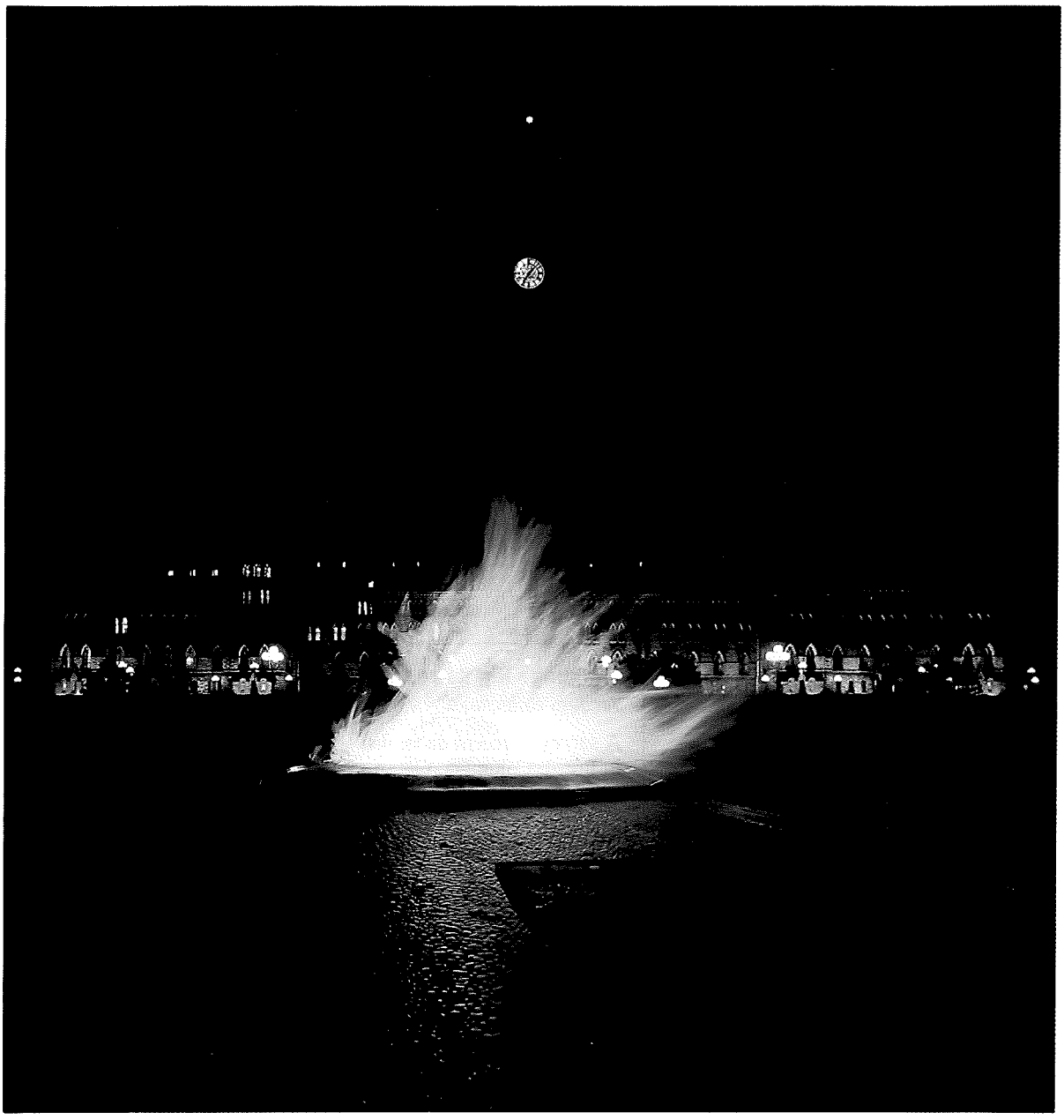
LANGUAGE AND SOCIETY



PIERRE JUNEAU: THE CBC AND THE MINORITIES

RICHARD HATFIELD RECALLS ACADIA

THE MONTREAL IRISH

NEW SERIES

Number **22**, Spring 1988

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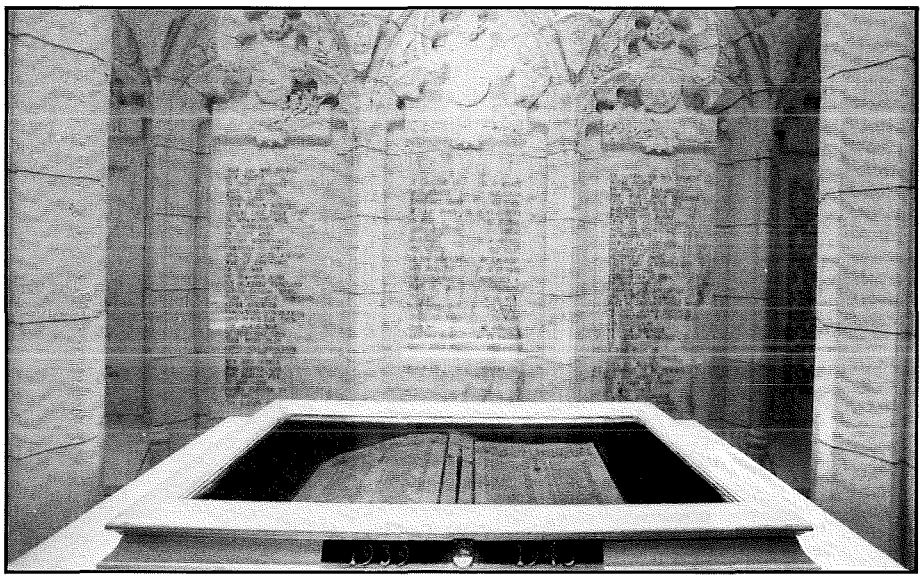

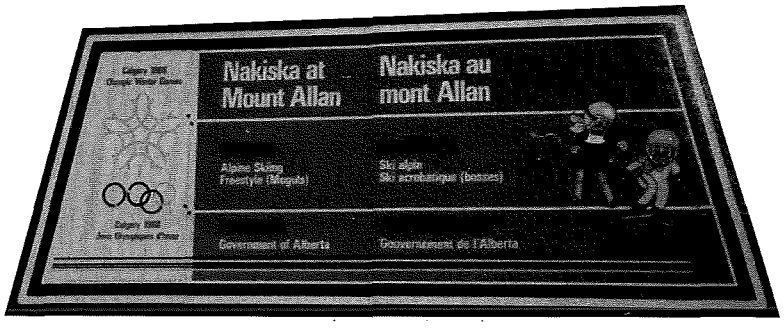

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Letters to the Editor, with the writer's name, address and telephone number, are most welcome. The Editor reserves the right to publish letters, which may be condensed. Send to: *Language and Society*, Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages, Ottawa, Canada K1A 0T8. Tel.: (613) 996-1731.

COMMISSIONER OF OFFICIAL LANGUAGES
COMMISSAIRE AUX LANGUES OFFICIELLES

LANGUAGE AND SOCIETY

This quarterly review is published by the Commissioner of Official Languages for all interested Canadians, and especially for social and political commentators, political and administrative leaders, educators and leaders in voluntary organizations, the private sector and linguistic communities. The review aims at reflecting the linguistic experience of Canadians and at keeping them informed of relevant major events and at encouraging dialogue.

Opinions expressed by contributors from outside the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages do not necessarily reflect the views of the Commissioner.

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A New Commitment

D'Iberville Fortier

A new "Act respecting the status and use of the official languages" has or is about to become law. It is time to stop griping about how long it has been in the making and to turn to the more important questions of what kind of instrument the new Act provides and what the prospects are for its successful use. Is it up to the task that is required of it? We may not agree with Montaigne that "laws remain in credit, not because they are just, but because they are laws", for an Act's legitimacy will always depend on the quality of justice that it claims to enunciate and apply. Its "credit" as law certainly derives, however, just as much from the authority of Parliament and the efficacy of its provisions.

What kind of an Act is the Official Languages Act of 1988? We have already commented in last September's issue on the many structural differences between this Act and its predecessor, but the differences that count can be summarized quite quickly. The Act provides more and clearer official language rights, on a more comprehensive constitutional and legal basis, and it holds out the possibility that those rights will be more promptly enforced. The Act will be more constraining on federal institutions, and it will be so on behalf of Canadians of both official language groups. It will, also, however, invite them to associate themselves as never before with the national ideals of English-French equality and equitable support for their respective communities wherever they may find themselves. The Act also addresses strongly and for the first time our special duty to the official language minorities who have so often borne the brunt of the broader linguistic "squeeze play".

There is a feeling abroad that Canada's commitment to official bilingualism as a unifying social, yes, and cultural value is approaching its moment of truth. Either respect for the "fundamental characteristic" of English-French complementarity and qualitative equality, as described in the Meech Lake accord, will pull us together as essentially a single people or it will not. But the time of testing is upon us and if the new Act does nothing else it puts us on the spot. It spells out the terms, as parliamentarians of all stripes and every region see them, whereby we can finally put our collective effort where our mouth is. From that perspective, the Act is a renewed challenge to our national character and ingenuity.

It is fitting, too, that we be asked to consider the true strength of our commitment to a unifying national language policy in the light of other commitments to the concept of our country: its pluralistic ethos, its economic competitiveness and its openness to other peoples from around the world. It is precisely because those commitments carry with them their inevitable share of centrifugal stress that we must be doubly sure of what is most central, most cohesive and most enduring at the level of a national language consensus.

The concept of multiculturalism, as enunciated in the Bill brought before Parliament last December, is not one that can be taken lightly from the official languages standpoint. The Commissioner's Office has long been on record as finding our increasingly diverse linguistic heritage a blessing, both real and potential. But it is not simply a blessing; like any other complex cultural fruit, it contains some seeds of discord, not least of which is the relative weight of English and French within the total cultural jigsaw. To be fair to everyone, we must above all be *clear* about these things: it is not diversity that is the problem, it is the possible confusion about goals. And nowhere more so than when it comes to providing new Canadians with a forthright statement of what they are, and what they are not, entitled to expect in terms of cultural recognition and support in their new homeland. Too many lures to remain culturally apart without emphasis on the more encompassing linguistic and cultural traditions of this country would certainly not be a service either to the individual or to the community at large. In plain words, preserving the heritage of various ethnic groups could spoil the chances of both the individual and the country if not accompanied by an even stronger effort to cleave to common values and common languages.

So the 1988 Official Languages Act is a good Act, as these things go, even if its length and detail make it a lot less "readable" than the old one. To take the measure of its prospects, however, we must look to two or three more extraneous factors. Our 18-year experience with the previous Act and its attendant policies is surely one such factor. So is the general environment of opinion on, and activity in, official languages matters. Both of these can perhaps be wrapped into the single notion of the Act's credibility: the credibility of what it purports to be able to achieve, and, even more important, the credibility of the means at its disposal for achieving it.

Among the things which the new Act proposes to achieve, three in particular are bound to provide very severe tests of both conceptual and practical credibility. They are its ability to deliver service in the minority language where the minority community is numerically small; its ability to raise French to the level of an effective working language in federal bodies in bilingual areas; and, toughest of all, its ability (1) to convince the more isolated minority communities that their "preservation" — in the most generous sense that the Meech Lake word will bear — is indeed an urgent priority, and (2) to persuade Canadian governments and Canadian society as a whole that this calls for their active co-operation. These communities still have a lot of innate vitality and pride, but their numbers are shrinking visibly and the availability of encouraging institutional lifelines is hardly enough to hang even modest hopes on at present.

"Hope deferred maketh the heart sick," the proverb says. Well, the new Act has at last given us something substantial to hope and to work for. It is as close to a national blueprint for a bilingual Canada as we seem likely to get right now. Do we have the will and the wherewithal to pull it off? The will, yes — or certainly enough to be going on with if everyone takes his or her role seriously. For that is one thing the new Act does in no uncertain terms. It puts new pressure on our institutional selves, to show real leadership as politicians, to be more sensitive and conscientious as public servants, and to "get with it" as ordinary citizens who believe in what Canada stands for. Heaviest of all may be the onus it will place on the minorities in whose name much of this girding of bilingual loins is to be done. They are the Canadians who can least afford to miss the new institutional opportunities to be true to their own language that the new Act provides. The financial wherewithal remains a lot less certain. But here we feel that the record of what *has* been achieved through our investment over the last 18 years will speak loud for the need to do the thing properly and make official bilingualism a truly paying proposition for our country. ■

Thank You for Your Interest

*Stuart Beaty**

While Government's replies to Committee reports on the official languages in education and federal bilingualism were bland, the Committee's work in fact launched useful initiatives.

Parliament's Standing Joint Committee on Official Languages submitted two important reports in 1987. The first, which was based on hearings conducted between October 1985 and June 1986, dealt with amendments to the Official Languages Act and the official languages in education. The second, which covered hearings between December 1986 and March 1987, focused on official languages management within the federal administration.

