitutional sense, but at the whim of the majority of its citizens.

Minority rights need the protection of government, but forcing bilingualism through the courts when the elected legislature of a province failed to take a voting decision is not likely to eradicate the bitterness of language as a divisive issue. Manitoba's crisis is a tragedy of federalism based on betrayed principle, but it leaves a scar on the nation and on Western Canada that will not heal in our lifetime.

In light of the fact that the mother tongue of 97.3 per cent of western Canadians is not French, how does one make a convincing case for French-language rights? With difficulty, but the case must be made.

As a nation, we have accepted bilingualism federally. There are two official languages. Broad-minded provincial governments would extend that principle, but they are also aware of the horrendous costs involved in trying to provide service in the language of choice of 2.7 per cent of their population.

Perhaps it is a case of making haste slowly, of moving gradually into an era of tolerance and understanding. It took us long enough to accept that there are two founding races deserving of linguistic equality and we will not now discard that belated recognition. But we cannot go back into another century, which is what Mr. Bilodeau's parking ticket is forcing Manitoba to do.

We have to make the West understand that bilingualism is its contribution to unity and not a millstone around its neck, dragging it down to perdition.

We need less bigotry on both sides. We can do without the unthinking

hardliners of the shunned Prairies, or do without the likes of Serge Joyal and his apparent interpretation of his portfolio as nothing more than to be the minister of the French fact.

Bilingualism needs acceptance, provincially as well as federally. If Manitoba is a setback for a reasoned and reasonable approach to bilingualism, I think the lost ground can be recovered if the hotheads can be defused, if there is political leadership that owes nothing to rhetoric or cynical vote-counting.

Bill Clarke's remarks

I have been asked to give my views on this topic from the perspective of a western Member of Parliament for the riding of Vancouver Quadra. I should add, perhaps, that I am a long-standing member of the parliamentary Joint Committee on Official Languages, an essentially non-partisan committee that calls witnesses to answer the criticisms of the Commissioner of Official Languages.

Earlier, Max Yalden provided some census statistics for Canada and Western Canada as a whole. To further illustrate the points he was making, I will give some figures pertaining to Vancouver and, more specifically, to my riding.

English is the declared mother tongue of 77.5 per cent of Vancouver residents, compared to 1.63 per cent, or 20,000, who declared French as their mother tongue.

Although 20,000 may sound impressive, it should be noted that three times as many residents declared Chinese as their mother tongue, and that there are twice as many native German-speakers as French-speaking residents. Thus, in Vancouver French ranked fourth as a mother tongue.

In my riding the situation is even more pronounced, and is perhaps

I am not sure if we are mature enough as a nation to provide that coaxing, cajoling style of political leadership that owes more to reason than to rabble-rousing. But we must find that maturity and sympathetic understanding if we are to survive as a nation. We cannot long withstand the pressures of regionalism if we align ourselves irrevocably on either side of the chalk marks of bilingualism.

We have come too far to retreat now from the policy of federal bilingualism, so we must not let Manitoba become the manifesta-

tion of a two-edged obsession. The acceptance of two languages is now part of our history, our tradition, our constitution. The pattern is woven into the tapestry of our federalism.

But how do we get that message through to the West and how do we soothe the anguished breast of those who have written it off as some haunt of unstructured pagan cavemen? How do we learn to live with each other? I wish I knew. And I wish I was not so pessimistic in my ignorance.

the visible minorities. While these undoubtedly have an element of racism attached to them, in my view they are also the result of tough economic times. Local people fear the newcomers are taking their jobs, even if they, the residents, are reluctant to fill these often menial jobs themselves.

When people come to me with criticisms about federal language policies, I point out that it is a two-way street. If they go to Rimouski, Quebec, they can watch CBC English TV. Similarly, French-speaking Canadians who come to Vancouver ought to be able to watch CBC French TV or to communicate in French with federal government offices.

On a recent trip to Europe, I found myself in a situation where I did not speak the local language. However, I met with a good deal of understanding and tolerance and managed to communicate. Similarly, I think attitudes are softening in Western Canada, and I do my best to persuade Vancouverites to keep an open mind on these issues. When they come to visit me in Ottawa, they see French in action as an everyday working language and go home with a much better understanding of our official languages programme.

best illustrated by the answer to another question, that regarding the official language spoken by respondents: 87 per cent answered that they spoke only English whereas 0.1 per cent spoke only French. Twenty times that number — 1,400 — speak neither English nor French. An encouraging statistic, however, is that 11 per cent of my constituents (8,660 people) said they spoke both English and French.

In light of these numbers, you can understand why French is not a big fact in my political life in Vancouver. I tend to downplay my involvement with the federal bilingualism programme and say little about the fact that I am functionally bilingual. Despite the presence of the weekly newspaper *Le Soleil* and a Caisse populaire in my riding, I still detect resentment toward the federal bilingualism programme. Some people still ask why there is French on some public buildings in Vancouver, to which I have the stock answer that Parliament has so decreed.

However, there are some signs of progress. Now for instance, we have two French immersion schools in my own riding. But there are also ongoing problems, including attacks on French-Canadian fruit pickers in the Okanagan Valley and on members of

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION PERIOD

In keeping with the exploratory tenor of this opening session, intervenors in the first discussion period used the opportunity to react to the statements of the three speakers and to define their own position on the issues.

The first speaker began by citing the results of a cross-country survey on language conducted by Southam Press in 1977. The survey showed that westerners were at that time very interested in developing their own and their children's mastery of French. Given the somewhat different attitude of many westerners today, the speaker wondered if the media had not played a significant role in shifting public opinion in the West away from bilingualism.

Increasing demand for French immersion

A similar point was taken up by a subsequent speaker, but from a different perspective. Challenging Patrick O'Callaghan's apparent belief that westerners consider bilingualism irrelevant to their situation, he noted the increasing demand for French immersion education in Western Canada: 50,000 children are currently enrolled in French immersion programmes in Western Canada, and a Gallup poll has revealed that over 50 per cent of British Columbians want their children to become bilingual through the school system.

A representative of the Ukrainian community then expressed the view that, although matters relating to non-official languages were governed by the federal multiculturalism policy, the Official Languages Act (especially Section 38) should be extended to cover languages other than English and French.

Two leading western Canadian university administrators felt that great strides had been made with

respect to bilingualism in the West over the past twenty years. One of them noted, however, that earlier speakers had cited many statistics but had offered no explanation for there being so few Francophones in the West. Picking up on the triple theme of media involvement, the Manitoba issue and western alienation, he suggested that Francophones experience the same sense of alienation in the West as other westerners do vis-à-vis the rest of Canada.

Taking a different tack, another speaker said he had consistently opposed bilingualizing federal public service positions for "cosmetic" reasons at a cost of millions of dollars to the taxpayer. His sympathy, he said, lay with the longer-term project of teaching French to young people, not only in primary and secondary schools, but also at the university level.

Still on the issue of education, the next participant linked the need for better second-language instruction to the growing requirements of Canada's business community on the international scene. He pointed to Canada's unique linguistic composition and hailed the new awareness among students of the need to develop language skills to enable them to deal with others, not only in English and French but in other languages too. Later, another university administrator noted that one of the problems facing universities today is the retreat from the study of the humanities, including languages. The value of studying another language has not, in his view, been sufficiently stressed, and university students today feel that a liberal arts education does not carry much weight in the business community.

Turning to one of the central issues of the morning's proceedings, another wondered aloud how Francophones should react

when a national policy defined by the national government is not accepted as a policy for the West. Were some suggesting that there should be a multilingual policy for the West and a separate and bilingual policy for Central Canada?

In his response to some of these observations and questions, Max Yalden expressed the view that the statistics quoted from the 1977 Southam survey were now irrelevant, and argued that the West had not rejected the policy of bilingualism. The problem in Manitoba, he noted, is a provincial matter, and the difficulty arises when some westerners feel the federal government is imposing a policy on a province over which it has no jurisdiction. In reference to the growing numbers of children learning French in Western Canada, especially in Calgary, he added that some French instruction is available at the university level in the West. He also noted that the western media have by and large supported federal bilingualism and that, in this sense, they have been far ahead of some of their readers.

Bilingual services: now or later?

In response to the doubts expressed about the cost and urgency of bilingualizing the federal public service, he said that French-speaking Canadians could not possibly wait for twenty years while a generation of bilingual Anglophones grew up to serve them in French. And, while he endorsed the notion that Canadians should learn languages other than English and French, he felt that Canada should not contemplate according any more languages official status.

The next two speakers sprang to the defence of Western Canada by noting that, in some respects, much greater tolerance for

bilingualism had been demonstrated by the West than by the Government of Quebec. Furthermore, Alberta is one of only two provinces in Canada that will certificate teachers on the basis of their proficiency in either official language.

A leader of Quebec's Anglophone community took issue with an earlier statement to the effect that Quebec is unilingual French and irrevocably so. On a day-to-day basis, he said, English-speaking Quebecers have everything they need to maintain a viable community. He warned that Canadians will face serious problems in the future if a consensus is not reached that certain basic services should be fundamental to all Canadians and available in both official languages.

Returning to the Manitoba language issue, the next speaker refuted the view that this was solely a provincial matter, adding that earlier provincial governments had failed to address the problem in a forthright manner. One of the problems facing Manitoba, he noted, is that bilingualism at the federal level is still not widely accepted, and that responsibility for solving that problem falls squarely on the federal, not the provincial, government.

Wrapping up the discussion period, Max Yalden warned that too much emphasis on statistics could lead to the espousal of a territorial form of bilingualism. Continuing efforts must be made to resist the easy road of endorsing a linguistic policy whereby French should be spoken in Quebec and English should hold sway everywhere else in Canada. The result of such an approach would, in his view, sound the death knell for minority languages and would be a recipe for separatism.

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Principles and practice *What role does or should Government play in promoting linguistic equity in Western Canada? Is bilingualism good for business; and is business good to bilingualism? These waters were tested by Stanley Roberts, a Vancouver businessman; Edgar Gallant, Chairman, Public Service Commission; and Tom Rust, Chairman, Crown Forest Industries Limited.*

The art of the possible

STANLEY ROBERTS

As the front pages of the major newspapers clearly attest, the language issue in Canada is still far from settled. With new leadership emerging in both major federal political parties, it is interesting and useful to find these questions once again in the forefront of political debate. Explosive and emotion-ridden though the subject may be, I promise not to choose my words as carefully as some of the more prominent players now campaigning on the national scene!

I am not a specialist in language matters; my remarks are those of an active observer and a member of the business community. Raised in a French-speaking community in Manitoba, I completed my high school exams in both official languages. Later, as a Manitoba MLA, I represented a rural riding where the most prevalent language was German. Since then, I have worked in business in Calgary, Montreal and Vancouver. These experiences have given me some understanding of the vast diversity, the broad cultural mosaic, that is one of the distinguishing marks of this country — a distinguishing mark that could make us great when we mature enough to appreciate it.

Bilingualism: what it means

I have always been, and continue to be, completely committed to bilingualism. Part of the "Canadian identity" — if I may use that rather dated term — is that modern Canada was founded by two peoples living for all practical purposes in two nations. This country can only continue to exist if we can live together, appreciate each other, and communicate effectively with one another.

The term "bilingualism" conjures up different images in the minds of different people, and in different

regions of this country. Literally, the dictionary defines bilingualism as "using or able to use two languages."