Using the Commissioner's 1985 and 1986 Annual Reports to Parliament as a base, the Committee quizzed expert witnesses, official languages associations and the heads of government institutions to form its own opinion of how well federal bilingualism was meeting its declared objectives and what needed to be done to make it more effective. The Committee's reports made 14 recommendations (three in the first and 11 in the second), to all of which the Government was required to respond within 150 days. It did so by formally replying to the Committee in mid-November 1987.

Amendments to the Official Languages Act

The Committee recommended that the Bill to amend the Act (which was tabled about the time the reports were published) should be referred to it, given its experience and expertise, rather than to a legislative committee. The Government declined to make an exception to the standard practice of considering the Bill separately in each Chamber while pointing out that it is also normal practice for members of a standing joint committee to be included in the respective House and Senate legislative committees.

Official languages in education

This first report singled out three main areas of concern: provinces' slowness in complying with the minority education rights of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms; public questions about whether federal aid in this area was being used as intended; and the almost total lack of post-secondary education in French outside Quebec.

It recommended a First Ministers Conference in 1988 on all aspects of official languages in education, and that the issues of French outside Quebec be discussed at the National Post-Secondary Forum in Saskatoon in October. The Government promised to raise the idea of a conference with the Council of Ministers of Education. It noted, however, that there are already "well established means of federal-provincial co-operation" in this area and that a number of the issues are necessarily discussed as part of the process of negotiating the five-year federal-provincial agreements on which federal funding is based. The question of post-secondary education in French was raised at the Saskatoon forum, along with other matters of special interest to the official languages communities.

Official languages in the federal Public Service

On the basis of its own close examination of 16 federal institutions, the Committee concluded that this aspect of the program was not being vigorously pursued and that "lack of direction and follow-up" in Treasury Board's management of the program was substantially to blame. It noted deficiencies in virtually all areas of the program and put forward 11 recommendations covering everything from equitable participation of both language groups in the federal Public Service to language training and the bilingualism bonus.

The Government's reply consisted, generally speaking, in accepting the validity of most of the Committee's criticisms and giving a series of undertakings to do better once a new Official Languages Act has been put in place.

Speaking of Committee recommendations on equitable participation, language of work and the program management and accountability systems for which Treasury Board is responsible, the reply said simply that "Government's commitment to these matters is clearly reflected in the provisions of the Bill." It then went on to repeat those provisions and to promise that Treasury Board will take "all the initiatives necessary...".

The Committee also made recommendations on such matters as the designation and staffing of bilingual jobs, the levels of second-language competence required and when and how to provide language training to public servants. Here again, the Government's reply was generally sympathetic to the thrust of the Committee's recommendations (to restrict the bilingualism bonus, for instance, to the more deserving cases) but at the same time politely suggested that Treasury Board either already had the situation in hand or would soon be in a position to do whatever might be necessary.

The Government's reaction to the Committee's recommendation that "all federal departments and agencies set up an Official Languages Branch which would report directly to the deputy minister..." may provide the reader with the general flavour: "Treasury Board is of the view that it is the responsibility of each institution to organize its resources in a way best suited to its particular mandate and circumstances and in order to meet its official languages obligations. Nevertheless, within the context of the negotiation of the letter of understanding, the official languages administrative framework will be examined carefully to ensure that a member of the institution's Executive Committee is effectively responsible for managing the program."

It is probably too much to expect that an official response to these parliamentary reports would convey a less orthodox bureaucratic message than "thank you for your interest; we're working on it." It is possible, too, that some of the Committee's recommendations were too general or not well enough substantiated to push the Government into taking action that it had not already decided on. One cannot help wondering what the public might make of these solemn, inconclusive exchanges about some heavy-duty problems in Canadian bilingualism. There is every reason to believe, however, that the hearings were highly successful in stimulating the agencies involved and through them much of the government apparatus. Thanks to the Committee's hard work, a number of interesting new initiatives were launched in 1987. ■

***Stuart Beaty is Special Projects Adviser in the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages.**

Who's Afraid of C-72?

*Gérard Pelletier**

The former Cabinet minister who introduced the 1969 Official Languages Act discusses the new one. Is it good news or bad news?

I have been asked to compare the 1969 Official Languages Act with Bill C-72 and to assess the changes contained in this new legislation. Will the cause of our official languages be advanced, or just the opposite?

As I was setting to work after examining both texts, an incident arose that shed some light on the question. Canadian Press reported that an Ontario MP had just resigned his position as a Parliamentary Secretary because of the new Bill. He said, in effect, that he feared the rights of his constituents were threatened by Bill C-72 and the way in which it was drafted.

Perhaps the new text is not totally insipid if it causes that much concern to a member of the House of Commons. The MP went on to say that he was a Conservative, unilingual, and represented an overwhelmingly unilingual Anglophone riding. What worries him, apparently, is that rights are accorded to French. It is difficult to understand how such rights could be a menace to his constituents, but one thing seems certain: if the amendments proposed to the 1969 Act had weakened French rights, the MP would not have resigned.

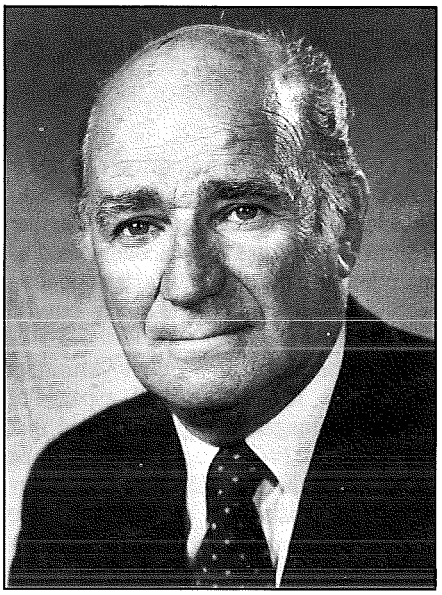
On the other hand, the threat does not appear to cause him a major problem. He is simply resigning as Parliamentary Secretary, is not leaving his party (responsible for the Bill) and is not resigning as the representative of his threatened constituents.

Vaguely worded formulations

I should warn readers that this is not a legal analysis for the simple reason that I am not qualified for such a task. Nevertheless, experience allows me to distinguish between the effective provisions of the 1969 Act and those that got us nowhere.

Let's begin with the bad news so we can have a happy ending.

Based on 18 years of experience, my first concern is with the many vaguely worded formulations of the "where numbers warrant" variety. The Commission nationale des parents francophones recently drew attention to the incredible interpretation that several Anglophone provinces have given to this wording, which appears in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. In Alberta the majority has a dozen or so public schools with less than 30 pupils each but refuses to provide French schools to Francophone minority groups with the same number or even more. In Saskatchewan the same double standard prevents the establishment of French school boards despite the generous number of English ones throughout the province.



Gérard Pelletier

Bill C-72 is full of similar formulations, both old and new: "...where there is significant demand...", "where, due to the nature of the office or facility, it is reasonable...", and so on.

It is not easy for the legislator to draft a legal text in which language rights and obligations are defined with absolute precision in every instance. Unfortunately, experience has shown that, by leaving this type of definition to arbitrary choice, generous principles contained in the legal text are almost inevitably emasculated. It is only too easy to exhaust, through legal and other procedures, the slim resources of parents wishing to provide their children with a normal education in their mother, and legally official, tongue. One is tempted to paraphrase Orwell's famous aphorism: English and French are the two official languages of Canada but, in some parts of the country, one is more official than the other.

No law can, of course, resolve every issue. But, by leaving it to Cabinet (which is the Governor in Council) to interpret criteria and draft regulations, we remove implementation modalities — the elements that make life more difficult or easier for our official languages and the people who use them — from public scrutiny.

Furthermore, there is a great deal of evidence to show that political will, which is not subject to any law, has an extremely important role to play in this area. For example, if a unilingual deputy minister is appointed to head a department, every major issue will be dealt with in his or her language no matter what regulations may have been drafted by Cabinet. None of these formulations will affect a deputy minister unable to response to "Comment allez-vous?" (In 20 years in the Ottawa area, I have never found a single one incapable of answering the question "How do you do?")

Progress has been made

So much for my reservations. Let me now give the good news.

The 1969 Act provided for the simultaneous publication in both languages of all legislative instruments unless their translation "would occasion a delay prejudicial to the public interest". This exception, thank goodness, disappears. We have finally recognized that the existence of two official languages is never prejudicial to the public interest. Clearly, we were too discreet when we drafted the first Act.

As for the courts, it seems to me that respect for our official languages will be significantly enhanced, if the Bill becomes law, when judges and presiding officers will have to be able to understand witnesses *without the help of an interpreter*, and when federal intervenors will have to use the official language chosen by the parties, both languages being required if the parties disagree, though we are left to wonder why the highest court of the land, the Supreme Court, is not subject to this requirement.

The 1969 Act imposed on federal departments and agencies an obligation to serve members of the public in the official language of their choice. The Charter made this a *right*. Under the new Bill, citizens who consider that their language rights have been contravened can appeal to the Commissioner of Official Languages (and six months later, if still not satisfied, bring their complaints to the Federal Court). Under the Charter, they may already address a court.

I also see that the Bill amends the Commissioner's mandate by extending it significantly. The Commissioner will

***Gérard Pelletier, who was Secretary of State of Canada between 1968 and 1972, sponsored the 1969 Official Language Act.**

henceforth be able to examine any regulations that Cabinet may make under the Act. When one considers the huge number of decisions this represents — I refer particularly to the designation of bilingual regions and the full participation of both language groups in the Public Service — one is reassured by this sober second look given to an independent official whose major concern is linguistic fair play.

Furthermore, if a complaint leads to an impasse, the Commissioner can, when he considers it appropriate, table a special report with the Governor in Council, and the government would have to react within a reasonable period of time, as is already the case for reports of standing committees of the House of Commons. Such an obligation will probably reduce, but not eradicate, the temptation always suffered by the executive to neglect everything that does not flow from its own initiative.

Management

On balance, the Bill is a positive step forward, at least to this non-expert. But I still do not consider it revolutionary and I cannot for the life of me understand how such relatively minor changes could threaten the constituents of the MP referred to above.

There is one last point I really cannot classify. Is it good news or bad news?

The 1969 Act did not designate responsibility for the management of language programs to any department or agency. The new Bill gives the Treasury Board overall responsibility for such management and for the promotion of these principles and programs throughout the federal administration and in Crown corporations and their wholly-owned subsidiaries.

Is this a good idea? I'm not sure. A bad idea? I wouldn't say that either because I'm a little too far removed to judge. On the one hand I know the power and influence of Treasury Board within government. But I also know that the nature of government is relatively far removed from matters to do with language and culture. Very far removed, in fact. My fear, which I express with reservations, is as follows: that Treasury Board, as in the past, will delegate this responsibility to public servants who, within its own structure, have little status and no great influence on its decisions *for the simple reason they do not deal with large budgets.* When you're not talking about millions of dollars, you're not given much credence!

However, it is quite possible that the President of the Treasury Board or some other minister may become greatly interested in this field and may be able to force his colleagues to give it the proper attention. That, at least, is what I hope. ■

Special Reports to the Governor in Council: The Saga of Three Cases

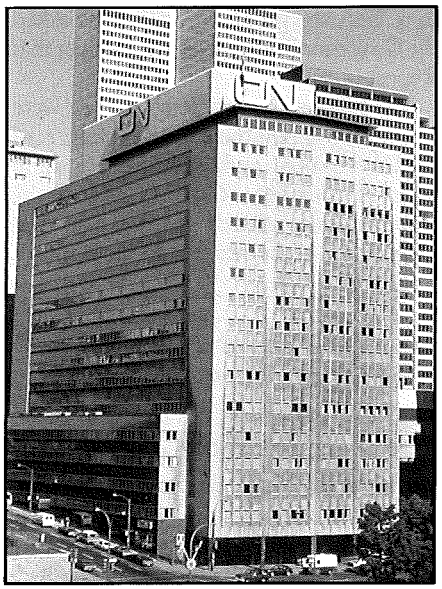
*Michael Johnston**

Special Reports from the Commissioner to the Governor in Council constitute an unusual step. That they should have been necessary years after the passage of the Official Languages Act shows the need to clarify rights, obligations and means of enforcement.

The Commissioner's powers, like those of all ombudsmen, are those of pressure and persuasion. But when the usual sort of encouraging, prodding and pushing fails to lead to adequate and appropriate action on his recommendations within a reasonable time, the law allows the Commissioner to take the unusual step of submitting the case to the Governor in Council — meaning the Prime Minister and his Cabinet colleagues.

A year ago the Commissioner took this step, sending three Reports to the Governor in Council. He chose the subjects of his Special Reports with care. They were striking examples of long-standing problems in the three fields which together determine the equality of our two official languages — service to the public, full participation and language of work — and dealt with matters of serious concern to a cross-section of Canadians of both official languages. The Commissioner also wanted to test the effectiveness of this device as a way of getting things back on track.