But in the West, bilingualism — and the programmes that have been instituted to help achieve the goal — means much more. To Francophones living in the West, it means the right to communicate with their government in their own language, and a chance for the preservation of their culture. To some Anglo-westerners, however, the term "bilingualism" has meant simply "ramming French down our throats." Believe it or not, one still hears scoffs about bilingual cornflake boxes or bilingual signs in a national park.

And to some westerners who immigrated here from other countries, the entrenchment of French language rights gives Francophones a "special status" within the West, and is perceived to ignore or minimize the profound contribution that these other cultural groups have made in the building of this region.

These complex attitudes seem to originate in Canada's geography — its vastness — and its history.

Understanding history

Clearly, the federal language policies are based on historical fact. Canada was born by the union of two founding peoples, French and English. But the history of the West is not simply an extension of Central Canada. Our historical roots are not the same. The West was settled by people from all over the world, many of whom arrived via the United States, or travelled straight through Quebec and Ontario to arrive in their new homeland. From the date of joining Confederation (and Manitoba is perhaps the only exception) the West was multicultural.

Within this context, French-speaking Canadians in the West are seen as just another cultural group that helped build the Western frontier — and a small one at that. The data from the 1981 census (see Table 1) serve as a backdrop for understanding the multicultural heritage of the West. The question asked by western citizens is: why should we be providing bilingual services in the West?

TABLE 1
French mother tongue population
for the western provinces and the territories

Province	French mother tongue		Others*	
	No.	%	No.	%
Manitoba	52,000	5.1	240,000	24
Saskatchewan	25,000	2.6	172,000	18
Alberta	62,000	2.5	365,000	16
British Columbia	45,000	1.6	450,000	16
Yukon	585	2.5	2,330	10
Northwest Territories	1,240	2.7	19,760	43

*Does not include English mother tongue.
Source: Statistics Canada, 1981 Census.

To this question there are many logical answers, not the least of which is the fact that Canada as a country was created in 1867 by a cooperative agreement of two founding peoples who spoke English and French. Bilingual services re-affirm this historical accord and help guarantee that Francophones *can* have a real stake in all areas of this country without sacrificing their linguistic distinctiveness.

But this question begs another: what kind of Canada do we want? Do we want a country that remembers its unique history, a country based on mutual respect and understanding among its distinct cultural groups, a country that wants to use each person's contribution to its fullest? If so, bilingualism policies are as indispensable as ever. And *explaining* this to all is an absolute must, for many westerners — Anglo or ethnic — have no fundamental understanding of the original 1867 accord or of current federal language policies.

But what should these services be — both in the short and long-term? And how should they be implemented? Given the cultural context of Western Canada, how do we institute effective bilingualism policies without creating a backlash that would threaten the national unity we are trying to protect? Having personally studied Canadian history in both languages (hence different teachers and different textbooks), I am convinced we must find a way to present all Canadian students with a more consistent and coherent version of the history of Canada. In order to appreciate the unique character of our nation, we must all view the founding of Confederation in the same way.

Language education

Another absolutely essential component is language education. No lasting solutions will ever be reached without providing education to Francophones in the West in their own language and good, sound French courses to Anglophones.

There are two hopeful signs on this front. I am optimistic about how school authorities and the courts will interpret the new Charter's educational rights "where numbers warrant". Second, Canadians' inherited resistance to learning two or more languages appears to be breaking down as more and more parents press for French immersion schools at the elementary level. Perhaps the change in public attitudes will encourage the provinces and schools to introduce programmes that will produce more real bilingual capacity than they have in the past. Through this, we may well see in the future a situation where real equality — equalingualism — could exist throughout the regions.

Public and private sectors

Let me now turn to the private and public sectors — what is being done presently, and what could be done in the short and long term.

The federal language policies developed since 1969 have emphasized individual language rights within the "bilingual heartland" and a fair degree of minority-language support elsewhere. In the 15 years since their initial implementation, federal departments have made great strides in ensuring the potential use of widely offered public services in both languages.

Provincially, however, there is no equivalent commitment to the provision of bilingual services. During a random sample survey of provincial departments and provincial Crown corporations in Alberta and British Columbia, the vast majority stated that no policies were in place to ensure or stimulate the development of French services.

For the private sector in the West, the story is the same: there are no established policies. Last week, I contacted four major Canadian employers operating in

the West and found that none of their personnel departments has developed, or attempted to develop, a coherent policy on the use of French in the workplace or in the provision of services to customers.

Of course, any sane businessman or public servant is going to communicate with the general public in the public's language. To succeed, one must communicate. But essentially due to the statistics I cited earlier, there is no overwhelming economic need to provide French services. In many areas of Western Canada, "bilingual services" are being provided — but the two languages may not be French and English.

New approaches

What, then, is the solution? What we can actually *do* to increase the level of bilingualism in both the private and public sectors in the 1980s?

First, western Canadians must be motivated — not coerced or forced — to learn a second (or even third) language. Emphasis should be placed on regional strategies and motivational techniques rather than on strictly legal measures. One of our challenges in the 1980s is to make all western Canadians knowledgeable about, and proud of, our country's heritage. We must take pride in the fact that we do not live in a monocultural melting pot. We must also feel proud to be able to speak our two official languages — and more — and these ideas require professional marketing.

Such marketing would have to be done with care. If, for example, a generalized requirement were implemented tomorrow that all provincial government and/or Crown corporation employees must be functionally bilingual, the result would be to make very difficult the appointment or promotion of many otherwise qualified westerners. In fact, a vigorous policy of

this genre in the immediate future could well stimulate new and vigorous opposition to bilingualism. We might thus lose more than we would gain in terms of national understanding.

A different and more promising approach might be to advise potential managers that bilingualism may be one of the criteria for promotion — along with skills in, say, marketing, advertising, or human relations.

In conclusion, I believe that "bilingualism" is dormant, not dead, in the West. While provincial governments and major corporations in the three most westerly provinces seem to have no consistent policy on this question, there is a great opportunity for a more positive, less confrontational approach to the implementation of effective, durable bilingual services. While progress is greatly needed, there is very real danger of backlash if more stringent, legalistic approaches are taken to "correct" the situation.

As a pragmatic idealist who wishes to win the game of making Canada a homeland for all Canadians, I view education, skilful marketing, and a little patience as more likely to achieve our basic objectives than what is perceived as forced feeding. The education component is two-pronged: to provide an accurate and relatively consistent history of Canada and a clear explanation of our commitment to Francophones; and to provide educational services in French to both Francophones and Anglophones.

The marketing objectives consist mainly of convincing old and young alike of the fun and personal growth opportunities in learning French. If the marketing is well done, our patience will be rewarded by a change in attitude whereby most westerners will *want* to speak both official languages.

Edgar Gallant's remarks

The very fact that we are attending a colloquium on *Official Languages: A Western Perspective* is a clear indication of the incredible progress that has been made in language policy in Canada. A review of the situation existing in the Public Service of Canada, in both the West and in the rest of the country, reveals the evolution of this policy. However, when dealing with this topic, it is essential to distinguish between myth and reality.

The first major reality is that the Public Service of Canada has become increasingly bilingual. Service to the public is provided in both official languages and public servants can receive internal services in English and in French and, in some areas, work in French. On the other hand, there is the persistent myth that federal public servants need to be bilingual. The reality is quite different, as I shall now try to show. At the end of 1983, 27 per cent of

the 222,000 positions in the public service were designated bilingual, 7 per cent were French essential, 60 per cent were English essential and 6 per cent enabled the incumbent to use either English or French.

In the four western provinces, only 950 of the 50,000 positions (a little less than 2 per cent) were designated bilingual, and of that number 170 were occupied by people who did not meet the language requirements of their position.

Another reality is that the federal public service is now an institution in which both language groups participate more equitably. At the end of 1983, 27.4 per cent of the 20,000-person federal workforce was Francophone. However, their participation rate varied from one employment category to another; Francophones represented 20 per cent of all staff in the management category and approximately 33 per cent in the administrative support category. In the western provinces, French was the first official language of 940 public servants (slightly under 2 per cent of federal employees in a region where Francophones represent 2.7 per cent of the population). While these figures show that progress has been made on the language front, they also indicate that the linguistic majority is in no way threatened and that minority participation is still, in some instances, too low.

Expressions of political commitment

By reflecting on these changes in the public service over the past fifteen years, we can reach a number of particularly noteworthy conclusions. First, without the political will that has been expressed and reaffirmed on many occasions, the official languages policy objectives could not have been achieved. It took not only the Official Languages Act of 1969 and the

Parliamentary Resolution of 1973, but also clear Treasury Board directives, a government white paper and the establishment of a Joint Commons and Senate Parliamentary Committee. These repeated expressions of firm political commitment have been and continue to be an essential factor in the success of the language reform programme. Another determining factor has been the judicious mix of methods used to ensure that this policy is respected. Firmness and determination as well as gentle persuasion have kept the programme on track.

Last but not least, another major factor has been the reasonable protection accorded the legitimate interests of public servants most intimately affected by these policies and programmes. Not only have they been given access to language training, but employees with long years of service and those approaching retirement have been allowed to remain unilingual, even when they occupied bilingual positions. Had such measures not been taken, the government would probably have been unable to overcome resistance to its language reform programme.

I am convinced that the language training programme has played, and continues to play, a major role in this reform, not simply because it enables people to learn the

second language but because it transforms attitudes. As a result of these courses, attitudes toward language use and toward those who speak the other language have changed, and many minds have been opened to the intellectual and cultural riches of the other official language.

These past fifteen years have taught us that extreme measures, even when inspired by honourable motives, can have negative effects. For example, in the early years (from 1973 to 1977), the designation of an excessive number of bilingual positions did risk compromising the programme. I could give other examples, but I would prefer to end by mentioning a positive phenomenon in the evolution of western attitudes. Great enthusiasm has been demonstrated toward French immersion courses in this region, as well as a growing interest among federal public servants in second-language evening courses. Many of these employees do not take such courses because they have to meet language requirements; they do so out of a personal interest to learn French. They want to be able to communicate better with their fellow citizens and participate more fully in the language reform adventure in Canada. They deserve our enthusiastic support.

Tom Rust's remarks

Let me begin by emphasizing that my remarks today represent the business community viewpoint of Western Canada as I see it. I have listened with interest to Mr. Roberts' views of bilingualism as it applies in particular to Western Canada. I do not agree with his statement that there is no consistent policy on

bilingualism in the business community in Western Canada; in my view there is no policy at all. Before saying anything more, perhaps I should explain a little about my background and the reasons I was asked here today.

I was born, raised and educated in Ontario, and worked there before

being transferred by my company, the Ontario Paper Company, to their operations in Baie Comeau, Quebec. I was there for 13 years — long before Baie Comeau became as famous as it is now. During my time in Baie Comeau, we witnessed the working language of operations switch from mainly English to almost 100 per cent

French. As a result, my background includes a fair degree of experience with bilingualism as it applies in the Province of Quebec from an industrial point of view.

I have now been in British Columbia for almost 20 years. Until this colloquium came along I had not given any more thought to bilingualism in business in Western Canada.

I read with interest the proceedings of last year's colloquium dealing with the issue of bilingualism in business. Most of the discussion focussed on Quebec and the language legislation governing business in that province.

There are still, I believe, many unanswered questions regarding the future of Bill 101, but there is no doubt that it has produced the desired result from Quebec's point of view — French is the language of business. However, even before the advent of Bill 101, this had largely been accomplished in the operating plants, if not in head offices.

Ontario, in particular Toronto, is now home to most of the head offices of Canadian companies. My observation from a distance is that bilingualism in these offices is not very far advanced. However, where these companies have operations in Quebec, the use of French by the employees directly responsible for the Quebec operation is encouraged and is no doubt a factor in promotion. I know this is the case with my former employers, the Ontario Paper Company.

My knowledge of the situation in the Maritime provinces precludes

me from making any comment except to say that I am sure businesses operating in predominantly French-speaking areas use French. In short, I believe that the situation relative to bilingualism is entirely different in the two settings — east and west.

In Western Canada, it is clear that the use of French is really not much of an issue today. The backlash and resentment that appeared ten years ago when federal bilingualism was first imposed on all of Canada has largely faded away. In general, people now accept French on cornflake boxes and on federal buildings, and I think most of us accept the rights of Francophones to court services in French.

This is not to say that everyone agrees with the concept or that everyone feels the resulting expenditures are necessary. However, as far as I can see, it has ceased to be an issue.

Bilingualism is appropriate on the industrial scene in Western Canada, particularly in British Columbia. But I would agree with Mr. Roberts that it is dormant. There is no perceived need to encourage or require employees to have a knowledge of French. If a Francophone wishes to work in British Columbia, he accepts the fact that his language of work will be English — just as in Quebec the Anglophone now accepts the fact he will work in French.

I am not saying that companies are anti-French — I am simply stating a fact. The cost of any attempt to have a bilingual workplace — in British Columbia at least — would

be far too great to contemplate. My own company has a small operation in Montreal. The language of work there is French, but communications with Vancouver are in English.

The suggestion that bilingualism might be encouraged by making the ability to speak French one of the criteria for promotion would, in my opinion, be counterproductive. I do not think we should suggest to the employees of our companies that their chances of promotion in a unilingual company would be enhanced if they were to learn French. Of course, if a person in, say, marketing, in a company involved in sales in Quebec spoke French, it would be a definite advantage and a factor in his promotional prospects.

Most companies provide their employees with a percentage of the cost of skill improvement programmes, including learning French where it is job related. This is where more could be done to encourage the learning of French, provided it is entirely voluntary.

To sum up, I do not see any need to change the attitude of the business community in Western Canada so far as promoting bilingualism in industry is concerned. And I would be utterly opposed to any legislation or coercive approach from the federal government in this regard.

Bilingualism will come if it is perceived to enhance our ability to conduct an efficient business. In the meantime, we have too many other pressing problems to resolve.

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION PERIOD

Participants in the second discussion period focussed their comments on three major issues: corporate attitudes and responsibilities vis-à-vis language;

the degree to which federal and provincial authorities meet their linguistic obligations to minority-language taxpayers; and various perceptions of the status of

French in the West.

Stanley Roberts' positive perspectives and Tom Rust's view that French plays only a minor

role in the western corporate ethos both came under fire. For example, a journalist, taking issue with the notion that the popularity of French immersion programmes in the West indicated an acceptance of bilingualism, pointed to the opposition to language reform in Manitoba and to western feelings that bilingualism was being imposed by those in power in Eastern Canada.

Corporate responsibility in the West

Several other speakers felt that the business sector in the West had done too little to promote the use of both languages and had failed to live up to its corporate responsibility to endorse the idea of nationhood. If federal Crown corporations are able to offer a degree of bilingual services from coast to coast, why should the private sector be incapable of doing likewise? Is it not the responsibility of large corporations, as much as Government, to show leadership in this area? While some initiatives in this regard have been taken, they have been all too few in number; altogether too much emphasis has been placed on warnings about coercion, and too little on the espousal of a positive attitude toward equal status for English and French outside government.

On the subject of government efforts to promote equality for both official languages in the West, two participants referred to the RCMP's language programme, noting that organization's long association with Western Canada. A unique feature of the Force is that, although its national headquarters are in Ottawa, the greater portion of its personnel is located outside Central Canada. This has produced some linguistic headaches both internally and externally, but the RCMP has nevertheless made headway over the years. For instance, the Force's bilingual unit concept means that,

in areas where there is a significant demand for service in both official languages, a number of positions are filled by bilingual staff. Across Western Canada, some 425 positions are staffed in this manner.

On a related issue, the administration of justice in the West, another speaker noted that Alberta has an ample supply of French-speaking lawyers and judges and is able to provide a broad range of court services in both official languages.

Provincial commitment is urged

Turning to the larger question of provincial services, another speaker referred to the importance to minority groups of an institutional network that enables them to use their language on a daily basis. He was opposed to the view that Canada's linguistic duality is a completely federal matter, and thought that in the future it would be much more urgent for the provinces, the western provinces included, to commit themselves to the principles of linguistic duality and bilingualism. Laws are passed to conserve certain animal species, but when it comes to preserving the French language and culture, the only safeguard offered is the phrase "where numbers warrant". French should be used not merely as a language for small talk but as a viable instrument of communication in the workplace.

Endorsing this view, a Quebec Anglophone added that it was not necessary for every member of the civil service to be capable of operating in both languages; instead, government should be organized in such a way as to ensure that service is made available to taxpayers in their language.

In reference to Ontario, a senior public servant from that province agreed that a group's culture and

language should be recognized and supported by a network of services. The sectors where such services are to be made available in both languages should be identified and a system developed whereby key areas in the centre of the province can serve outlying areas through toll-free telephone lines. He noted that Ontario has gradually entrenched many of these services in legislation and that the freeze on hiring in the Ontario civil service does not apply to positions requiring bilingual skills.

A university administrator then took issue with the notion that French is a low-status language in Western Canada. Furthermore, we should not confine ourselves to the thought that only a quarter or so of the population is educable in the second language. That fallacy has been disproven by the experience of other countries, where large numbers of ordinary citizens learn to use more than one language.

Bilingualism: an integral part of Canada's future

Wrapping up the session, Stanley Roberts repeated his conviction that bilingualism was an admirable and essential goal for the future of Canada. The excellent immersion programmes in schools should not be relinquished but encouraged. He wondered, however, whether we were doing all we should to make Canada the kind of nation we want it to be. For example, is Canadian history being taught in a manner conducive to producing a sense of commitment to Canada? Lastly, he noted, many Canadians are beginning to realize that bilingualism will be the key to a decent job in the future. In his view, there are many ways of encouraging people to become bilingual without using coercion or making passionate pleas in the name of Canadian unity.

3 / LINGUISTIC MINORITIES

A majority of minorities *Within a constitutional framework that accords official primacy to English and French, how should we recognize, protect and nurture the multilingual and multicultural wealth of Western Canada? Three westerners offered responses to this question: Lloyd Barber, President, University of Regina; Joseph Slogan, President, Ukrainian-Canadian Professional and Business Federation; and Guy Goyette, President, Association canadienne-française de l'Alberta.*

The challenge of linguistic pluralism

LLOYD BARBER

As we all know from recent experience here in the West and from the problems encountered by an unnamed aspirant for high office, my topic is surrounded by a very tricky mine field. There is no riskless entrée to the subject: facetious and reasoned comment alike can trigger an explosion.

I, a reluctant unilingual, grew up in rural Saskatchewan in the 1930s and 1940s when "bohunk" was a pejorative term and when "zombies" were beaten up because they would not fight in Europe. At that time, I did not realize the depth of prejudice my society had assumed during the period of massive European migration. In my youth, western Canadians were led to accept, whether we knew it or not, the melting-pot philosophy of our southern neighbours. My mother was an immigrant from the U.S. mid-west; and while I do not recall any direct references or discussions about the superiority of English, I know she went to some effort to try to get our Polish housekeeper to improve her English and to no effort to have me learn any Polish!

I imagine this is a background shared, with variations, by many in the room. My small community, because it was a summer resort, was in reality two societies. The summer society, with its transient population, was widely diverse, the winter society as confined as any Saskatchewan small town in that period.

Unfortunately, the cultural and linguistic differences that could have enriched life immeasurably were sacrificed to the melting-pot ethos. If there was a dominant second language in my village, it was Cree. But you never heard it in the playground and you weren't encouraged to learn more about the language and the heritage of the people who carried it; they, after all,

should learn to be like us, carry our values and speak our language. What a tragic loss of opportunity.

Every chance we had we went somewhere, "somewhere" being south or west. Before I was twenty, I had travelled over most of Western Canada and half of the United States and Mexico, but never to Toronto or Montreal. Certainly, we learned about Champlain and Cartier and Cabot. We studied Wolfe and Montcalm and conjured up mental pictures of the Plains of Abraham as vast as half the distance from Edmonton to Calgary. But we did not *feel* the founding cultures and the founding languages. And because we didn't feel them or live them, we did not comprehend, in the fullest sense of the term, the meaning of these concepts in our being, our psyche or ethos. We feel a bit put upon when it is implied that we are inferior because we don't comprehend, and we get upset when we are told we must.

As many have, it is far too simple to suggest, in the wake of the debacle in Manitoba, that red-necked westerners are against the French language and against bilingualism. What puts the lie to this assertion is the almost insatiable demand for student places in bilingual education programmes right across the West. At the University of Regina we have had to put in place a special programme in our Faculty of Education to supply the demand for bilingual programmes. And while the focus of news is on the resistance to official bilingualism in Manitoba, parents are sending their children to bilingual programmes in greater and greater numbers.

It would be comforting to conclude that official bilingualism is assured because of this phenomenon. I think the reality is much more complex than a sudden embracing of the party line. Western Canadians are

world traders. Our prairie scope and our sea scope make us look outward, with the long view; I think we know that we are in competition with a good deal of the world for economic survival.

Multilingualism: opportunity lost

We also know that with our polyglot background we missed a genuine opportunity to be a multilingual society. We suppressed our "other" languages and deep down we regret this. We envy the Europeans who speak, or at least can get along in, a variety of languages. We marvel at the Chinese or the Sri Lankans or whoever who can function effectively in Mandarin or Tamil or Singhalese or French or English. We, who missed the golden opportunity to be multilingual because we thought the English speakers were superior, feel ignorant. It is a frustrating and humbling experience.

I do not in any way wish to denigrate or downplay official bilingualism as a Canadian thrust. I recognize the importance of this thrust and appreciate its significance in terms of the past, present and future of Canada. In a general sense, despite surface indications to the contrary, I believe most Canadians accept this proposition. What they won't accept is coercion to get there. They will accept powerful persuasion, they will accept financial incentives, and they will accept the subtle sanctions that might be imposed if they don't make it; but they (read we in Western Canada) will not accept coercive force. Manitoba proves that.

The fascinating thing about all of this is that I think western Canadians really do feel that they missed the multilingual boat when it was leaving the dock. We could have achieved the multilingual polyglot that Europe and every truly international air terminal in the world has become, but we missed it because we insisted that we were a melting pot and English was the flame. Tragic, and deep down we know it.

But let us assume for a moment that the official thrust had been not toward bilingualism, but toward multilingualism. Set aside for the moment the practical problems inherent in this idea and assume that human energy, financial resources and official approval had encouraged German and Icelandic, Ukrainian and Greek, Mandarin and Cree, Sioux and Yiddish.

Each group would have seized the opportunity to expand the influence of its language and would have proselytized others to learn, and each unilingual would have chosen another language on the basis of self-interest. It is interesting to speculate about what kind of society would have been produced by unlimited support for multiple language instruction.