The significance of this test is underlined by the fact that the Reports were made against the background of the revision then being carried out of the Official Languages Act. They deal with specific aspects of the program and do not constitute general indictments of the institutions concerned. The Commissioner said in explaining the Reports to the Standing Joint Committee on Official Languages, "when the Government proposals to amend



the Official Languages Act are considered, the additional light provided by the Reports should help the legislator to see that the road to equity is long and arduous...".

Replying on the very day that the new Official Languages Bill was tabled, Prime Minister Mulroney said that he and his colleagues had found the Reports extremely helpful, and he felt that the measures which were being proposed in separate letters approved by Cabinet should lead to a clear improvement in all three situations.

In the case of two of the Reports — on Canadian National and Via Rail (passenger services) and Anglophone participation in the federal Public Service in Quebec — the ministerial proposals did mark a step forward. But the measures on language of work proposed by National Defence were

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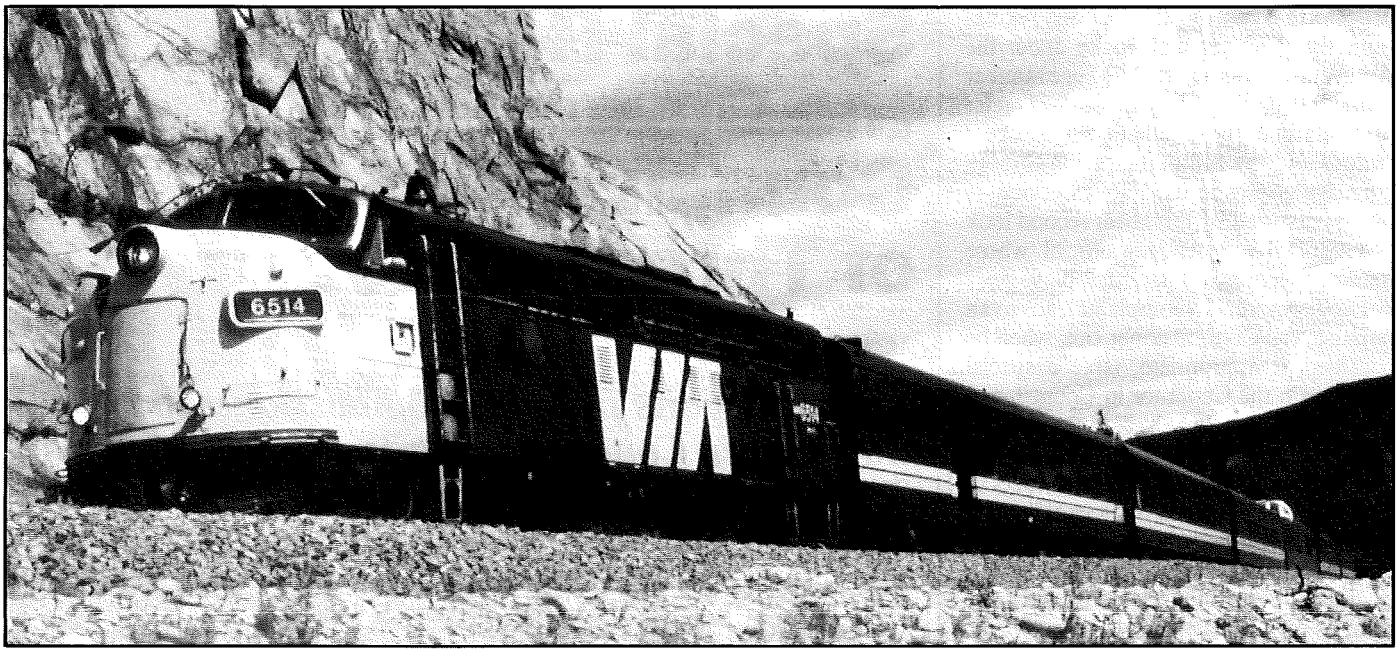
***A long-time employee of the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages, Michael Johnston is now on special assignment with National Museums of Canada.**



Daniel Wiener

not, in the Commissioner's view, adequate to remedy the problems. In July he asked the Governor in Council to reconsider that Report.

We present the problems as they were when we brought them to the attention of the Government, and describe the position as of December 16, 1987, when the Commissioner advised the Standing Joint Committee of the reaction to the Reports.

The Reports were made against the background of the revisions being carried out to the Official Languages Act.

Via

The first Report concerned services which Canadian National (CN) and Via often provided to travellers in English only.

Because of the absence of language clauses in collective agreements with Via Rail, station and train employees in contact with the public were being assigned to jobs without regard for the passengers' right to service in the official language of their choice. When challenged to do something about this, Via's management, despite numerous promises, did not succeed in bringing about the appropriate changes. Although CN had an understanding with the union as early as 1968 to facilitate the provision of bilingual services by conductors and brakemen on passenger trains in the "bilingual belt", it failed to apply it to teams working out of Toronto. Elsewhere, bilingual services were not provided for by collective agreements or understandings. As a result, Francophone travellers were frequently unable to obtain services in their own language on trains or in stations.

In his reply, the Minister of Transport summarized measures taken by CN and Via to improve services all along the system and said that, beginning in 1987, the majority of candidates hired for public-contact jobs would be bilingual. He noted that management and the union had agreed to work together in designating bilingual positions, and language training would be stepped up.

The Commissioner was pleased with the positive attitude shown in the reply. He did, however, request clarification on a number of points, and is focusing on other situations which require urgent attention.

Anglophone participation in Quebec

The second Report dealt with the steadily-declining participation of Anglophones in the federal Public Service in Quebec. Even in bilingual areas where 20% of the population is Anglophone, Anglophones hold only 7.1% of Public Service jobs. The normal channel for filling certain non-officer positions is through the federal Employment Centres and the fact that the employees working in these Centres are almost exclusively Francophone did not help matters.

The President of the Treasury Board informed the Commissioner that nine departments with a poor record of employing Anglophones in Quebec had been instructed to come up with specific initiatives to correct the situation. The Public Service Commission (PSC) set up a committee to analyze the initiatives and propose measures. This committee required that institutions with participation problems provide more precise data to Canada Employment Centres and the PSC on candidate requirements. Managers would need to be made more aware of the problem of Anglophone under-representation, and federal institutions in Quebec would be asked to re-examine recruitment methods and review the language profiles of positions. The various institutions would be expected to advertise vacant positions in both English- and French-language newspapers while taking steps to enhance relations with the English-speaking community. Finally, the members of selection boards would be required to have a sufficient knowledge of English to be able to evaluate Anglophone candidates in a fair manner, and at least one board member would have to be an Anglophone. The committee will meet in the middle of 1988 and early 1989 to evaluate progress.

National Defence

The third Report concerned the Department of National Defence's (DND) failure to give equal status to French as a language of work, particularly at its headquarters in Ottawa. The vast majority of DND's technical work instruments are still in English only, many of its technical and professional training courses are unavailable in French, and almost two-thirds of bilingual military positions are occupied by people who do not meet the language requirements. All these problems had been the subject of recommendations as early as the Commissioner's 1977 audit of DND.

As Canada's Armed Forces depend increasingly on technology, the lack of French technical training manuals and computer software means that Francophones are at a disadvantage in their careers and, while it is useful to know a second language, the ubiquity of English within DND in fact makes this asset an instrument of assimilation for Francophone

personnel. Even though basic training is available in both languages, less and less training is available in French as the degree of specialization increases. This is the case, for example, at the Canadian Forces School of Military Engineering and the Automated Data Processing Centre. Where training in French is not available, tutorial assistance is sometimes given to Francophones in English-language courses, but this is a poor substitute for training in one's own language.

Posting unilingual military personnel to bilingual positions has had a negative effect on the use of French as a language of work, and nowhere is this more evident than at headquarters. It is surprising to find that, years after the Official Languages Act, only 37% of the bilingual positions are filled with people competent in both languages in an organization which has considerable control over the careers of its personnel.

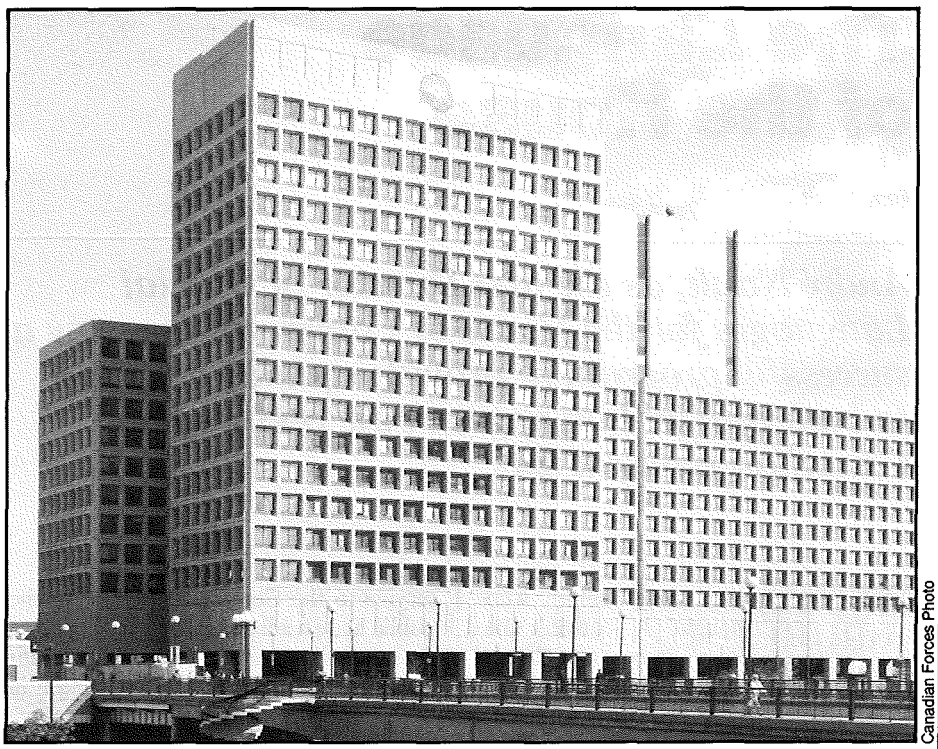
In his reply, the Associate Minister of National Defence reviewed a number of current policies and programs that would

be revitalized or applied more rigorously, and said that an executive committee would be set up to monitor progress and devise new ways of increasing the use of French.

After considering the response carefully, the Commissioner decided that, while the means proposed were helpful, the solutions did not measure up to the problems and shortcomings, and he therefore resubmitted the Report to the Governor in Council.

In early December a second reply was received, this time from the Minister, who made a number of commitments which, once acted on, will bring about significant improvements. He and his senior staff expressed in particular their intention of integrating official languages obligations with operational objectives, and they have created an Executive Committee on Official Languages to oversee the development of new initiatives.

DND has taken steps to deal with the long-standing problem of unilingual-



Canadian Forces Photo

National Defence headquarters, Ottawa

English technical manuals and other work documents. It asked for and received Treasury Board's authorization to hire additional translators to tackle the backlog. Contract tenders for the purchase of new equipment now contain a clause requiring bilingual documentation which must be available in time for the first staff training session. Professional training, another weak area, has also received attention. Some 350 courses have been reviewed to ensure that they are available in French, and new directives dealing with 1,250 other courses will be ready by February 1988.

DND seems finally to have agreed that it is important to at least begin staffing bilingual positions with personnel who possess the appropriate language skills. On the military side, the process will coincide with the start of the next transfer phase, and priority will be given to positions involving security and safety, service to the public and staff training. On the civilian side, managers have been asked to review staffing requests to ensure that the highest possible level of bilingualism is required of candidates appointed to bilingual positions.

The Commissioner will give a little more time to the Department a little time before evaluating progress. However, he fully expects these steps to result in concrete, measurable achievements in the area of language of work.

Conclusion

Any number of current situations could have given rise to the Special Reports, or could do so in the future. As well as being important in themselves, the three chosen were selected for their symbolic value.

In our view, the Special Reports were worth the effort. They galvanized the Government into taking long-overdue action to correct the deficiencies in services to railway passengers and to halt the decline of Anglophone representation in federal services in Quebec. More effort was needed to convince the Department of National Defence that the Commissioner meant business, but DND's second reply was much more positive and is expected to produce significant changes in the status of French.

Special Reports do not, of course, end with the responses of the Prime Minister and the ministers concerned, or with their immediate actions. They will be judged by the concrete, durable reforms they bring about. The Commissioner will keep a watchful eye on the institutions concerned and will keep the Standing Joint Committee informed of developments as the need arises. Special Reports would seem to be particularly appropriate where political will is the key to reform; not every problem lends itself to settlement in the courts.

The fact that these Special Reports were necessary at all nearly 20 years after the enactment of the Official Languages Act has demonstrated the need to clarify linguistic rights, obligations and means of enforcement. This process is now well underway. ■

The Language of the House

Tom Sloan

André Nault, as the first Director of Official Languages for the House of Commons, oversaw a successful program to provide equality of status to both official languages at the centre of Canadian political life.

"There were some who thought it couldn't be done," says André Nault proudly, "but it was."

"It" refers to the complete bilingualization of one of the most crucial, visible, and at the same time most complex institutions to deal with in the whole structure of the federal government — the House of Commons itself. As the centre of Canadian political life, the House is an institution like no other, the home of 282 ever watchful Members, rightly jealous of their prestige and their prerogatives. By its very nature, it is mindful of tradition and wary of change coming from the outside.

The precincts of Parliament

In a very real sense, of course, the House and the Senate have been bilingual since Confederation, when English and French were both recognized as official languages within the precincts of the federal Parliament, just as they were in the Quebec legislature and in the federal courts. Today, all official parliamentary documents are in both languages, and debates in committees as well as in the full House are translated simultaneously.

Nevertheless, as André Nault discovered when he was appointed the first Director of Official Languages for the Commons in October 1980, there was much more to be done.

Resting on laurels

While the administration as a whole had proceeded with more or less deliberate speed towards ever more comprehensive programs designed to give equality of status to both official languages, Parliament essentially stood still, resting on past laurels. And, while many, if not most, of the 1,500 staff members attached to the House were effectively bilingual, there was no assurance that those in key areas of service to the Commons itself or to the public had an adequate bilingual capacity. A constant source of complaint, for example, was the inability to function in both languages of many of the commissionaires and guides whose job is to welcome visitors to the Parliament buildings. In more general terms, there was a widespread feeling, especially among Francophones, that the atmosphere surrounding the central institution of Canadian political life did not reflect Canadian reality.

The image of Canada

The process of change began with the arrival of Jeanne Sauvé as Speaker of the House in April 1980, followed shortly by a statement that the House considered itself bound by the Official Languages Act. The crucial first step was her appointment, a few months later, of Mr. Nault to ensure that, in his words, "Parliament Hill reflected the image of a united Canada in a bilingual country."

Mr. Nault had the background for the job. After entering the Public Service 24 years earlier as an inventory clerk, he had risen steadily in the ranks, specializing in the fields of program co-ordination and management evaluation. He had already been closely involved with official languages programs in two government departments in the 70s, and his university studies included master's degrees in public administration and project management.

The challenge involved the institution itself and its staffing; and, even more delicately, it involved the physical face of Parliament itself, including plaques and inscriptions etched in stone, clearly meant to be permanent, but just as clearly unilingual.

Bilingual pages

The question of staffing to meet the new language needs was a difficult one, involving hirings, transfers and language training, which fully occupied his small staff of seven, in addition to 21 language teachers. Perhaps the thorniest problem of all was that of the House of Commons pages, who are hired on a sessional basis to serve the needs of MPs, an obvious case of the need for a bilingual capacity, but complicated by the fact that the pages, usually university students, come from all parts of the country. In 1980, when the language program began, 15 of 35 pages were incapable of functioning in both languages. In July 1981, weathering a small storm from some MPs, the new Director introduced a policy whereby all recruits should have at least an intermediate level of their second language. By 1986, while geographic balance continued to be respected, all pages were functionally bilingual. In his post-mortem report, Mr. Nault concluded: "This proves that, with desire, perseverance and diplomacy, it is possible to introduce and apply a new, controversial policy, even in a milieu that is traditional and well guarded."

One of the operative words is "diplomacy". In discussing his experience, Mr. Nault stresses the importance of persuasion, discussion and continuous communication with those concerned in the process. In his report, Mr. Nault credits the use of "democratic or co-operative methods, as opposed to attempts to change things autocratically" for the overall success of the program.

The Memorial Chapel

Diplomacy and persuasion were especially necessary when it came to one of the most potentially controversial aspects of the whole process. This was the linguistic facelift of the Parliament buildings in general and, in particular, of the Memorial Chapel, originally built in 1929 to commemorate the Canadian dead of the First World War. Understandably, there was much concern on the part of veterans' groups at the prospect of interfering with the original plaques and inscriptions, all in English. From the start mindful in this, as in other areas, of the danger of a backlash, Mr. Nault consulted with everyone concerned to ensure acceptance of the necessary changes. Acceptance came, and 1982 saw the re-opening of a now bilingual Chapel dedicated to the memories, not only of the First World War, but of all Canadian military involvements from 1866 to the present.

Inscriptions

The Chapel was the most visible part of a comprehensive program that changed, but did not harm, Parliament Hill, where plaques, notices and inscriptions are now

all bilingual, both in and outside the Parliament buildings. This in turn was part of the overall program that, while strictly speaking limited to the Commons, has also directly affected the Senate and the Parliamentary Library, both of which to a large extent adopted the plans designed for the House. In addition, Mr. Nault reports that there was an excellent response from the offices of MPs, to whom the program was offered on a voluntary basis.

Success

Mr. Nault considers the project a success. "I'm very proud of what we accomplished," he says, while noting that there must be vigilance to guard against slippage. His assessment is shared by the Commissioner of Official Languages who, in a succession of Annual Reports and audits since 1981, has singled out the House of Commons for high praise.

There is often a caveat in any success story. In this case, it concerns the relative proportion of staff members whose first languages are English and French respectively. In fact, Anglophone staffers in the Commons presently account for only about 38% of the total. The imbalance concerned Mr. Nault from the start of his mandate. "It's a difficult problem in the Ottawa area," he says, because, especially in the support and technical staff categories, where the disparity is widest, the supply of bilingual Francophones far exceeds that of Anglophones. The effort to correct the situation continues. ■

Under Control?

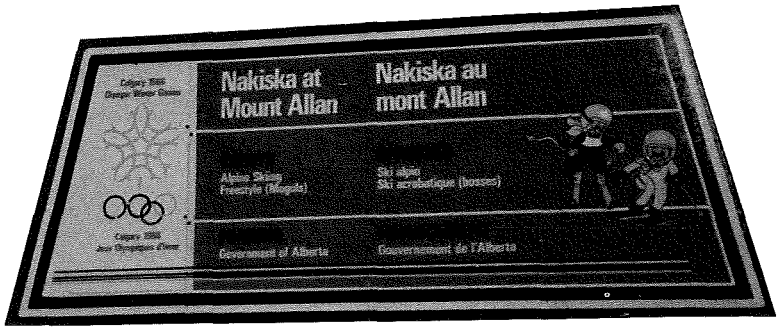
As reported in *Language and Society* 20 and 21, the Commissioner of Official Languages is investigating complaints from eight Francophone air traffic controllers that they had been subject to some hostility during training programs at the Whitehorse, Kamloops and Winnipeg airports.

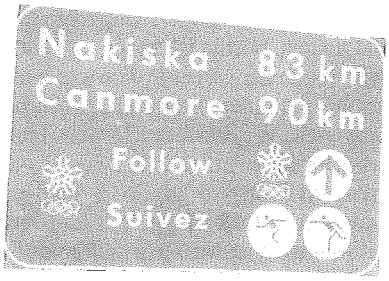
A report from Transport Canada last summer has been revised and re-presented following queries and comments on the part of the Commissioner. The final version is somewhat unsatisfactory.

As we go to print, the complainants have officially maintained their allegations and, in the Commissioner's Office, the investigation continues.

We'll bring you up to date in our June issue.

A Prelude to the Calgary Olympic Winter Games: Signs of the Times





In our next issue we will report on how well the linguistic game was played in Calgary.

The CBC and Minority Concerns: An Interview with Pierre Juneau

With some 11,000 employees the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation is one of the heavyweights of the Canadian business community. Pierre Juneau has been its president since 1982.* Language and Society *asked him about the services the CBC provides to Canada's official language minorities.

Language and Society: *The minorities are asking the CBC for more regional content in radio and television programming. Francophone communities say the French network is a mere reflection of Montreal, while Anglo-Quebecers complain that Toronto is luring away Montreal's English-speaking artists. Is there any truth to those claims?*

Pierre Juneau: I'll begin with the last part of your question. It's true there has been a certain exodus toward Toronto by Anglophones in the past few years, but that trend is reversing. We've just appointed a new director of English-language services in Quebec, Nicole Bélanger, a Montrealer who made her career in Toronto and who knows the senior English network people very well. We also have Dennis Trudeau, who began his career in Montreal, then went to Toronto to do a high-profile program, "As It Happens", and has just returned to Montreal to a major position in television. These two changes will no doubt help.

— *Does that mean some of the CBC's English-language production may return to Montreal?*

— Perhaps. There seems to be something of a revival in Montreal generally. It's in the best interests of Francophones that Montreal remain a major Anglophone cultural centre. Culture is a major resource, and any decline in cultural resources is unfortunate.

— *Are the French-speaking minorities right in saying there's not enough regional content?*

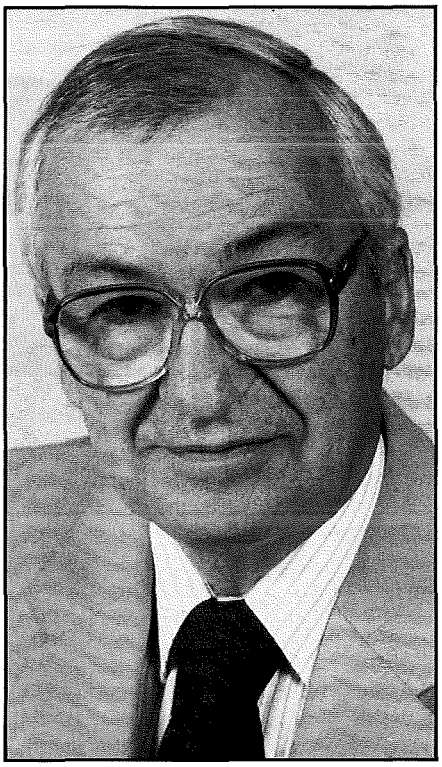


Photo Features Ltd.

Pierre Juneau

— You can say the same thing about CBC production as a whole. We constantly say it ourselves. We feel there's a very respectable quantity of production on the French side, but we need larger budgets to improve the quality of news programming, to do more drama, repertory production and documentaries on important subjects. We're currently conducting a study on ways to improve radio news programs. Production and programming are inadequate in all sorts of areas.

— *Will the CBC consider reallocating budgets from Montreal and Toronto to the regions?*

— It's an unfortunate attitude, this idea that the solution to almost any problem at the CBC is to take from Peter to pay Paul. Resources have been taken from the CBC as a whole in recent years. We need bigger budgets for the CBC French network, that's for sure. Even if 40% of our total budget goes to the Francophone side of our operation, you must remember that a good program costs just as much to produce in French as in English.

— *If you were given $25 million today, would you begin by improving regional programming?*

— Not just regional programming. There are aspects of network programming that need fixing, too. We hear a lot of political demands for us to emphasize the importance of regional programming. I'm all for it. If we look at the statistics, however, we see that the general public watches a lot of national programs. If the 10 o'clock national news is under-funded, the public will complain about it just as much as if it were the six o'clock regional news.

— *Not all Francophones in Canada can receive the CBC. Even fairly large cities receive Radio-Canada Montréal instead of the local signal. That's the case in British Columbia, for example. How can this be corrected?*

— Roughly 2% of Francophones do not receive the CBC French network. That's about the same as the percentage of Anglophones who don't receive the English network. It's not really a problem specific to Francophones.

The British Columbia case is an exception. There are places where Radio-Canada does not yet have a ground transmitter. Programs from Montreal are available by satellite, and it's fortunate they are. That's more of a benefit than a drawback.

— *The Fédération des Francophones hors Québec is asking the CBC to revive the Accelerated Coverage Plan. Where do things stand in this regard?*

— The plan you're speaking of was made possible by special federal funding in the early 1970s. We would have to see whether the government would agree to continue the plan. In the 1970s the CRTC campaigned to have the government provide the CBC with special funds for that purpose, and we succeeded.

— What was the coverage plan?

— The idea was to install additional radio and television transmitters in areas where there were at least 500 Francophone or Anglophone inhabitants. At that time the CBC was received by perhaps 80% of the population, Anglophone and Francophone. We constantly received complaints about this at the CRTC. In our view, we had to accelerate CBC's coverage. We pressed the government to have that figure increased from 80% to 95% or 97%, and that's what happened.

Today, there's no way the CBC can withdraw resources from its programming to add new transmitters. Nor can we let our transmitters and antennas rust, as is now happening, and put new ones in places where there are none. First we have to repair those that are rusting away. The same is true for cameras. We have some that are so old we can't find spare parts. We have to repair them by combining parts from other old cameras. This is the kind of problem we're facing.

— When it renewed your licence this year, the CRTC required you to examine the cost of providing your services to minority groups of 200 to 500 persons. How is that study coming along?

— Quite well and we intend to complete it. I don't know if we'll finish by February, but it shouldn't take too long.

— The Fédération des jeunes Canadiens français has asked the CBC to share its airwaves with community radio stations. Are you prepared to do that?

— We're already doing it and we are prepared to do the same in other situations as well.