Internationalism and tribalism

There is a growing realization of international interdependence in the world. Paradoxically, however,

when we become more internationalized and more interdependent, we also become increasingly tribalized. The single most distinguishing mark of internationalism is the ability to get along in several languages. The single most distinguishing mark of tribalism is the ability to converse and convince in the subtle nuance of the language of tribal communication.

A significant part of my working life was devoted to questions about aboriginal peoples. These experiences convinced me of a society's power through culture expressed in language to survive the worst onslaughts on that society's existence. I simply do not believe in monolithic societies, regardless of their political or economic underpinnings. There are too many minorities in the world who will cling to their language as a measure of their singularity even as all other measures have been eroded.

Western Canada is like that. We are a society that emerged somewhere between the beginnings of Canada in the 19th century and the current so-called post-industrial society. We are polyglot and we are proud of it. We recognize the benefits of linguistic skills because we are traders, and we need to talk to those with whom we would strike a deal. We also understand the persistence of culture and the importance of mother tongue in the preservation of the values that a culture carries.

Pragmatism and principle

In Western Canada we are proud of the bilingual thrust. We wish, deep down, that it could be a multilingual thrust. We recognize the absolute necessity, in the international commercial battle we face, for more people to have greater understanding of other peoples and other cultures, and we know that this comes, in part, through linguistic skills. Further, we understand the importance of the French language in the fabric of this country. Unlike many Canadians, however, we understand it in an intellectual and logical way rather than in the visceral way we perceive it to be understood in other parts of Canada. Others in Canada must recognize that our participation is more pragmatic than emotional. As traders, we in Western Canada increasingly recognize the need to speak several international languages. We kick ourselves for not realizing it thirty years ago when it would have been easy because of our ethnic diversity.

We will cleave to a Canadian French/English bilingual policy because we are pro-Canadian and because there are incentives, some direct and subtle, to go this route. We also know that French is a major international language.

If this country has a lesson to teach the world, it is that it can become bilingual, in the best sense of that term. It would be tragic, in my judgement, if we limited that objective through thinking only in our domestic context.

We are a multilingual country. Let us rejoice in that fact. Let us recognize the primacy of French and English in our make-up, but let us not forget the importance of Chinese and Ukrainian, Cree and Portuguese, German and Yiddish — and so many others. We have a cultural and linguistic mosaic which makes us unique. And all this, incidentally, is worth money to us.

This westerner says bilingualism is great, but our unique multilingualism is worth a lot more. It may be our salvation in the trading battles to come.

Let's capitalize on our cultural and linguistic pluralism.

Joseph Slogan's remarks

In my remarks, I shall attempt to review some historical events and relate them to the theory of two founding races and two official languages from a westerner's point of view.

The founding race concept is a matter with which I, a western Canadian of Ukrainian descent, take issue. This concept carries the connotation that one group of citizens has more inherent rights than another group, as is the case for rights devolving from the notion of "official" languages. This idea is difficult to substantiate in a democratic society, where everyone is to be considered equal. I thoroughly disagree with the concept, which ignores the fact that all of us — our native peoples included — were immigrants to this country at one time or another.

By way of background to this issue, let me begin by tracing a few of the significant events in the history of what is now Manitoba. Sir Thomas Button discovered the west shore of Hudson's Bay in 1612 while searching for the Northwest Passage. Raising a cross, he claimed the land for King James I and called it New Wales.

The early days in Canada

The exploration of the West followed two different paths. The British, for instance, sought to spearhead the fur trade and to develop it from Hudson's Bay by creating the Hudson's Bay Company in 1670. The Company was almost a law unto itself, for it was granted rights to all the land that

drained into Hudson's Bay. It created the territory of Rupert's Land which, although under British control, was administered by the Company. The territory was five times larger than the then Dominion of Canada, and contained half of what is now the Province of Quebec.

The French were meanwhile pursuing a different path in search of the Northwest Passage. In 1734, having followed a fresh-water channel across the continent, La Vérendrye arrived at the Red River. He established Fort Rouge and other forts for the French, some of whom put down roots in the area over the years. Five foreign wars — English, French, Spanish, Austrian and American — affected the fate of the West from 1682 to 1782.

The Hudson's Bay Company's priority, however, was the fur trade, not the settlement of new lands. As a result, it decided to get rid of the land, selling it to Canada in 1869 for 300,000 pounds sterling. Since the British were not anxious to assume administration of this territory, they persuaded Canada to take it over and the Hudson's Bay Company ceased to be responsible for administration of the territory.

This situation created a void with some regrettable results. Since neither the Hudson's Bay Company nor Canada were exercising their authority, the citizens of the Red River area set up a provisional government and drew up a list of rights. Among the 14 provisions

that were later embodied in the Manitoba Act were declarations that English and French were the languages of the legislature and the courts and that all public documents and legislation should be published in both these languages. Different interpretations have been given to these declarations, but it seems clear that they were largely copied from the Quebec Act's guarantees to the French when they entered Confederation.

The founding of Manitoba

It is interesting to look at the type of society that existed in Manitoba in 1870. The census of 1870 shows us that the most important social groupings in Manitoba at the time of its creation were 48 per cent French-speaking Métis, 34 per cent English-speaking half-breeds, 6 per cent whites native to the country (more or less the descendents of settlers), 5 per cent Indians, 2 per cent whites born in Canada and 4 per cent whites born elsewhere. The total population was only 12,000. These figures were published on February 20, 1984, in an article in the *Winnipeg Free Press* which went on to say: "to impose a theory of two original founders upon Manitoba is to replace history with mythology."

But the rights embodied in the Manitoba Act of 1870 are understandable in the context of the society that existed at this time. They reflect its reality. During this period of turmoil, Louis Riel, leader of the Métis group, and others who had formed the provisional government, were in the end not

allowed to carry out their plans. Despite Sir John A. MacDonald's wishes, the movement led by the Orange Lodge in Ontario was allowed to prevail and finally resulted in Riel's execution. I think this is a black mark on the history of both Canada and Manitoba and, I believe, the result of an imposition of the will of Eastern Canada. And, I would add, while the Manitoba Act reflected the fact that 55 per cent of the population spoke French and 45 per cent English, the laws since then have failed to reflect the linguistic plurality of the population, only 5 per cent of which now speaks French.

Waves of immigration

To really understand the West and the character of its people, we must look at the immigration that took place after the railroad was completed in the 1880s. The railroad enabled the government of Sir Wilfrid Laurier to undertake a programme of colonization of the West. The Canadian government launched a major campaign, paying agents a per-head commission for immigrants sent to Canada. It promoted the West as a land of milk and honey and even promised immigrants guaranteed language rights. A staggering number of people came, including more than 200,000 Ukrainians. Since the population of Manitoba in 1880 was only about 12,000, one understands to what extent its character, and particularly its linguistic nature, was changed when foreign-speaking immigrants often exceeded that number in a single year. In addition, many Americans arrived, as did people of Mennonite, German, Polish and Icelandic origin. This was not immigration as we know it today. Many families settled in distinct communities. It was colonization.

If you drive through the West today the results are evident. You will encounter one village that is solidly German next to one that is solidly Polish, another French and so on. When we talked about bilingualism we were not talking

about Anglophones learning French. In their isolated communities, Germans from one village learned to speak the Ukrainian of the neighbouring village, and vice versa. Their children intermarried and bred a type of person that is now a western Canadian. The immigrants came to the West with little, and the only contribution they could make to their new country was to work the land. It is said that the Ukrainians broke over 10 million acres of land, and I am sure that the other groups made an equal contribution. Their other major contribution to the country was the building of later sections of the railway, often at great personal sacrifice. More than 10,000 died in railway accidents or during construction work and ten times that number were injured. And although 10,000 Ukrainians fought for Canada in World War I, many were interned because of their Austrian passports. What I am saying, then, is that they made a contribution to this country. As Ukrainians, we can lay claim not perhaps to being a founding people, but certainly to being nation builders, as can many others in Western Canada in addition to the English and French.

The legacy of 1890

From 1870, the composition of the society underwent enormous change. In 1890 the Government of Manitoba passed legislation that made English the only officially recognized language. And of course, that created problems. Eventually, passage of the Laurier-Greenway agreement gave the French and other ethnic groups the freedom to have bilingual schools. But as more and more bilingual schools were set up, there was pressure to take away these rights. And so in 1916, the minorities — the French, the Ukrainian and others — lost these rights. Over 120 Ukrainian schools were closed down. Near the steps of the legislature, the provincial government built a bonfire and burned the books, another black mark on our society.

We lived through that situation and tried to progress as best we could. Now we face another critical situation in Manitoba. I should like to quote part of a joint representation to the legislature made by the Ukrainian, German and Polish Business and Professional Associations:

"We accept and endorse the multicultural policy of the federal government and the concept of Canada as a multilingual country with two official languages, English and French. We are concerned that the implementation of extended French language services may infringe upon the equal opportunity in employment of civil servants. Particularly we urge that where a civil servant can serve a local community better because of his knowledge of English or French and the heritage language spoken in the local community, that the candidate be extended the same privilege of preference as those for French communities. We commend the province on the opportunities it has created for the learning of heritage languages in the schools of the province and we urge that this policy be maintained and equally entrenched. We therefore urge the government and the opposition to approach this sensitive issue in a cooperative and enlightened manner which will preserve the harmonious relationships amongst the multicultural peoples of Manitoba rather than spawn discord and divisiveness as is more and more evident."

The brief ended with the following quotation, from Pierre Elliot Trudeau: "If freedom of choice is in danger for some ethnic groups, it is in danger for all. It is the policy of this government to eliminate any such danger and to safeguard this freedom."

We supported entrenchment so that we would not undergo incidents similar to those of 1916. However, we realize that

entrenching rights in the Constitution can cause problems for a society that is constantly changing. We have seen what happened with the Manitoba Act. We feel our Constitution and our laws must recognize and reflect the present situation in Canada, not freeze us into a situation that is out of date, unjust or discriminatory.

To us, being Canadian means being a member of a multicultural and multilingual society in which we share common ideals of freedom and democracy, and common loyalty to a way of life that is uniquely Canadian. We believe in the

principle of partnership. We do not believe in founding and non-founding races, because no such division can be justified in a democratic society based on equality of citizenship. To use Prime Minister Trudeau's words, "no citizen is other than Canadian and all should be treated fairly."

In conclusion I would like to give you my version of Canada. My Canada makes me proud to be a Canadian first, unhyphenated and unfettered. I would like to think of every Canadian in terms of the contribution he is making to enriching our country and culture regardless of the colour of his skin or the language that he speaks. If he is different, I would like to try

to understand him and to know that he can appreciate the difference between us. I think that Canada is a great country that deserves our dedication to high principles and a great effort on our part to leave a heritage for our children. A Canada that is united, that is homogeneous and that can prevail in the face of all obstacles, whether they be economic, social, political or cultural. I would like to see a Canada in which we can speak with one voice to attain the principles to which all good Canadians should be dedicated. Whatever the language of that voice, I would hope that its objectives would be the same: to cement and strengthen our country rather than to divide and weaken it.

Guy Goyette's remarks

Let me begin by placing our western Canadian situation in a broader context.

Perhaps because we in Canada have never experienced large-scale war or violent dissension on our own territory, we are still grappling with the problem of determining our identity as a nation. One element of that quest for identity is the development of a satisfactory approach to the linguistic realities of this vast country.

The political and social realities of bilingualism

Official bilingualism is a political and social reality, its principle being that English and French have official status in the federal domain throughout Canada. In practice and in fact, however, this recognition is less than absolute.

Although the dollars produced by federal and provincial taxes are printed in both languages, there is little recognition of bilingualism in the laws or regulations that these dollars help to produce and enforce. For instance, the oft-used phrase "where numbers warrant" is a democratic euphemism employed when we do not wish to consent to the absolute application

of a principle or when, for whatever motive, we wish to attract the attention of the majority. It is like asking the majority if the minority should have rights — a question posed, of course, in the name of democracy.

Plebiscites or referenda serve only to divide the population and should be avoided. The majority should not be asked what the rights of the minority are or how they should be applied. History is full of examples showing that, when there is unwillingness to legislate on a difficult issue, the problem is referred to the people at large, who are divided on the issue. This enables government to cover its traces easily and claim that it need no longer make a decision that would clearly leave some people unhappy. Indecision is the hallmark of weak government.

As Canadians, Francophones have always participated as fully as possible in the development of Canada at all levels — economic, artistic and educational — and we plan to continue to do so. As individuals belonging to a well-identified cultural and linguistic group, we work together to maintain the

French language and culture in the West.

Preserving the Canadian identity

The more encouragement given to a particular group's cultural and linguistic development, the easier it becomes for its members to participate in Canada's development. We firmly believe that a person participates more fully in Canadian life when his day-to-day existence reflects his own origins. When those origins are abandoned and replaced by assimilation, part of the Canadian identity is destroyed.

The advantages and essential fairness of bilingualism and cultural and linguistic pluralism are clearly demonstrated in many walks of life. It is widely recognized, for example, that people who speak a number of languages open their minds to others and can thus participate in the richness of the international community. Canadians should be proud that their two official languages have international currency.

The learning of French as a second language by western Canadians is a positive undertaking that must

be emphasized. Thousands of non-Francophones are learning French as a second language, the fundamental reason being their attraction to the world of communications. However, our political leaders must make a distinction between first and second language instruction.

A plea for tolerance

Bilingualism in everyday life cannot be legislated. The key to the whole matter lies in the desire to live according to certain rules governing the human condition. In Western Canada, we have all the necessary ingredients for a better life for all citizens: unlimited space, innumerable resources, and the expectations of a country still young in years. But what so often happens is that we return to the warlike conduct of the buffalo-hunt era and quarrel, apparently in an effort to obtain vengeance, compensation or recognition. Why are we incapable of living in linguistic peace as Switzerland does? Can we not find a solution of benefit to all Canadians? Can we not understand that enabling the other culture to fulfil itself in no way detracts from one's own richness and identity?

The cultures in Canada can be compared to the members of a symphony orchestra: every instru-

ment is important. We listen to each of them and together they form an artistic ensemble that pleases our ear and our intellect. The different cultures in Canada form a magnificent symphony, the first movement of which has the Canadian identity as its theme. Let us hope that the finale will offer a synthesis of the real Canada.

How is it that Canada is bilingual, but that only one of its 12 provinces and territories is officially so? Why is Canada a jigsaw puzzle with one overall colour but with individual pieces of a completely different colour?

It is not very realistic to expect Canada to become 100 per cent bilingual, and this is not the purpose of the Official Languages Act. What is positive and achievable is that every Canadian should respect the language and culture of his fellow citizens. Let our governments establish rules that will encourage the development and respect of our languages and cultures. Let our governments recognize the rights and responsibilities of the official language communities in their territory. It is this spirit that must motivate every Canadian dreaming of a free country worthy of his ancestors. If an official language community is poorly treated in some provinces, what will happen to the visible

minorities who are also seeking their place in the sun?

Respect for others is the key

Let us then be practical; let us recognize the law of Canada. And let us also recognize that Canadians share a plurality of languages and cultures. No one suffers by recognizing the rights of others. Indeed, by encouraging others and respecting their culture, we gain acceptance of ourselves. Let us therefore strive to achieve a better understanding in the West of our cultural and linguistic identities. In making this effort we should try to reach agreements based on some of the elementary rules governing the human condition. Lastly, let us keep our negotiations as far from the courts as possible, for if in the end we have to appeal to the judicial system, we shall have exhausted all human resources of good will and mutual understanding.

This applies to all western Canadians, whether Francophone, Anglophone, Ukrainian or German. The rigours of our climate have taught us to find prompt and effective solutions to our problems. We have all the necessary elements for an equitable solution. Let us use our energy to advantage. Let us do it for the love of our country.

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION PERIOD

Warming to the challenge of the debate, which by now had focused clearly on the central issue — how to reconcile official bilingualism with the multilingual/multicultural make-up of western Canadian society — intervenors in the third discussion period pulled few punches. Where, several speakers implicitly asked, lay the links, the common ground, between these two concepts? Which

of the obvious differences should be maintained?

Both federal and provincial support is necessary

The first speaker suggested that the federal government had a choice. Either it could run roughshod over the diversity of Western Canada, or it could work with it and try to establish alliances and coalitions with groups that were

neither English nor French. He deplored what he felt were the weak constitutional guarantees for non-official language communities, and was disturbed by the failure of provincial authorities to provide on-going support and funding for such groups. He added that these minority communities in the West saw English and French as national languages of communication, and other languages as vehicles for

particular cultures. Both concepts should be supported by government, for the communities in question could not, by themselves, fight successfully against the forces of assimilation.

Endorsing these views, particularly the fact that the provincial governments should live up to their obligations in this area, another participant added that he felt there had been altogether too much self-congratulation expressed at the colloquium on the matter of French immersion programmes. These, he felt, should not be viewed as a solution to the fundamental problem facing Francophone minorities in Western Canada. Echoing this sentiment, a later speaker said he saw Anglophone support for French immersion as an insurance policy taken out by pragmatists rather than as a symbol of a deeper commitment to official bilingualism.

Responding acidly to Patrick O'Callaghan's earlier reference to Francophones in the West — "185,000 snowflakes do not constitute a Prairie winter" — more than one speaker noted that snowflakes melt and disappear. That, one suggested, was the danger continued assimilation posed for Francophones. Why, she asked, did some people appear to think that the Manitoba issue had suddenly dropped from the sky? Manitoba had been officially, constitutionally, and legally bilingual in 1870; a terrible injustice had been committed in 1890; and

Francophones have been waiting 94 years for it to be rectified. Canadians should now accept the fact that their Constitution guarantees certain rights — among them, language rights — and should see to it that every effort is made to give these rights substance.

Another Francophone expressed optimism over the transformation that has taken place in Canada since 1964. Words and phrases such as "Francophone community", unheard of twenty years ago, are now in common usage. Today Quebec is not the only province for Francophones in Canada, but merely one of many Francophone communities. Some of these communities are having difficulty understanding the concept of a single Canadian identity. Francophone forces have splintered and the smallest groups find themselves in a difficult situation because other minority language groups have also demanded more concrete recognition. He believed all minority groups should be recognized as part of a new Canadian identity and that we should not return to the old notion of hyphenated Canadians.

Two Quebecers — one Francophone, the other Anglophone — offered different perspectives on recent trends in their province and the effect of such changes on western Francophones. One deplored what he saw as a trend in Quebec among students and teachers to study and teach solely in French. He thought it important that

people be aware of this evolution, particularly because of its impact on the amount of support Francophone minorities in the West can expect to obtain from Quebec. He noted that some Francophone communities have voiced resentment against this evolution, adding that minorities in the rest of Canada should rely on their own forcefulness to press for better education and development assistance.

His fellow Quebecer disagreed with the notion that English is virtually dead at the official level in Quebec. However, the Quebec government has become a symbol for the rejection of bilingualism because of its position that access to government services in English is merely discretionary. If everyone agrees that bilingualism is accepted as a goal in Manitoba, he remarked, then an effective programme should be developed to attain it. He qualified as "naive" the notion that a solution to the problem would likely crop up in fifteen years or so.

In his closing remarks, Lloyd Barber again drew attention to the fact that the colloquium had ignored native languages and native rights. Our aboriginal people, he noted, were also minorities in Canada and should be part of any policy that addressed the issue of language and culture.

4 / LANGUAGE AND EDUCATION

Options and futures Language as a vehicle for instruction and as a subject on the school curriculum poses many questions for Western Canada. What role should English and French play in relation to other languages? What are the implications of the "where numbers warrant"? Should the minorities control their own schools? And should languages be compulsory subjects? These and associated topics were discussed by George Pedersen, President, University of British Columbia; David King, Minister of Education, Alberta; and Claude Ryan, Member of the Quebec National Assembly.

Tolerance, balance, and public choice

GEORGE PEDERSEN and THOMAS FLEMING

There is no issue of greater historical significance to Canadians than bilingualism and its embodiment in law and education. For more than two centuries, Canadians have struggled to understand the meaning of living in a country with two languages and have tried to reconcile the needs and aspirations of the two cultures they represent. Our participation in this colloquium reflects a continuing interest in achieving linguistic equilibrium in this country.

In an effort to provide a western perspective on language and education, I shall direct my remarks to three points: first, to some elements that comprise the social context of French-language instruction in the West; second, to some important developments in French-language education in the western provinces since the 1960s; and, finally, to a number of approaches to language policy that will serve us well now and in the future. I shall also address several broad themes which seem to have a bearing on a search for serviceable language and cultural policies, and which refer to regional needs and to the need to develop our educational programmes. In the latter regard, I believe that the principles of tolerance, balance, and public choice should underlie our approach to language education, and that, wherever possible, language programmes should be developed in accordance with local needs, interests, and levels of support.

Social context for French-language instruction

In Book II of the *Report of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism*, the commissioners noted a number of features which have made French-language instruction in the western provinces a special kind of undertaking. They observed, for

example, that French-speaking minorities in the West differed in many ways from those of other provinces, that French-speaking people were more widely dispersed in terms of geography, and that there were no large settlements in the West where Francophones congregated in ways similar to those found in Ontario or New Brunswick. They also pointed out that western Francophones were only *one* linguistic or cultural minority among many, and that they were frequently not the largest minority group.

The commissioners were correct in observing that the question of French-language study in the West should be seen against the backdrop of a larger linguistic and cultural mosaic, even though French is recognized as one of the two official languages of the nation. Such historical and geographical realities further suggest we must be sensitive to the linguistic and cultural aspirations of other minorities and that we should be aware that much of the support for French-language study in the West is derived from English-speaking or other linguistic constituencies rather than from Francophones themselves. In light of this unique situation, it is extremely important that language policies and programmes developed by federal and other authorities allow for certain degrees of tolerance and public choice and aim for a certain balance between the ideals of language reform and parity, and what communities throughout the West will accept. The Official Languages Act provides a blueprint for language reform and the Charter of Rights now makes constitutional provision for the "equality of status and equal rights and privileges" as to the use of the two official languages of Canada in all federal institutions. Nevertheless, in a region such as the West, attempts to promote the survival of the French language clearly should not take place at the expense of other minority groups.

All in all, the French-language policies developed nationally over the last two decades have been implemented in a fairly judicious manner, and some important steps have been taken toward securing the "equal partnership" referred to by the B and B Commission. In many respects, western Canadians are more conscious today of the need to encourage biculturalism, and westerners in general have become increasingly supportive of learning the second official language. While this interest in French has in large part been fostered by federal policies, and by federal support for language education, it has also been spurred by other broad social factors, not least of which is that Canadians in all provinces have a new, more mature appreciation, understanding, and tolerance of minority rights in general. Canadians have also come to realize the advantages of becoming fluent in both official languages.