We share our air time where a regional French-language station does not adequately meet the specific needs of small communities. In the case of Penetanguishene, you may remember that the Toronto station, CJBC, produced one-third of all French radio programming for the region. Since that programming was aimed first of all at the greater Toronto area, CJBC did not fully meet the needs of the small communities it also served, such as Penetang. Even though it is a very active community, Penetang has no newspaper.

So it was from there that we received the first request to share our airwaves. However, we are not prepared to apply this policy in all centres. In some places, such as St. Boniface and Vancouver, we broadcast programs on local events five or six hours a day. In those places, we could not let a community radio station replace Radio-Canada programming with its own.

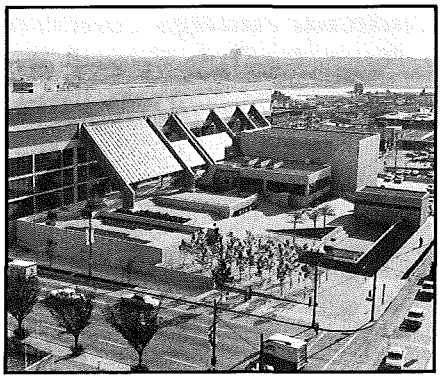
— Supposing you had enormous funds and the budget to do so, how could new technologies help you increase your services to the official language minorities?

— It's a little unclear exactly how the new technologies can help in that regard. The most obvious one, though, is cable. Consider the case of Radio-Canada FM. That network reaches three-quarters of the Francophone population from Ottawa to Moncton. In other words, one-quarter of that population does not receive the service. The same is true of the English service. Some 28% of Anglophones do not receive CBC-FM. In many locations, however, they do receive cable. Approximately 65% of Canadian households are equipped for cable. The FM service is broadcast by satellite across Canada. Cable companies are able to receive the satellite signal and send it out by cable. Poorly served communities could obtain the FM service if they pressed the cable companies for it, or if the CRTC or the CBC pressed them. Of course, individual households would have to subscribe to the local cable service. In any case, this is an instance in which technology can help. Satellite dishes will get cheaper and will eventually be quite small. With a small dish, completely isolated farms that can't get cable and where there are no CBC transmitters could at least receive network programming.

Another example is the case of Francophones in Yellowknife and Whitehorse. We lent them two dishes, which will now enable them to receive the Montreal station by cable. They prefer to have the Montreal service rather than nothing at all. Here we're raising an important issue concerning the policy of the Commissioner of Official Languages. Regional programming is not the only programming to have a major effect on the vitality of Francophone communities across the country.

The most popular American and other English-language programs are not broadcast to Canadian audiences by local American stations, but rather by the major networks. The same is true of Canadian programs, most of which are produced by CTV, Global and our own English-language network. What do radio and television audiences want to hear and see? People from their region, of course, but also good programming.

— The Caplan-Sauvageau Task Force and the Commissioner of Official Languages have recommended that the distinct nature of French-language broadcasting be recognized. Would such recognition change the CBC's organization, budget and programming?



CBC building, Vancouver

— Not at all. Programming on our French-language television network has always been very distinct, even more so on radio. The people responsible for French-language programming are completely separate from their English-speaking counterparts. In a recent decision, the CRTC required that new Radio-Canada French-language services be offered as a package, whereas cable companies are free to choose the programs they want on the English side. That's proof that a distinct policy already exists.

— We hear talk of privatization for some regional stations. Would privatization be a way of solving the CBC's financial problems and of meeting minority expectations?

— We are considering it, particularly on the French side. I don't see how we can operate a French-language radio or television station profitably in Vancouver, Edmonton or St. Boniface, for example. But I think private businesses, which are governed by the laws of profit and loss, are deluding themselves if they think they can do better than the CBC in local and regional French- and English-language programming. I think minority community leaders know where they stand in that regard.

— Is there any hope you may obtain more money from the government?

— Last year, I mean the current fiscal year, we obtained a fairly large increase in our broadcasting budgets. We may also have further increases in our capital budgets. And we have not lost all hope of securing increased operating funds next year. ■

Language Rights and the Courts

Jacques Robichaud

Judicial rulings concerning three provinces have affected educational and criminal trial rights from the linguistic point of view.

On September 2, 1987, Madam Justice Patricia M. Proudfoot, of the Supreme Court of British Columbia, rejected the suit of nine parents from Saanich, eight of them Anglophone, to order the regional school board to create a French immersion program. The parents based their action on Section 23 of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms on minority language educational rights.

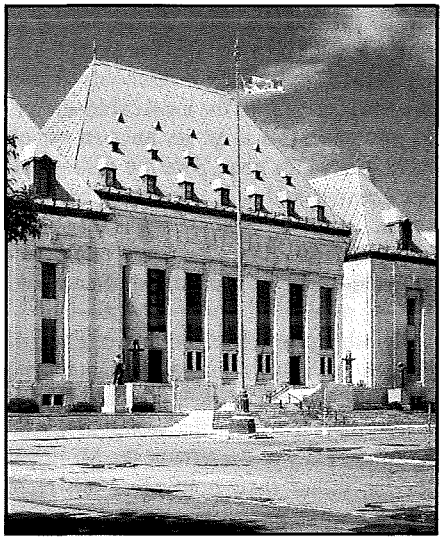
Two important principles flow from this decision. First, members of the linguistic majority may not invoke Section 23, since, as its title indicates, it deals specifically with minority language educational rights. Second, by establishing a comprehensive French program for Francophones at the elementary and secondary levels — even though not bound by provincial law to do so — British Columbia has in a sense complied with Section 23, since the program expressly provides for instruction in French at both levels.

Ontario

The case of Penetanguishene, which many considered resolved, has resurfaced in the courts. Mr. Justice Jean-Charles Sirois of the Supreme Court of Ontario had recognized the right of Jacques Marchand and other plaintiffs to a French school with the same facilities as the English one. That decision seemed to bother the Attorney General of Ontario and the Simcoe School Board. They appealed it in 1986 and then withdrew their appeal.

But on October 21, 1987, Mr. Justice Sirois had to intervene at the request of the school board; on that occasion he made it clear that the Francophone plaintiffs had an unequivocal right to see the terms of his decision carried out rapidly, appropriately and fairly, without needing to invoke the Charter. In his opinion, the town's French Language Education Council had already dealt with the issue. The board had approved the proposal to build separate classrooms and a gymnasium for Francophones, similar to those used by Anglophones, a proposal the Simcoe School Board was slow to implement. The Ministry of Education would have preferred more modest facilities and services.

The Court held that, as a result of an amendment to the Ontario Education Act, the French Language Education Council has been given exclusive authority over French language "units". Current guidelines require the province to provide the appropriate subsidies — 94.4% of construction costs — and the Simcoe School Board to assume responsibility for the remaining 5.6%.



Supreme Court of Canada

Newfoundland

Without giving grounds for their ruling, three justices of the Supreme Court of Canada refused to hear the case of William Ringuette, who had asked that his preliminary hearing and trial be conducted before a French-speaking judge or French-speaking judge and jury.

The highest court of the land was apparently satisfied with the reasons given by the Supreme Court of Newfoundland for refusing to reverse the decision of the lower court judge who had rejected the defendant's petition. But what were these reasons?

Part XIV(1) of the Criminal Code establishes the right of a defendant to a trial before a judge (or judge and jury) who speaks his language, whether English or French. Since this Part had yet to be proclaimed in Newfoundland, William Ringuette cited, in support of his petition, Section 15 of the Charter (equality rights). The Supreme Court of Newfoundland and the lower court rejected the petition. Given the particular circumstances of Newfoundland, the judges ruled as without foundation the claim that because Part XIV(1) of the Criminal Code had not been proclaimed the fundamental rights of the accused had been subjected to unreasonable limits.

Provincial failure to proclaim Part XIV(1) of the Criminal Code does not mean the rights of a defendant have been unreasonably limited.

The Supreme Court of Newfoundland also ruled inapplicable two earlier decisions of Saskatchewan (the Tremblay case) and of Alberta (the Paquette case), noting that these had also had to consider Section 110 of the North-West Territories Act, 1891, and that the situation was in fact different in those provinces; it is easier, for instance, to find law officers, judges, jury members and lawyers knowledgeable in French in either Saskatchewan or Alberta than in Newfoundland. These two rulings of courts in the West should thus not establish a precedent for the courts of Newfoundland.

The Supreme Court of Newfoundland was also of the view that equality before the law should not be interpreted as being synonymous with universal application of statutes. The fact that this Part of the Criminal Code has not been enacted in Newfoundland does not constitute a discriminatory omission. Like the Supreme Court of Canada in the 1986 MacDonald case in Quebec and the Société des Acadiens du Nouveau-Brunswick case, the Supreme Court of Newfoundland is of the view that it must be more cautious interpreting legislative provisions on "language rights" than those relating to "legal guarantees".

While this matter is now closed, it does not necessarily mean that no criminal case will ever be heard in French in Newfoundland. The proposed Official Languages Act (Bill C-72) contains new provisions in this regard. ■

Anything to Declare?

Sarah Hood

Hamilton Region Customs and Excise is doing a good job of service, and promising to get better.

Although representatives of the Commissioner's Office (OCOL) often get a good reception from the government departments they visit, it is almost unheard of for them to receive unsolicited invitations to tour and offer their comments. You might compare it to a taxpayer phoning Revenue Canada to ask for a tax audit.

Hamilton Region

Early last summer Gloria Reid, Regional Collector for Hamilton Region Customs and Excise, suggested that representatives of the OCOL might tour a number of Customs installations in the Niagara Peninsula and a visit was arranged.

One of the Commissioner's Ottawa officers, Mary Lee Bragg, a member of his Ontario Regional Office staff from Toronto, Janette Hamilton, and a Revenue Canada representative responsible for official languages, Guy Bisson, visited four international bridges in two days. On October 1 the group met with Gloria Reid and toured the Peace Bridge at Fort Erie, which connects with Buffalo, New York. The second day they visited the Rainbow, Whirlpool and Queenston bridges at Niagara Falls.

Primary inspection

Primary inspection — the usual drive through the roadside booth — takes an average of 30 to 45 seconds per car. If it takes any longer, traffic on the bridge begins to build up. This means that Customs inspectors are faced with an extra challenge in offering services in both languages.

"To give not only service, but service in both languages in that short a time — that's not an easy mandate to have to fulfil," says Hamilton. And most Customs inspectors are not bilingual.

To make the job easier, the Department has produced what it calls the "Pocket Translator", a handy little plasticized card with nine useful phrases translated from English to French on one side and from French to English on the other. Besides the translation, a transliteration is given. For example, a French-speaking Customs officer might ask an English-speaking driver: "Woud iou laique tou bi seurv'd ine inn-glish?"

Border checks

Customs and Excise is very much aware of the public's nervousness about going through a border check. Almost everyone feels some anxiety when crossing a border, and any departure from the ordinary routine only increases the uneasiness felt by returning citizens. When it comes to bilingual service, there is an added area of delicacy. In the Hamilton Region, drivers who wish to be served in French must sometimes be directed to "secondary inspection", which is associated in the minds of most people with luggage searches and embarrassment.

The Commissioner's representatives believe that Francophone Canadians re-entering the country in the Hamilton Region could be made to feel even more comfortable if, as an interim measure, Customs inspectors at primary inspection carried cards with a message along the lines of "I am sorry; I do not speak French. If you will go to the office, a bilingual officer will be with you shortly" to give travellers.

The OCOL representatives also recommended that the Department designate one booth at each Customs post as a bilingual point of service, identifying it clearly. This would require signs to direct traffic coming off the bridges. Another suggestion was that the Department use the powers granted it under the revised Customs Act of 1986 to oblige the bridge owners to post appropriate signs.

To measure customer satisfaction, Customs and Excise has placed questionnaires called "Serving you in both official languages" in its offices. These ask questions such as "Was the Customs employee dealing with you able to communicate effectively?" and are printed on postage-paid cards which may by mailed to Revenue Canada in Ottawa.

Meanwhile, as thousand of visitors pour back and forth across the border, Canada Customs and Excise is doing its best to welcome citizens and visitors to Canada in both our official languages. ■

The Multiculturalism Bill

Stella Ohan

In early December the Secretary of State and Minister of State for Multiculturalism, David Crombie, tabled Bill C-93, "An Act for the preservation and enhancement of multiculturalism in Canada".

The Bill contains a preamble the wording of which, inspired by the Constitution, emphasizes the equality of every individual before and under the law, the importance of preserving and enhancing the multicultural heritage of Canadians, the rights of the aboriginal peoples, and the equality of status of the two official languages. It also notes that all citizens are entitled, under the Citizenship Act, the Canadian Human Rights Act and the international conventions to which Canada is a party, to equal privileges and protection against discrimination.

The major objectives of multiculturalism policy are to make Canadians more aware of the cultural diversity of our society and to recognize the freedom of all individuals to preserve and share their cultural heritage; the promotion of multiculturalism and understanding between different communities must be in harmony with the national commitment to Canada's official languages. The Bill provides for federal institutions to take measures to implement multiculturalism policy, and defines the duties of the minister responsible. It also raises the possibility of establishing an advisory council on multiculturalism.