The study of a second or third language has long been considered a mark of a well-rounded liberal education. We have also come to realize that bilingualism has certain utilitarian benefits: occupational mobility, and increased opportunities for government and international service, trade and commerce, and travel. The fact that the two official languages of Canada are the two most widely-used languages of communication in the world provides strong incentive for language study. Thus, quite apart from the benefits that can accrue to Canadians by breaking down the language barrier that has for so long divided us, powerful economic and international pressures exist for learning a second language.

Language education programmes in the West

The growing interest of English-speaking Canadians in the study of French can clearly be seen in the development of language education programmes in the West. In at least two western provinces, there has been fairly strong growth at the elementary school level in the numbers of youngsters enrolled in core French-language study. In Manitoba, 45 per cent of elementary pupils received language instruction in French last year, compared to only 29 per cent a decade or so ago. In British Columbia, more than half of all school boards have made French a part of their curriculum; about 28 per cent of elementary pupils now study French, compared to 5.6 ten years ago.

At the secondary level, the signs are somewhat less encouraging. But although there have been declines in student enrolments in all four western provinces, the percentage of instructional time given to French has increased in Manitoba, Alberta and British Columbia, and has remained constant in Saskatchewan. Factors that have undoubtedly shaped these declines include changing curricula at the junior and senior high school level, the fact that students have "room" for only a certain number of subjects, and pupil perceptions about the kinds of courses that will be immediately useful to them in the labour market.

In the West, the big success story has been French immersion programmes. Increasing emphasis by the federal government on bilingualism, dissatisfaction with traditional methods of French-language instruction, and new public support for language study have all contributed to the growth of such programmes, which now enrol more than 100,000 youngsters across the country.

In the West, immersion has taken on a life of its own, building on a groundswell of parental interest and participation. In Manitoba, for example, fewer than 1,000 youngsters were enrolled in immersion in 1974; today, there are more than 9,000 and by 1994 it is anticipated there will be over 25,000. In Saskatchewan, in recent years, there has been a 20 per cent to 30 per cent growth, with nearly 5,000 youngsters currently enrolled in immersion programmes. In Alberta, for the 1983-84 school year, more than 90 schools in 35 jurisdictions are offering French-language instruction, and almost 17,000 pupils study French from early childhood to Grade 12 in immersion and other programmes. In coming years, it is estimated that the overall growth in French-language programmes will continue to increase in Alberta at a rate of approximately 10 to 15 per cent annually. Likewise, in some school districts in British Columbia, around 25 per cent of kindergarten pupils are enrolled in immersion. Altogether, more than 10,000 youngsters in the province are at various stages of immersion instruction. Thus, since 1976-77, elementary and secondary pupil enrolments in immersion programmes have increased about sixfold in Manitoba, tenfold in Saskatchewan, and ninefold in British Columbia.

Such expansion, of course, has not been without problems. For one thing, immersion teachers seem to face heavier workloads and the popularity of the programme has caused problems for schoolboards and administrators. In some instances, immersion classes are swelling while enrolments in other areas of the curriculum, or in school populations in general, are declining. Such situations have sometimes produced difficulties in redeploying personnel, in dealing with seniority issues and teacher layoffs, and in finding suitable candidates to staff the new positions.

Some critics charge that the expansion of French-language programmes has occurred so rapidly that there is an inadequate supply of qualified bilingual teachers. The universities have responded to this new challenge in several ways. At the University of Regina, a bilingual bachelor of education programme is now available for immersion and other teachers; and special programmes for immersion teachers are now offered at Simon Fraser University and at the University of British Columbia. French language programmes are also available at the University of Alberta, and students can now take a full programme in arts, science, and education at the Faculté St-Jean at the University of Alberta in Edmonton.

Such developments testify to the effectiveness of language education policies that permit local initiative and provide support for language instruction evolving in line with changing public tastes and perceptions. The great benefits of such an incremental strategy for promoting bilingual language education are clear. In balancing desires for language reform with an understanding and tolerance of what communities and institutions will and will not accept, government can avoid creating the kind of public resistance that sometimes accompanies the introduction of new policies.

Future action

Language education in Canada is *not* simply a pedagogical issue — there are real emotional and political value components underlying policies about language. And, although language can have salutary effects on an individual's educational, cultural, and economic opportunities, we must also recognize that, in this country, the question of language is ultimately connected in political and philosophical ways to larger questions about national unity and identity, national purpose, and the linguistic and cultural survival of a minority group. Nor should we ignore the fact that language policies have reference not just to divisions between French and English, but between East and West, and between the federal government and the provinces. Decision makers in Ottawa must keep in mind the problems that may ripple throughout provincial educational systems as they try to accommodate federal policy changes.

A second question of great practical significance is what parents want in terms of French-language instruction for their youngsters. Are they looking for fluency in both official languages? Is this a realistic goal? Or do we run the risk of giving youngsters an inadequate command of both languages? Are parents prepared to take the chance that their children might be unable to master their first language and its literary

heritage for the sake of some degree of fluency in French? How many parents are qualified to judge the quality of the French programmes their children receive, or the effects such programmes have on the rest of their schooling? Should we be teaching the language and culture of French Canada, or be concentrating firmly on international standards of French? If we choose the latter, what does this mean in terms of promoting our goals for Canadian studies? And so on.

Even if we can agree upon the philosophical and pedagogical foundations for language education, do we not also need to consider the limits of formal schooling in promoting and maintaining bilingualism? Given that the language of work in this country is principally English, we need to provide greater numbers of continuing education programmes for adults who wish to maintain or improve whatever fluency they have achieved. Continuing education departments at the universities can no doubt assist in this regard, but more needs to be done to provide other kinds of formal and informal opportunities for study required by graduates of immersion programmes.

There is considerable reason to be pleased by what we have achieved in recent decades. In the West, the study of French is no longer seen as an obstacle but as an advantage; language education has caused many parents to participate enthusiastically in public education, and has helped forge new links between the schools and the communities they serve; there is a new mood of tolerance for minority rights and cultures, and we seem to have found new ways to accommodate some of our political goals with the rights and interests of individuals. In short, we are making progress in the West toward achieving some workable form of linguistic equilibrium between French and English in a predominantly English-speaking part of the country.

David King's remarks

Over the past two days, our discussions have clearly revealed the complexity and importance of the language question in Western Canada. I will comment briefly on four aspects of the question that we seem to return to time and time again; these I will call the environment, the issue, the political need and the strategy.

The environment
Canada has an unusual Constitution in that it is not the same one that blankets us all from sea to sea. For example, the Constitution that governs those of us who live in Alberta includes the Alberta Act of 1905. Our Constitution is thus different from the one governing people living in Ontario, Quebec and New Brunswick, different

again from the one governing Manitobans.

It would probably be fair to characterize an Albertan's view of our constitutional history as having been based on an agreement between two founding races and four communities. When Canada extended itself by acquiring Rupert's Land shortly after

Confederation, our national leaders quite reasonably decided to borrow some of the language of the 1867 British North America Act in drafting the Manitoba Act of 1870. Subsequently, however, in particular between 1896 and 1905, the nature of the pact as it applied to Western Canada changed. Deliberate decisions were made that certain provisions of the earlier constitutional documents would not be included in the Alberta Act and the Saskatchewan Act, both of 1905. Thus, for example, Alberta's government and its services are unilingual.

As a result of this background and of current realities, it seems to me that if fundamental changes are contemplated for the linguistic regime in this province, they will more likely move us in the direction of multilingual government and services rather than toward bilingual government and services. But there is one important exception to that generalization: in 1976 and 1977, Alberta associated itself with all the other provinces of Canada, and later subscribed fully to the Charter of Rights' provision that, where numbers warrant, it would provide minority-language education in French. Indeed, policy statements now under consideration by Cabinet will, if approved, go beyond those commitments.

Some 16,500 students in Alberta are today taking their studies in French. In addition, however, we have some 1,000 students studying mathematics, science, social studies and history in Ukrainian, and others doing so in German, Hebrew, Cree, Arabic, Italian, Polish and several other languages.

Another important difference is that Alberta is one of only two provinces in Canada that will certify teachers on the basis of their competence in either of Canada's official languages.

In terms of language of instruction, then, Alberta has made significant progress. We have not yet

done enough, but there is little doubt that we shall accomplish more.

The issue

Earlier today, someone asked why we are all being so polite. For me, at least, the answer lies in the fact that I am attempting to learn a new terminology and grasp an issue that is being described by some in terms that are not meaningful for us in Alberta. Take for example, the term "Anglophone": while many people in Western Canada speak English, they are not Anglophones. Our experience with the concept of Canada is different from that of many people living in Ontario or Quebec.

Similarly, what do we mean by the term "assimilation" and why is that term so pejorative? Here in the West, we operate on the assumption that we want to create a culture that is not Anglophone or Francophone, but which, in Don Harron's word, is "Canajun". Such a process has undertones of 'assimilation'. We are trying to grow a culture that will *not* submerge the best of other cultures, but will draw out the best from all other cultures, and lend energy to the new creation by a process of synergy. When we hear talk that describes association with this emerging culture in pejorative terms we are concerned.

On the other hand, to describe bilingualism as the essential defence against 'assimilation' is to argue that language is essential to cultural distinctiveness. In that case, a bilingualism policy makes a mockery of a multicultural policy.

The political need

The concept of nationhood requires that we stand on common ground, share a common history and share common convictions about the future. Who can describe our national goals, or how they are set? Who can convince us that the goals are capable of achievement? We lack morale, which depends on leadership.

The goal of nationhood cannot be achieved without leadership, leadership from politicians, from businessmen and from the universities. And if bilingualism is deemed to be one of the necessary elements for achieving that goal of nationhood, it is essential that the political will be present and that the concept be endorsed by leaders of the business and university communities.

Strategy

All of which brings me to my last point. Our strategy in the education field should, first and foremost, be to endorse the value of bilingualism. Second, without recourse to coercion, we should ensure that people are given the opportunity to pursue that goal. Third, we should provide incentives for people to become bilingual and, finally, we should reward people who make that choice. In the education field, we do all of these things, because we believe that bilingualism is educationally sound, conducive to the furtherance of our idea of Canada, and personally valuable for individuals and the community at large. Our current plans to develop a new policy on language education is another step toward achieving that goal. I for one am confident that it will be successful.

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Claude Ryan's remarks

By reminding us of the problems involved in implementing the official languages policy in the western provinces, our discussions at this colloquium have brought us to the heart of the Canadian dilemma: the necessity and the difficulty of reaching nationwide agreement on certain national goals.

My position on this matter can be simply put. For Canada to truly distinguish itself from its southern neighbour, make an original contribution to world affairs and allow all Canadians to develop in a spirit of harmony and cooperation, it must accept, in principle and in fact, the French/English duality in this country. History, demography and geography offer no other alternative. If we try to muffle this reality or avoid the issue, the country will spin its wheels and fail to develop its potential as quickly as we might hope.

National goals: establishing priorities

Respect for cultural diversity should be our second national goal. But we must realize that before we can achieve respect for cultural pluralism, we must accept the linguistic and cultural duality that is one of Canada's fundamental features. If we accept this fact, our second goal will be much easier to achieve than if we begin with the premise that Canada should develop in a monolithic, uniform fashion. In short, I believe it is essential to establish clear priorities between these two goals.