Although some people immediately criticized the Bill for its lack of teeth, its tabling is nonetheless an event of major historical significance since it will create a legislative base for what had hitherto been simply a statement of policy.

We sincerely hope that debate on the Bill will lead to a better understanding of its objectives and of the complementarity of multiculturalism and official languages policies as essential elements of Canadian identity. Let us also hope that the learning of official languages by immigrants and intercultural relations between our official language minorities and majorities will remain key elements of this new policy. ■

Cheers

Royal Canadian Mounted Police — In an effort to increase the bilingual ability of its personnel, the RCMP intends to offer language courses to all unilingual recruits. It has recently changed its training policy so that all recruits may now choose the language in which they prefer to take basic training.

Justice — After its Winnipeg office received a complaint last winter concerning the impossibility of obtaining service in French, although the office is located in a bilingual region, the Department decided this summer to post a bilingual Francophone lawyer there.

Petro-Canada — Signage is now bilingual in Petro-Canada service stations on the Trans-Canada highway in the Calgary vicinity and the Saddledome tourist area. We hope that this practice will be extended the length of the Trans-Canada highway.

Tears

External Affairs — During a business exhibition held in Montreal on November 25 and 26, a visitor was unable to obtain service in French at the Department's booth. An initial investigation showed that most of the employees assigned to work at the exhibition had only level B language ability in French. This Department may be better acquainted with the language preference of foreign cities than that of the majority of Montrealers.

— Operation of the free trade telephone information service was assigned to a Toronto agency. This agency considers seven of its 10 employees bilingual, which is not corroborated by the Department. When an Anglophone answers, Francophones are obliged to muddle along to the best of their ability in English. An agreement of such magnitude, however, is of obvious interest to both language groups.

Air Canada — While it is true that reasonable service is available in both official languages at the Toronto airport, and that approximately one-third of its 600 agents (185) are bilingual — an entirely laudable fact — staff is not always suitably distributed and French-language service points are not clearly indicated. Francophone travellers are therefore far from guaranteed service in their language.

National Defence — The Joint Parliamentary Committee on Official Languages was told by the Department that clinical records at the National Defence Medical Centre are kept in English only. The rationale? "To avoid a situation where someone on duty would not understand the information contained in such records."

Canada Post — For many years now, Kingston, Ontario, has been identified by Canada Post as a location where a significant demand for bilingual service exists. In the fall of 1987, both counter clerks, who had been until then quite meanfully providing that service, were transferred elsewhere. Under the terms of its collective agreement with their union, the Corporation was obliged to deploy the clerks according to seniority. Unless a customer should be lucky enough to catch the Postmaster himself serving at the counter, he or she will not be served in French in the Kingston Post Office... at least until May 1988, when it is expected that the first of two new counter clerks will finish language training.

Marine Atlantic — Francophone employees at Marine Atlantic headquarters are not authorized to work in the official language of their choice. This situation is made all the more outrageous given that the offices in question are located in Moncton, in the heart of an officially bilingual province.

Liaison Officers

In April 1987 the Commissioner informed the Standing Joint Committee on Official Languages of his intention to engage six part-time liaison officers to be located in areas where he presently has no resident representative. Committee members had expressed support in the past for an increase in the representation of the Commissioner's Office.

"With the aim of bringing the services of my Office closer to the Canadian public and of better responding to the needs of a vigorous renewal of linguistic reform, we have opted for this system as the most creative one," the Commissioner said. "Given present budgetary constraints," he added, "these liaison officers will work independently out of their own residences and report to the appropriate Commissioner's Regional Office already in existence."

Now all the liaison agents have been nominated. They are Chantal Rivest (British Columbia), Thérèse Gaudet (Saskatchewan), Rita Brownen-Matte (Quebec City-Gaspé), Marie-Adèle Devault (Nova Scotia), Aubrey Cormier (Prince Edward Island) and Lyly Fortin (Newfoundand).

With the new liaison officers supplementing the staff of his Regional Offices in Moncton, Montreal, Toronto, Sudbury, St. Boniface and Edmonton, the Commissioner can now count on the full or part-time support of an officer in every province. ■

A Conversation with Richard Hatfield

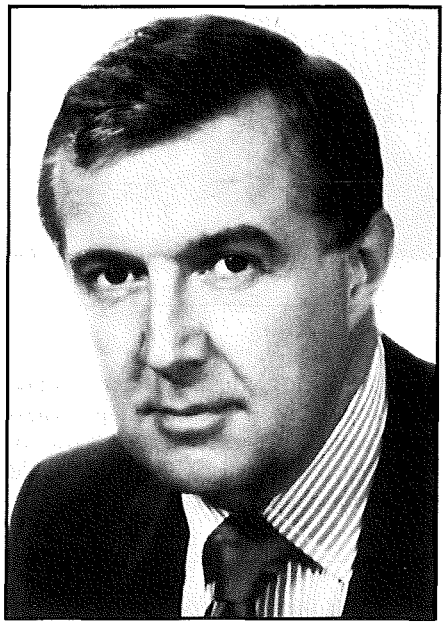
The former Premier of New Brunswick talked to* Silver Donald Cameron* *about himself, his province, the Acadians and linguistic equality.

"My father was a Member of Parliament during the war and I often had to go to Ottawa with him. Often we used to drive, so I discovered Quebec and French Canada and I liked it very much. I was envious of people who could speak two languages — and who were shining shoes, while I was the son of a Member of Parliament and I could only speak one. I sensed a serious inequality. People who spoke two languages were shining shoes, and people who spoke one language owned the shoes that were being shined.

"I was envious of people who could speak two languages."

"Then in 1958 I joined Hatfield Industries as sales manager. I set out to visit all our wholesalers throughout Atlantic Canada and the Gaspé — and on that trip I discovered the Acadians, and I sensed that inequality even more. There was talk of an election, and I was a great admirer of Hugh John Flemming — but I kept hearing that the government had not done very much in the French-speaking areas, that the government was old and tired. Acadians who did support the Conservatives actually stood out. If you asked anybody in a small village, 'Who's the Conservative here?' they'd say 'So-and-so.' That person was *known*.

"But when I talked to Conservatives, their response was, 'Why should we bother with the French-speaking people? They don't vote for us.' I was appalled to learn that in one election in the 40s we didn't even nominate candidates in the five seats in Gloucester County. But the Liberals, I realized later, took the French-speaking people for granted. The Acadians would always vote Liberal because they had no one else to vote for, so the Liberals really weren't taking them very seriously either.



Richard Hatfield

"Then real nationalism emerged in Quebec. We had the B and B Commission, and I went to many of their hearings. They'd go to Charlottetown, I'd be there, sometimes I went in Quebec and Ontario, sometimes in Nova Scotia. As I listened to what people were saying, I realized that the French-speaking people wanted an acknowledgement — a respect — for their language, and they wanted that language to be protected and to be secure.

"In the caucus, I had been speaking about recognizing two languages — just throwing the idea out and saying, 'Look, we should think about this, it's important.' Charlie Van Horn once put me in a terrible quandry by insisting that we put a motion to make two languages official. I didn't think it was proper, and I knew it would fail: it wasn't done out of respect for the language, and he didn't have the support of the caucus, and I knew that it would be recognized as a raw political ploy, which it was. But a year later Louis Robichaud brought in a government motion, with a Bill attached to it. I asked for time to swing the caucus around — and I did eventually get the caucus to vote for it unanimously, and it went through the House unanimously. I think it was one of the great days in the history of the New Brunswick Legislature.

"Mind you, many sections were not proclaimed for several years. But soon after I became Premier I put someone in charge of translating legislation. About 1973 I found it was moving very slowly, so we hired some translators from Ottawa — and by 1977 or 1978 we were finally able to proclaim the whole Bill. There was very widespread acceptance, because around that same time the whole pressure for total immersion education started to develop, from young mobile English parents insisting that their children learn to speak French.

"All the same, feelings were very strong in some quarters, and the situation could really have been dangerous. I remember making one of my best speeches to the English-speaking Association in Devon, based on the argument that the very essence of British democracy is the concept that one person, with right on his side, is a majority. My point was, you are fighting a battle that has to be lost, that can't be won, because if it *is* won it ultimately means turbulence and bloodshed. That speech was very important to me — and it did work. For all intents and purposes that group never met again.

"Why was I so committed to all this? First, it was that sense of inequality, but also, from the very beginning I liked the people. I was jealous — in a near-*sinful* way — of this ability to speak both languages very well. I also sensed among French-speaking Canadians a quality of being Canadian before I sensed it among the English-speaking people that I grew up with. We were English, and they were Canadian.

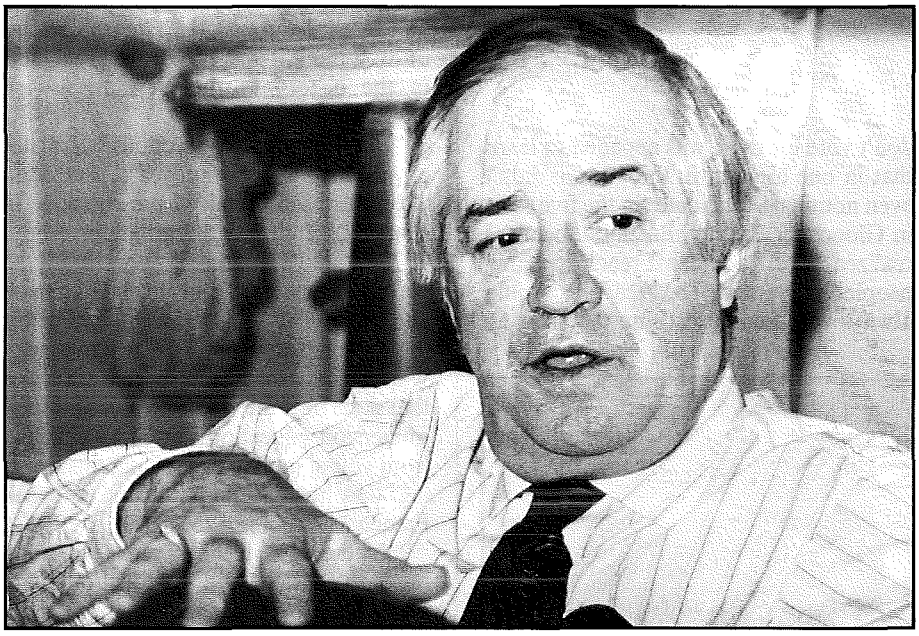
"With the Acadians in New Brunswick, I saw their love of fun, and music — homemade music, *created* music — and their politeness, their sense of family, their hospitality, their tolerance. They loved all the things that I loved, many of which were missing in my own environment. I loved them for that, and I still do. I'm sure I always will." ■

* **One of Canada's most successful professional writers, Silver Donald Cameron is presently Writer-in-Residence at the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design in Halifax.**

The Montreal Irish

Hal Winter

The Montreal Irish community struggled towards prosperity, only to see its painfully-built future slip away as it was caught in the language crossfire.



Bryce Mackasey

Just over a quarter of a century ago, a triumphant Bryce Mackasey was bringing the glad tidings back to the Irish community of Verdun: the cultural future of their children seemed secure. As president of Quebec's first English-language Catholic Parent-Teacher Association, he had wrested a pledge from Premier Maurice Duplessis to build an ultra-modern high school to meet the growing needs of this southwestern area of Montreal.

Duplessis was buried on the eve of the new school's opening. No one could have foreseen his passing was to trigger social upheaval destined to crush a vibrant segment of society.

Euphoria vs. history

At first, there was general euphoria. And on the crest of the wave of liberalism of the early 60s, Mackasey went on to carry the voice of Irish Catholic Montreal into the highest councils of the land as MP for Verdun and minister in two cabinets.

But, in Quebec, the seeds of change were sown. The "Maîtres Chez Nous" reforms of Premier Jean Lesage's government began to undermine the economic hegemony of the English-speaking business world. Just 15 years later, the Charter of the French Language (Bill 101) would deliver the coup de grâce.

Irish immigrants bowed to English economic domination as a North American reality.

Generations of persecution

As an incidental casualty of the demise of Anglophone ascendency, the Irish community fell victim to a cruelly ironic twist of history. If the starving, plague-ridden, "coffin-ship" refugees fleeing the 1845-46 famine landed at Montreal as English-speaking, it was certainly not by choice. The conqueror had imposed his language on them. Small wonder that, after generations of language persecution on the other side of the Atlantic, the Irish immigrants were ready to bow to English economic domination as a North American reality. A century later their descendants would pay the price as Quebec's Quiet Revolution again reworked the equation.

Jobs were always in English.

When they first began to settle in the Pointe-Saint-Charles area on swampy land straddling the Lachine Canal, these newcomers must have seemed prime new material for the French-language community. They had the Catholic faith and Celtic temperament in common. And France had been Ireland's traditional — if all too often ineffectual — ally against England.

Rex Turnbull

But jobs were always in English. Hungry immigrants had scant time for cultural considerations. The Church pragmatically adapted, creating distinctive English structures. Alongside the working poor of other backgrounds, the Irish survived.

Slow prosperity

Prosperity came slowly. Gradually over the years, Pointe families climbed the economic ladder, then took the social step of moving to a "better" neighbourhood. This often meant the adjacent municipality of Verdun, a burgeoning bedroom city on

its way to being the third largest in Quebec.

Verdun produced its share of local folk heroes such as wartime fighter pilot Buzz Beurling and hockey's Scotty Bowman. In its peak years, two-thirds of the 90,000 population were Anglophone, with ties to England, Scotland and the Maritimes as well as to Ireland.

At its peak, two-thirds of Verdun's 90,000 citizens were Anglophone.

Those who enjoyed this period, including former Beurling air force buddy Rex Turnbull, claim Verdun was a model for all of Canada. Nowhere, he says, was there more genuine good feeling and shared activity in mutual respect between the Anglophone and Francophone communities. But by the 70s, recalls Turnbull — whose father and grandfather were born in the Pointe — the first serious cracks began to show in the social structure. Plants began to close, big employers started moving out of the surrounding industrial areas. The Anglophone exodus began as people followed jobs.

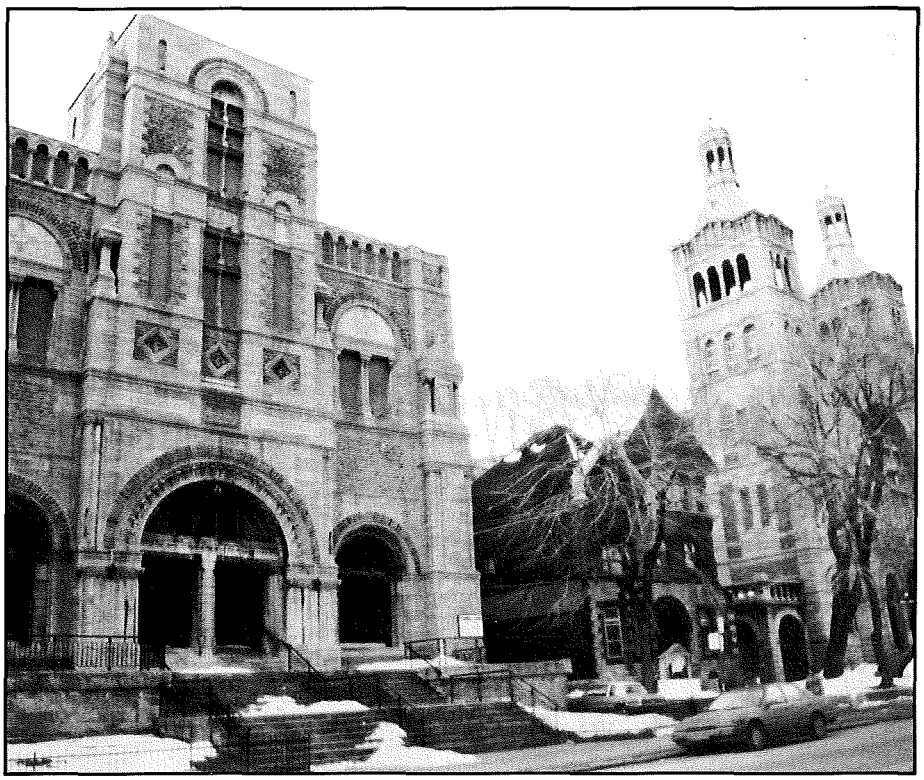
Bill 101

With the 1976 election of the Parti Québécois, this attrition was accelerated. The crowning blow, says Turnbull, came with Bill 101. The threat of an independence referendum in 1980 did nothing to allay Anglophone fears. Compounding the crisis was the cutting off of traditional sources of renewal for the Anglophone ranks. Under Bill 101, even the children of immigrants from other parts of Canada had to attend French-language schools. Maritimers simply bypassed Montreal for a more hospitable Toronto. People born a couple of decades ago tend to look elsewhere for the future. Deprived of outside renewal, Verdun's Anglophone population is today about half its peak of the early 60s.

Losing the future

"Since Bill 101 and the whole French language business started about 10 years ago," says Father McGlynn of St. Thomas More Church, "we have lost all our future parishioners. All our young leaders, the brightest brains, have gone to Toronto... they have gone out West."

When he came to the parish some 35 years ago, Father McGlynn recalls, his flock included about 1,400 families. Today, there are about 700, and around three-quarters of these are senior citizens. "Then, we had a grammar school that was bulging at the seams with 700 youngsters... we had to enlarge it. Today, we have about 130 children. In 1961 the high school had 1,200 students. And now we have less than 400."



In Pointe-Saint-Charles, churches huddle together

By the 70s serious cracks began to show in the social structure.

On top of this, Father McGlynn adds, there is no longer any English voice in the civic field, in a range of institutions such as senior citizen's homes and hospitals. "This gives you the idea that we're being phased out...we're becoming almost a non-entity."

The same phenomenon is apparent throughout Montreal's Anglophone Catholic community, with half a dozen churches in the inner city just about ready to shut up shop, Father McGlynn says. "The English community is no longer Irish. Griffintown is dead...though the Pointe is still struggling along. But the future clearly means an ethnic mix, a melting pot, as far as the voice of the minority is concerned."

Bryce Mackasey

For veteran political observer Bryce Mackasey, Quebec's language law is just another link in a complex chain of events leading to the dramatic decline in the numbers and influence of the Anglophone population. "The early 70s sounded the death knell here," he recalls. "But a lot of industry was looking for an excuse to leave Quebec anyway. The bottom line is profit... and somewhere along the way Ontario grabbed the population, became the economic and financial centre. This simply made it look all the more attractive when the language trouble began."

Mackasey — who also sat as a Quebec MNA during the Bill 101 debate — feels it is unfair to blame the Bill alone for the business exodus. This also obscures the fact that "not all of its provisions were bad. In fact, some were urgently needed to correct long-standing language abuses."

As a boy in Quebec City, where his father was a railway superintendent, he recalls that there was a stipulation in the CN shops that "for safety reasons, the language of work shall be English. Small wonder that the average, moderate French Canadian resented this sort of patronizing attitude of the English boss. Now the government is taking the legal, judicial path in going all the way to the Supreme Court. But if Bill 101 were struck down, how would it turn the clock back? Should it be turned back? In some areas, it should not."

However, Mackasey says, the coercive tenor of the language law is still perceived as an insult by English-speaking Canadians. The Irish, "who have always been good citizens of Quebec", have been caught in the squeeze.

"If the Quebec Irish finally disappear from the scene, it's our oldest friends — the French Canadians — who will feel the greatest loss." ■

FFHQ President Yvon Fontaine

*Paul-Émile Richard**

The Fédération des Francophones hors Québec has many urgent priorities.

Congratulations are in order for anyone 34 years of age who is both a Dean of Law and president of an organization as challenging as the Fédération des Francophones hors Québec. We refer to Yvon Fontaine, a New Brunswick Acadian who became FFHQ president just over a year ago.

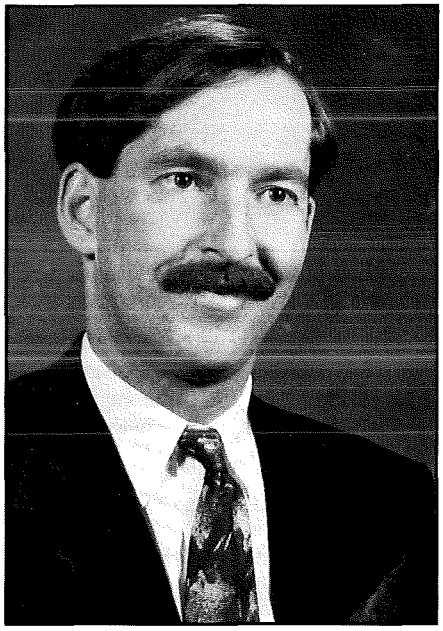
In 1986 Yvon Fontaine had done various freelance research projects for the FFHQ, the most important being a study of the impact of a new constitutional accord on Francophones outside Quebec. Another study dealt with the urgent need for new official languages legislation to prevent the complete disappearance of Francophones in several provinces.

Fontaine is a young, dynamic leader and a great Acadian nationalist.

In the fall of 1986 the FFHQ faced another organizational and leadership crisis. Quite unexpectedly, it had lost its president, Gilles LeBlanc. Despite serious short and medium-term challenges, the position of president would henceforth be only part-time. A strong and energetic president had to be found to give the FFHQ new impetus, and Yvon Fontaine appeared to be the ideal candidate. He admits he was somewhat surprised to be offered the position, but today, when he speaks of this or the many projects he has in mind for the FFHQ, his tremendous enthusiasm is evident.

A young achiever

Who is Yvon Fontaine? — a young, dynamic leader and a great Acadian nationalist, but also a man of exceptional ability. A believer in predestination might say he was foreordained to become FFHQ president.



Yvon Fontaine

At 15 he was already involved in establishing Activités-Jeunesse, an association of young Acadians in New Brunswick. He became its president while filling the same role on the student council of École Saint-Louis-de-Kent. Shortly thereafter, he helped found the national Fédération des jeunes Canadiens français. Once again, his leadership qualities were quickly recognized and he became its first president. This gave him an opportunity to meet many young people across Canada, to become knowledgeable about their problems and, above all, sensitive to the needs and hopes of each region.

As luck would have it, he then met a bright, young, vivacious Francophone from Saskatchewan, Réjeanne Blais. A few years later they married.

Major issues

When asked to outline the FFHQ's priorities, Yvon Fontaine is animated. There are so many priority issues, and everything is urgent. For instance, he wants the FFHQ to become more "professional" and to restore its credibility. He wants to expand the organization's horizons and give it a more open outlook, especially towards Quebec. On January 4, 1987, the FFHQ established an office in Quebec to give Quebecers a better understanding of the reality of other French Canadians, "a reality which", he says, "is too often perceived by Quebecers as folklore."

Another FFHQ priority is to have its budget doubled by the federal government. In his view, it will take hundreds of millions of dollars to save *la francophonie pancanadienne*. Other urgent priorities include the Meech Lake accord, the new Official Languages Act and multiculturalism.

He wants to expand the FFHQ's horizons and give it a more open outlook, especially towards Quebec.

The Meech Lake accord

The FFHQ is not terribly fond of the Meech Lake accord. Although it accepts the idea of Quebec as a distinct society: "this is simply a recognition of reality", it would like to see New Brunswick's Premier, Frank McKenna, achieve greater recognition for Francophones outside Quebec. But the FFHQ is also realistic. It knows that the accord has already been approved by Parliament and the legislatures of several provinces. It has therefore suggested to Mr. McKenna and the other ministers that a text be added to the agreement which would recognize Canada's duality from coast to coast. It also calls upon the federal government and the provinces prepared to recognize this duality to make a commitment to promote it in their areas.

Yvon Fontaine is fully aware of the fact that the FFHQ's demands are no more attractive to Quebec than to the English-speaking provinces. "But while we know Quebec is not our constitutional ally, it is nevertheless prepared to offer us tangible assistance in developing our communities."

Official languages

Yvon Fontaine is frustrated by the delay encountered with the federal Official Languages Act tabled in June. "The Bill is so important to us. It addresses our major concerns, and yet we have seen it languish

***Paul-Émile Richard is a journalist working for Radio-Canada in Moncton.**

before the federal cabinet for over eight months. It has not yet received second reading, and that's discouraging."

But the FFHQ has not abandoned its struggle. It knows that time is passing and that in some circles there is talk of an election on the free trade issue before too long. That would be fatal for the Official Languages Act. "There's a blockage somewhere. Despite obvious dissension among Conservatives, the government must exercise a little leadership on this matter."

The FFHQ accepts the idea of Quebec as a distinct society: "this is simply a recognition of reality."

Another preoccupation is the Multiculturalism Act. "While we can't really oppose multiculturalism, it would be much easier to accept if our Francophone communities were not threatened with oblivion."

When he looks at what is happening in Canada, Yvon Fontaine sometimes becomes pessimistic. "There are now as many francophiles as Francophones outside Quebec," he says. The government is spending millions of dollars for Anglophones to learn French in immersion programs; but, despite constitutional guarantees, thousands of Francophones are losing their French because they do not yet have the right to French schools.

"This is a truly disgusting situation. What's the point of constitutional accords when thousands of Francophones are still without French schools nearly 20 years after adoption of the Official Languages Act?"

It will take millions of dollars to save la francophonie pancanadienne.

The irony, he suggests, is that once Francophones have been assimilated, the government will perhaps then pay for them to take immersion classes. "After all, it's easier to gain access to French immersion than to obtain French schools for Francophones."

There can be no doubt that the FFHQ has a great deal on its plate. But Yvon Fontaine will never give up. ■

Acadian Affairs in Prince Edward Island

Federal and provincial authorities are making plans to improve services to Island Francophones. The steps taken may have Canada-wide significance for other official languages minorities.