When we speak of French/English duality, we associate it primarily with language, but not with language alone. Along with the language are the people who speak it. After one of our sessions, a Montreal colleague of mine participating in this colloquium told me privately: "I get the impression that some people like the French language but not the French-

Canadians." It seems to me if someone truly likes the French language and upholds the principle of French/English duality, then he has a duty as a Francophone, to like and respect those who speak English and, conversely, as an Anglophone, to like and respect those who speak French and who wish to maintain their culture and language wherever they happen to live in Canada.

Furthermore I find the goal of linguistic duality a civilized and enduring objective. It is a goal to which we may all commit ourselves in the almost certain knowledge that in ten, fifteen or twenty years, it will still be valid. It is through perseverance and continuity that we build a great people. Linguistic duality is a noble goal that can be very attractive. However, in order for it to develop into a national goal we must be prepared to accept the fact that it requires the commitment not only of the federal, but also of the provincial and municipal governments, heads of industry, institutions and associations, leaders in the media and private citizens. Acceptance of duality and all its consequences is the price we must be prepared to pay if we want a strong Canada. If we accept that, then we can accomplish a great deal no matter what the future holds for Canada's political structure.

I for one shall never subscribe to the argument that we must do a little more for French in the West in order to prevent Quebec from separating. Don't expect me to engage in such an argument. I prefer to deal with these issues on a higher plane. It is vital that we be convinced that what we are called upon to do is just. This must be repeated over and over again.

I should now like to outline a few goals which we might, in light of

what I have just said, collectively seek to attain in the field of education. For the short term, I would not consider new laws or constitutional change. Those things should come at the proper time, once public opinion has sufficiently matured.

With our collective progress in mind, I should like to suggest four objectives.

First, we should seek to ensure that every Canadian has the opportunity to receive instruction in his or her language at least in elementary and secondary school and, to the extent possible, at higher levels. In other words, all French-speaking children should have access to French-language elementary and secondary schools and English-speaking children should have access to schooling in English throughout Canada.

Currently, to use the language of the 1982 Constitution Act, we are at the point of "where numbers warrant". I hope the provincial governments will act with enough generosity to make legal action before the courts completely unnecessary. I also hope that when the Constitution is next revised, with the participation of the Quebec government, we will see this restrictive clause dropped. You may wonder if that is possible. My answer is that, in Quebec, it has always been so.

Second, we must have a network of institutions and services at the elementary and secondary school levels over which Francophones have an effective measure of control. I am here referring to Francophones outside the Province of Quebec but my comments hold true for the Anglophones of Quebec as well.

Control over their schools is rapidly becoming the major demand of our linguistic minorities.

Much still remains to be done in this regard. If two or three French schools in a given region are governed by an Anglophone school board, you can expect many decisions to be made without a complete understanding of the problems facing Francophones. For this reason, Francophones want a regrouping of their schools and institutions. In Quebec, English-speaking Protestants have long had effective responsibility for their school system. This holds true to such an extent that, even when the Department of Education wants them to implement overly precise policy directives, it often has to issue its directives several times before they are put into practice. We do not wish to deprive the boards of this control. We maintain — at least my party does — that they must keep it; such control is, in our view, in keeping with respect for the goal of duality. Granted, the degree of control would necessarily vary from one province to another according to population composition and distribution, but we must be firm in our resolve to achieve this goal.

The linguistic minorities require more than access to school systems tailored to their needs. They also need community support through a network of infrastructures that enables them to maintain their growth and acts as a support for their development and their day-to-day life.

If all a region has to offer are French-language schools and nothing else to enable Francophones to realize their potential, clearly they will not go very far. For years, French life in the West has been eroding at an alarming rate. This phenomenon was already apparent fifteen years ago when I had opportunities to visit the West more often. It seems to me to have worsened over the past few years. If we want to check the pace of this erosion, a minimum number of public services must be offered in French in the western provinces. This is the meaning of the

battle that Francophones are waging in Manitoba. It is tragic to observe the hysterical direction that public debate on the matter has too often taken. What is important is not whether the 2,000 or 4,000 laws adopted in Manitoba since 1867 will be translated into French within one or two years.

What does the future hold

What is really important is to know what will happen to Franco-Manitobans this year, next year and the year after. There is, however, still no answer to this more serious problem. One of the participants in this colloquium told me, "Don't try and use strong-arm tactics with us, we've proven in Manitoba that they don't work." I beg to differ; there was never any question of coercion in Manitoba. What we had was a legitimate government acting within its normal mandate.

Anyone disagreeing with its approach had the option of voting against the government in the next election. The type of obstruction we witnessed in Manitoba is unworthy, in my humble opinion, of a vigorous democracy.

Still on the same theme, it is essential that a certain number of jobs be available to Francophones in the West in French. It is not without significance, for example, that the federal government employs 55,000 public servants in this region and that a number of them are Francophones. It does not matter that these people are called upon to work in French only part of the time. What matters is that the Francophone community is assured of service in French and of a number of jobs that enable them to avoid totally forgetting or abandoning their culture as soon as they enter the work force.

Third, we should seek to ensure that every young Canadian has the opportunity to acquire, in our elementary and secondary schools, a solid understanding of his first

language and culture as well as a satisfactory knowledge of the second official language and culture. I shall deal only with the second aspect of this proposal, adequate mastery of the second official language.

That too is a noble goal that Canadians should set for themselves. We need not try to achieve it overnight. But if we decided that we wanted to make it a reality in, say, ten years, and that we would work together to achieve that goal, the results would be outstanding. We can do it.

Immersion programmes: a success story

I applaud the spectacular success of French immersion programmes in the four western provinces. The English-speaking Protestant schools of Quebec have made equally remarkable progress in this field.

On the other hand, the major accomplishments made at the elementary level may prove futile if no comparable effort is sustained at the secondary level where study of the second language drops sharply outside the Province of Quebec. The reason for this decline is simple: French is no longer a compulsory subject. Given the present indecision of government and public opinion vis-à-vis language issues, it is not surprising that students are not overly anxious to study French.

In Quebec, English is a compulsory subject in high school and the teaching of English has produced significant results. Furthermore, most Quebecers would agree that the second proposal I have just made is a valid goal for all Canadians.

Our education programmes must also make room for more courses on the cultural heritage of ethnic groups and on heritage languages and cultures. We have made important progress on this front in Quebec but much still remains to be done.

We should also seek to provide members of ethnic communities with public services in their language situations where demography so justifies. I feel no apprehension supporting such a proposal. Initiatives of this type have long been apparent in the Canadian West. Who could truly take offense at that? Political leaders have a duty to offer the public the best possible services. If this means that services are to be offered in the only language through which a particular group of citizens can be reached, why should anyone object?

Finally, we should increase the number of exchange programmes between students, teachers, parents and school administrators in the different provinces and regions of the country.

Last year in Quebec, major amendments were made to the Charter of the French Language (Bill 101). Eric Maldoff, President of Alliance Quebec, has said during this colloquium that even if major grievances still exist and substantial improvements need to

be made, the major irritants have been resolved or alleviated. I note, however, that almost no one in the West has heard of these changes. They still talk of this legislation as though no amendments had ever taken place over the past year.

Increasing the number of exchange programmes between the provinces and regions of Canada would undoubtedly contribute to better mutual communication and understanding. The National Assembly of Quebec is often visited by groups of young people from Ontario and the western provinces. These young visitors are always amazed by what they discover in Quebec and we are always very happy, for our part, to have them come. As one of our national goals in education, we should promote and organize these programmes on an even more solid basis.

By way of conclusion I would say that if we pay only lip service to the national goal of linguistic and cultural duality, we might just as well say we reject it.

The federal government has now accomplished much of what it had to do. Certainly, there is room for many minor improvements, but the groundwork is in place.

As for the provinces, I would not like to see the federal government force them into action as it has sometimes done in the past, whether through over-zealousness or intrigue. A genuine sense of conviction must develop of its own accord within each province. For good to come of it, each province must act in the belief that the cause is a good one and not because they are afraid of future retaliation. Particularly in the field of official languages education, provincial commitment must be more clearly evident and the federal commitment must not waiver.

Federal financial support in this area will be necessary for a number of years to come. Such assistance should, however, be applied to programmes conceived or fully supported by the provinces.

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION PERIOD

Reflecting the consensus that education, in its various forms, offers the best hope for linguistic equity and reconciliation in tomorrow's Canada, speakers in the final discussion period concentrated their comments on current realities — both positive and negative — and on the need for continued reform. The debate focussed on two major issues: the demands of minority-language communities; and the efforts of education administrators to meet the diverse needs of the society they serve.

The first speaker, a leader of Saskatchewan's French-speaking community, noted that assimilation has taken a heavy toll in that province. The 25,000 or so Francophones who remain are trying hard to have French recognized as an official language in Saskatchewan, and a case related to that issue is now before the courts. The Supreme Court's impending decision on the Manitoba case will undoubtedly have an influence on the Fransaskois and Franco-Albertan communities.

New developments are encouraging

Next to speak was a representative of the Francophone minority in British Columbia. He found it encouraging that a Francophone Chamber of Commerce had been formed in Vancouver and that the provincial government was beginning to reach out to its Francophone population. Noting that the first French school, *École Anne Hébert*, opened in Vancouver this year, he echoed several other speakers who stressed the importance of having French schools for Francophones distinct from French immersion schools for Anglophones. He also thought that the western provinces were having difficulty with their commitment to the Constitution, adding that the Government of British

Columbia should accept its commitment to guarantee Francophone rights.

A member of the legal community, noting that the survival and expansion of a minority language and culture begins in the classroom, said the school system for Francophones should be controlled by Francophones and financed by public funds, as is the case for the Anglo-controlled Anglo-Protestant school system in Quebec. He further suggested that the English version of Quebec's legislation on this matter should be adapted to the western provinces so that Francophone minorities could have a system equivalent to that enjoyed by their Anglophone counterparts in Quebec.

The next intervenor, a Franco-Ontarian, agreed with Mr. Ryan's comment that all secondary schools in Ontario should provide courses in the second language; this would enable Francophones to obtain their secondary school diplomas by taking all their courses in French. He mentioned, however, that the Government of Ontario was not totally in favour of such a regime at the present time. He did, however, feel that the province had made remarkable progress over the past year. The western provinces would benefit greatly from an examination of what the Ontario government was doing.

Dialogue, tolerance and understanding

A series of speakers reflected on the broader issue of language and education. One, noting that Canada has no national goal for education, wondered if this were not one reason why Canadians are so lukewarm toward bilingualism and to the provision of proper facilities for the minority population. Another, a union leader, said

the word "dialogue" should accompany "tolerance and understanding" as key expressions of any reform philosophy in this area. The ability to dialogue with one another would be the only way to prevent what has happened in the work world with respect to other languages. Just as it took some legislative clout to bring about recognition of French as the working language of Quebec, so too is legislative support needed in order to draw commitments from various institutions in the West.

Yet another speaker thought it essential to expand the use of French throughout Canada: every educated person should speak the language or languages of his or her country. Education in Canada involved the notion of feeling at home in both official languages; quite apart from the deeper metaphysical questions of national identity or self identity, the most admirable aspect of our country is its linguistic and cultural duality. He did not think there should be so much emphasis on language training for children. What was more important, he said, were the consequences of that training and the living, practical things that should be done to make French a living presence in Canada.

French in Alberta

Turning to Alberta — and in particular to Calgary, the next intervenor gave a brief rundown of the changes that had occurred in that city since 1969. Although Francophones represented only a small percentage of the population, there were now educational and cultural facilities providing services in French. And, more important perhaps, was the support for such facilities demonstrated by people from all racial backgrounds.

In response to questions, David King first noted that there was a basis for consensus between the government and the French community in Alberta on the implementation of Section 23 of the Constitution. It was therefore unlikely that the matter would be brought before the courts. He also reiterated his belief that westerners accept duality and the two founding nations as concepts central to Canada. He added that the governments in Western Canada want to draw out the French fact and create a Canadian culture that manifests itself in many different ways. The federal government has a bilingualism policy and a multiculturalism policy, but Albertans are sceptical that this is feasible for two reasons. If language is deemed essential to culture, then what makes it more essential to Francophones than to Ukrainians or Poles? Second, if assimilation is a loss for Francophones, then it is also a loss for every other assimilated group.

In response to comments on his earlier remarks, George Pedersen said he found it difficult to believe that a highly-developed country like Canada could advance economically, socially and culturally without a clear understanding of the goals and role of education in its overall development.

Max Yalden concluded the discussion period and the colloquium on an optimistic note. He thought that Francophone communities were infinitely more vital today than they had been ten or fifteen years ago and that minority official language rights would be increasingly recognized throughout Canada.

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"I believe the tradition of diversity which allows multiculturalism to flourish in the West is fundamentally rooted and would not exist without the official languages and the two founding cultures being reflected in our law." Following is the text of the Right Honourable Joe Clark's keynote address to colloquium participants.

Past imperfect, future conditional

JOE CLARK

My words this evening will be those of a national politician from Western Canada who not only wants our official language policies to succeed, but who also wants the West to feel and to be an equal partner in Confederation. I particularly want to discuss how we can make our national language policy work without dividing the country.

First, I think it must be said that the war over acceptance of the Official Languages Act in the West is an old war, a war that has been largely won. In the new battle being waged today, language is not so much an issue as a symbol — a symbol of the growing concern among westerners about the role of Western Canada as an equal partner in the Canadian Confederation. If language policy must, as I believe, be seen in the context of national unity, then the theme of language policy in Western Canada must be examined in light of the goals of bilingualism and in light of the nature of Western Canada.

Past historic, present tense

A few words need to be said about two aspects of the nature of this region: its history and its recent experiences. There is no denying that this region has a different history of settlement from the rest of the country. That historic reality naturally produces a different sense of who we are, as well as different attitudes and responses toward the question of official languages and "bilingualism". It is revealing, for example, to note that all six Cabinet ministers in my government from the Prairies and the North were bilingual, but I was the only one who spoke French.

More recently, there has been an accelerating sense in Western Canada that national policy has been

conducted without proper regard for the legitimate interests of this part of the country. For example, many people from other parts of Canada who were concerned about the Constitution saw it in terms of Quebec and the centre. But in Western Canada it was not seen in those terms at all: rather, it was seen in terms of an attempt to impose an inferior status upon the provinces in this region.

Thus, in my view, the recent outbreak of conflict in Manitoba should not be viewed as yet another battle in the old war against the official languages policy. The position of Mr. Mulroney and our party was taken because it reflected not only a national, but a regional, consensus. All of us here from the West acknowledge that the "language issue" — while not a major concern for most people and not an issue of public policy in these provinces — is vital to the existence of our country. Why? Because these matters are of intense concern and importance to over 25 per cent of our fellow Canadians whose mother tongue is French — some 6.5 million people. We also understand that minority language rights are of increasing concern to 800,000 Canadians who belong to Quebec's English-speaking minority. And we know that these issues are an important element in the continuance in Confederation of one of our provinces, Quebec.

We also know that equal status for the two official languages was an essential part of the bargain that made the original Confederation possible in 1867. We are today being reminded of a part of our Canadian and western Canadian history that has been ignored for many decades: equality of status for English and French was part of the bargain that extended Confederation westwards beyond its original boundaries. Most westerners know this; they also know that our

Canadian history and, more importantly, our Canadian reality cannot be changed. I believe this to be an accurate description of the position of those western Canadians whose decisions will influence language policy; and I think it is reassuring to anyone concerned that the Manitoba controversy has changed official western Canadian attitudes materially.

It is important today that we begin to pay more attention to the new challenge for this region. In the West, the language question should be regarded as a *national policy*, not as a *national cause*. In parts of the country where the population is aware of a common history of French and English, you can perhaps pursue bilingualism as a matter of patriotism; here it is better to pursue it as a matter of pragmatism.

Why? Because apart from the very important communities of Francophone minorities in all our western provinces, the residents of this region have had almost no direct experience with the French language. French is a part of our future, but for most of us it was not a part of our past. My daughter has ample reason to become bilingual, but my parents did not. And, until I decided to save the country, nor did I! After all, to whom would I speak French in High River?

Turning in to the West

I assume that one of the purposes of this colloquium is to move beyond the conventional discussions about national language policy and to address its implications for this particular region. What must be recognized is that a language policy designed to unify those parts of Canada with a conscious history of two languages could, if pursued without care, aggrrieve a region with a different conscious history.

That is the problem with the official languages policy in most of Western Canada, and that is what flared into bitter division in Manitoba. Language policy, which is seen as an instrument of "belonging" in most of Canada, can be seen as an instrument of exclusion in Western Canada. There is no deep opposition to the Official Languages Act, or to French. There is just a natural fear, more evident in hard economic times, that rules are being written which make western Canadians less than equal. In order to counter the growing sense of exclusion in the West, we will have to proceed with sensitivity as we develop official languages policies, and we shall have to act quickly to ensure that youngsters in rural and urban Western Canada have an equal opportunity to become Canadian successes.

Let me now take issue gently with the idea that support for bilingualism is the key to Quebec remaining in Confederation. That view is based on the idea that language alone defines the French-Canadian community in Canada. Although language is important, the sense of community is even more so. That is why,

without diminishing the importance or the rights of the Francophone community outside Quebec, we have to recognize the special nature of the Province of Quebec as the crucible of the French-Canadian culture. I hasten to emphasize that that is my personal view. I think Quebec is more than language and I think a policy is inadequate which pretends that guarantees of language will alone enable the French-Canadian culture in Canada to flourish.

Political insensitivity

Putting aside the response to the crisis in Manitoba, I believe the present Government's elaboration of language policy has revealed a profound insensitivity to Western Canada; that insensitivity is the author of much of the opposition to official bilingualism in the West. If this were merely past history, I would not raise it here; unhappily, however, there are current examples too.

Jacques Olivier began his term as Minister of State for Amateur Sport by telling the Calgary committee organizing the Olympic Games to become more bilingual. And John Munro, with virtually no consultation, announced a bill applying the Official Languages Act and the Charter of Rights and Freedoms to the Yukon and the Northwest Territories, whose elected territorial governments he went out of his way to describe as "creations of the Government of Canada". That is a euphemism for colonies.

Now what is the point of that? Mr. Olivier acquired a brief reputation as the Billy Smith of language policy, and the invocation of the North's colonial status angered every Anglophone and Francophone and Inuit north of the 60th parallel. But the poor guy in High River who wants to think well of bilingualism because Joe Clark does, or perhaps even because Pierre Trudeau does, wonders: why are they throwing their weight around?

One of the issues we faced during my brief but intense period in power was the Chouinard Report on bilingual air traffic control. We acted on it quickly, without fanfare, because we were less interested in having our action celebrated in Quebec than we were in getting it accepted in the rest of Canada, including the West. With all due modesty, I recommend that example to people who are concerned about language policy in this region.

Room at the top

I have two concerns about the future of western Canadians in Confederation in light of language policy. One of these, for the short and medium term, is addressed to the federal government. In attempting to set an example of bilingualism at the top, we must not create a situation in which the top ranks of the public service become the preserve of people who come from the so-called bilingual belt in Central Canada. I urge the government to be sensitive to the need for a

public service that not only reflects the two official language groups at all levels, but is geographically representative as well. It was bad for Canada in every way, and it was potentially fatal for Confederation when the public service in Ottawa was wall-to-wall unilingual Anglophone. That situation has changed immensely. But it will be no less wrong if, because of language or any other reason, westerners come to feel that they are denied advancement to the top jobs. They should be shown flexibility and reasonableness since they have had less exposure to French in their early lives than many easterners have had. However, I recommend that all people interested in the full future of the country learn both official languages.

Investing in the future

The second concern is for the longer term, the need to equip our youngsters with a working knowledge of Canada's two official languages. This, of course, falls under provincial jurisdiction. As surely as our school system in the West must equip our children to master new technologies, so it must also equip them to meet Canada's linguistic challenge as more and more of the top jobs, regardless of the sector, require bilingual capability. I appreciate the progress that has been achieved in Alberta and in the other three western provinces. But we are still a long way from giving all our children the opportunity to acquire the linguistic capacity they are going to need in the future. French immersion is fairly widespread and much in demand in the West. But immersion must obviously be the exception rather than the rule in elementary and secondary schools in an English-speaking school system. Of the 1.3 million students in the elementary and secondary school systems of Western Canada, some 126,000 are in French immersion programmes this year. The mass of students in Western Canada must be taught French as a part of the regular curriculum.

Although there have been encouraging increases in the percentage of students studying French at the elementary level, there has unfortunately been a sharp decline at the secondary level. The same situation may be observed in other largely Anglophone provinces — Newfoundland, P.E.I., Nova Scotia, and Ontario — and it is disquieting.

Whatever explanations are offered by those in a position to explain this phenomenon, I should like to know why our school systems cannot make compulsory the study of both of Canada's official

languages, and why our universities cannot make this a requirement both for entrance and for graduation.

Nobody should underestimate the difficulties in turning this situation around. It will require a great degree of cooperative effort on the part of ministers of education, teachers' unions, school boards and parents. The difficulties are real but not insuperable. It is, after all, the interests of our youngsters that are directly at stake. It will affect their access to career opportunities in Canada that will be closed to them if they are not bilingual. Ultimately, then, it is the future of our country that is at stake.

The Canadian tradition

There is one last topic I should like to touch on before I conclude. It has to do with the problem of how we approach the question of two official languages and a multitude of cultures. Some argue that there is conflict between those goals. I disagree. I believe that the fact that we have two official languages has created in this country what I have called a tradition of diversity. We often pride ourselves on our tolerance. But our tolerance is partly a response to necessity. The two communities were here. We had to get along in the bosom of a single state and that created an attitude, a larger view of things, a tolerance that I believe contributed directly to the distinguishable Canadian tradition of encouraging Canadians who came here from the Ukraine, Poland, Asia or elsewhere, to be Canadian while guarding the language, culture and traditions of their origin. I believe the tradition of diversity which allows multiculturalism to flourish here is fundamentally rooted and would not exist without the official languages and the two founding cultures being reflected in our law.

I also think there is a particular tradition of tolerance in Western Canada. People grew up with neighbourliness. I do not think we are a region of particular bitterness or narrowness. I think the opposite. Tolerance is very much a part of Canadian life, in part because we have been forced to be tolerant by the circumstances of geography or of the founding cultures that established this country. Although there are still difficulties today, those difficulties have as much to do with the method of approaching the implementation of language policy as they do with the acceptance of it. The problems can be overcome if we have the will to do so and if we proceed with an understanding of the community in which we are acting.

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at the Colloquium
on Official Languages,
University of
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May 11 and 12, 1984.**

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