The drive to provide a wider range of services to the French-speaking Acadian population of Prince Edward Island, described in the last issue of *Language of Society* ("The Garden of the Gulf") is proceeding on two fronts. Both the federal and the provincial governments are working on plans to improve the situation of the still beleaguered Francophone minority.

Federal plans

Federally, there appears to be an excellent chance that the recommendations made in the report of an investigative team from the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages (OCOL) last summer will at last begin to come to fruition by early spring 1988. The report called for the setting up of a small network of bilingual regional offices to serve the 6,000 French-speaking Acadians still fighting the battle for survival after two centuries of struggle to maintain their own language, culture and institutions. The centres are designed to offer advice, information and, where necessary, interpretation, to enable Island Francophones to connect more easily with various federal departments.

Provincial plans

Provincially, the Minister in charge of Acadian Affairs, Léonce Bernard, has announced plans to further extend provincial services to the Acadian population, following the publication of a report by a provincially-appointed committee of Acadians critical of the neglect of their specific needs and interests by successive provincial administrations.

There is already a bilingual provincial service centre in the Prince County region of Évangéline, the centre of the largest concentration of Francophones on the Island, a presence that will aid the federal government in setting up its own operation. Present plans, prepared jointly by the two levels of government, call for federal services to work out of existing provincial offices in the area. The Évangéline centre will have permanent staff and will provide free telephone access to all federal departments on the Island.

Joint plans

In addition to the Évangéline operation, federal-provincial negotiations are under way concerning two similar projects. One would be located at Tignish, the centre of another considerable Acadian community, and a third would be in Charlottetown, connected to a Francophone cultural centre, construction of which was promised by Ottawa when the headquarters of the federal Department of Veterans Affairs was moved to the provincial capital in the late 1970s.

The latest developments follow meetings in Prince Edward Island last October involving federal and provincial authorities and OCOL representatives Jan Carbon and Jean-Guy Patenaude. A scheduling program worked out at that time was temporarily set back by hesitancy on the part of the Treasury Board to proceed before the adoption of the new Official Languages Act, introduced into Parliament last June. However, as it became clear that immediate passage was unlikely, the Board relented, and agreement to proceed among the departments concerned came at a meeting in December.

Wider significance

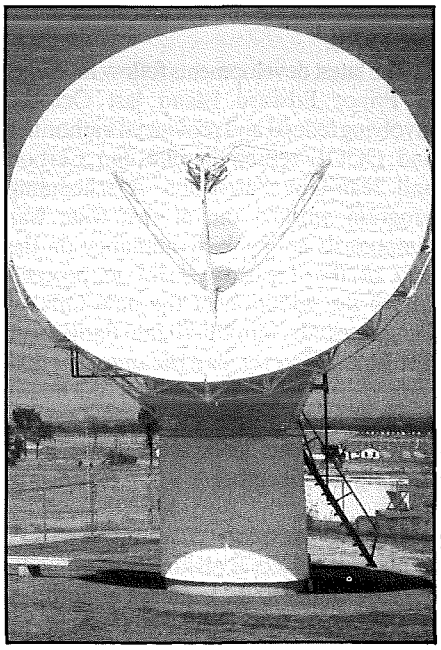
While this project is obviously of immediate importance to the language minority in one province, its significance could be considerably wider. In the eyes of its initiators at OCOL, and apparently also in those of key officials of the Secretary of State's Department, it could well be used as a model for future operations in other provinces where the demand for such services clearly exists, but at a relatively low and unconcentrated level. The Prince Edward Island experiment may in fact be a harbinger of things to come in the continuing effort to bring more justice to the lives of official language minorities across the country. At least that is the hope of many of those involved in the process. *T.S.* ■

Community Radio

Fernand Doré

Tuned in, or turned off? Canada's official language minorities are finding new answers to an old question.

Recent moves to increase public access to the airwaves in many European countries have given rise to a new phenomenon: local and regional radio stations. In France, for example, the *radio de pays*, as it has been dubbed by its organizers, now offers stiff competition to the major networks, both public and private. Quebec has experienced a similar phenomenon, in the form of community radio. Across the province, non-profit organizations have been formed to see that this efficient electronic medium of communication and self-expression is available to serve their members.



Department of Communications

Refusing to accept the inevitability of cultural homogenization — an almost irresistible outcome of continuing advances in communications technology and the pervasive influence of public and private broadcasting corporations — communities today are working hard to made sure that at least some of the radio stations they receive express their values and offer an outlet for their creativity. There is a growing awareness that the electronic media exercise a determining influence in people's lives and a realization that the voices of outsiders — no matter how much information they carry — can never really meet the community's need to communicate and to explore its own unique identity. Radio, where the investment needed is far more modest than in television, gives communities affordable access to the airwaves, and a viable means of sharing their experience.

Linguistic minorities

Anglophones and Francophones who live as linguistic minorities far from major population centres often receive little or no service from the electronic media in their own languages. Overlooked by the private sector — the profit motive being what it is — these linguistic minorities feel that they are also neglected by the CBC, especially where regional and local information programming is concerned, despite the Corporation's laudable efforts to remedy the situation.

Canada has a total of 670 AM and FM stations, but only 16 stations outside Quebec that broadcast in French. If you are one of the 950,000 Francophones living outside Quebec, you have no choice but to listen to English-language stations to satisfy your need to find out what is going on around you.

Studies carried out for the Fédération des Francophones hors Québec by Cégir Inc. on the listening habits of Francophones outside Quebec show that English-language radio accounts for 62% of listening time overall. For those under 25 years of age, the figure rises to 80%. In New Brunswick, where there is a strong and sizeable French-speaking minority, half the Francophones get all their information and entertainment from a single private station broadcasting in English. Despite the good job being done by a few private local stations, the listening audience for French-language radio has dropped dramatically during the last decade. Under the circumstances, it is hardly surprising that the effects of assimilation are being felt.

Community radio

The facts cited here are not, however, proof of an irreversible tendency. Results of surveys and market studies carried out by the Fédération des jeunes Canadiens-français (FJCF) show clearly that a large number of Francophones are far from happy with the status quo. Young and old alike desire radio that provides local and international coverage in French.

One of the most promising solutions to the problem is the creation of local community-based stations. Convinced that this was the right direction to take, the FJCF became involved in community radio three years ago with the support of the major Francophone associations outside Quebec. Its first step was to encourage involvement by local, regional and national groups. The FJCF then commissioned in-depth studies in the main areas of the country where there are significant numbers of French-speaking people. In 1986 assistance from the Quebec government enabled it to hire a specialist in communications whose main task has been to co-ordinate and direct the work of groups already involved in setting up local radio stations.

The Department of the Secretary of State has also recognized the value of community radio, announcing a $5.6 million funding program to assist minority language radio over the next five years. A large portion of this — $3.5 million — is earmarked for capital expenditures, while the rest is to help with start-up costs.

The efforts of the FJCF and the many other parties involved are now beginning to pay off. Since July 1987 four licence applications have been approved by the Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission — Radio Péninsule at Inkerman and Radio de la Baie de Bathurst/Dalhousie/Campbellton in New Brunswick; Radio de l'Épinette noire in Hearst, Ontario; and Rivière Saint-Augustin Community Radio, which will serve the English-speaking population of the Saguenay in Quebec. Several other community stations are being planned in St. Boniface, Manitoba; Penetanguishene, Ontario; St. Marys Bay, Nova Scotia; and Edmunston, New Brunswick, among others.

All of these are worthy achievements, and they do not come a moment to soon given the need to do everything we can to slow down the assimilation that is undermining Canada's official language minorities.

At last Canada's official language minorities have been given an opportunity by our broadcasting system to have a voice of their own through which they can express their identity and gain a new sense of solidarity. By extending access to the electronic marketplace of ideas to all parts of our country, broadcasting is enriching the fabric of our society. ■

Challenges

New Brunswick

Among the early tasks of the New Brunswick Liberal government has been to review a comprehensive language policy document apparently approved by the former Progressive Conservative provincial government shortly before it was defeated at the polls last fall.

Entitled "Policy on Official Languages", the secret document was obtained by the New Brunswick media in November.

Based on the federal Constitution Act of 1982 as well as on two provincial statutes dealing with official languages, the 18-page paper called for full recognition of the equal status of English and French in all parts of the province, regardless of the size of the minority language group, and the encouragement of both official languages throughout the provincial administration — most specifically of French in the predominantly Anglophone operations in the capital, Fredericton.

The report suggested the establishment of a Policy Implementation Committee to work with an advisory committee of deputy ministers to help each department set up its own plan to put the program into effect in what is still Canada's only officially bilingual province.

Nova Scotia

A "historic" step toward providing full government services in French for the Acadian areas of the province has been announced by Environment Minister Guy LeBlanc.

Speaking to the Fédération des Acadiens de la Nouvelle-Écosse, Mr. LeBlanc said that the plans were based on programs already in place in Ontario and New Brunswick. The major cost of the operation will be in the provision of immersion French courses for civil servants who wish them. No English-speaking civil servants will lose their jobs in the process.

Quebec

As the result of an inquiry they conducted in west-central Montreal, a group of French-speaking college students have said they were "disillusioned, stupefied and disturbed" at the number of times they were greeted in English in commercial establishments.

According to the nine students, who visited some 300 establishments in a one-month period spanning November and December, in one-third of the cases they were greeted in English, a rate they said they found abnormally high. The area is home to one of the larger concentrations of Anglophones in Montreal.

The Charter of Rights and Freedoms was the centrepiece of a Supreme Court of Canada language battle that went on for four days in November. At issue was the right of the Quebec government to forbid commercial signs in English in the province — something it has done since the passage of Bill 101 in 1977.

The case was brought before the Court by the Quebec government in an appeal against an earlier ruling by the Quebec Superior Court denying the right of Quebec to ban English from signs in the province.

Arguing the case against Quebec were lawyers for two Montreal merchants, as well as those representing the governments of Canada, Ontario and New Brunswick. While each argued from slightly different perspectives, the essential burden of their case was that, under the provisions of the Charter of Rights, the province does not have the power to ban English from external signage, because to do so is basically an undermining of the right to free speech as protected constitutionally under the Charter.

For its part, Quebec argued that while the Charter does provide for free speech, it offers no guarantee of freedom of language as such. According to Quebec lawyers, given the precarious situation of the French language in Canada, including elements such as the high rate of assimilation into the English-speaking community, it is reasonable and justifiable for Quebec to take the measures it has to maintain a French face in the province.

Saskatchewan

One of the results of the decision of Saskatchewan to extend the use of French in the provincial court system has been the creation of a Francophone organization to help the process along.

The group is the Association des juristes d'expression française de la Saskatchewan. Its goal is to help legal practitioners acquire the necessary French legal terminology to enable them to fulfil their roles in the system adequately.

Similar associations already exist in Manitoba, Ontario and New Brunswick.

Prince Edward Island

A resurgence in the activity of co-operative institutions in Évangéline has strengthened both the process of economic renewal and the place of French in the region, the centre of *la Francophonie* on the Island.

With six new co-operative endeavours having been started in the last two years, there are now 14 active co-ops in the Évangéline area, already considered to be the capital of the North American co-operative movement.

Manitoba

Manitoba consists of 184 localities: 105 rural municipalities, 74 towns and villages and 5 cities, small and large. In 38 of these, the 1981 census showed that French was the first language of more than 6% of the population.

More than two years ago, Albert Saint-Hilaire, the reeve of Montcalm, a rural municipality where the first language of most inhabitants is French, invited the mayor of Saint-Pierre, Aimé Gauthier, and the mayor of Ritchot, Raymond Lagassé, to discuss how French was faring in their respective areas. In all three, the situation left something to be desired. They decided to meet again and to invite other colleagues to join them. The result: similar findings all round. The next step was to determine what municipal governments could do to improve the quality of their French-language services.

A working group was created and, with the support of the Société franco-manitobaine, solicited funding from the Department of the Secretary of State to conduct a more detailed study of the situation, with Maurice Gauthier in charge.

With a wealth of related experience, including seven years as the Western representative of the Commissioner of Official Languages, Mr. Gauthier began work in the spring of 1987. He visited some 23 localities where the first language of at least 20% of the population was French. He reported that 87 of the 127 elected officials are bilingual as well as 82 of the 117 employees.

These municipalities have the personnel required to serve the public effectively in the official language of its choice. However, all administrative writing is done in English. Francophones, even between themselves, have become accustomed to working in English. Although they have no written language policy, these municipalities do make an effort to serve their constituents in the language of their choice, except in technical or legal matters. Almost invariably, municipal by-laws, minutes and official correspondence are written in English. The same usually holds true of forms and letterheads on official documents.

Enabling these municipalities to operate and communicate with their constituents in French will be a long and demanding task that can only be accomplished gradually. To achieve this, Maurice Gauthier recommends that municipal authorities be made aware that it is possible to work in French as well, and that, considering the major role they will play in the francization of services, they spend three to five days in Quebec municipalities of comparable size to acquire practical experience. ■

Debunking a Myth

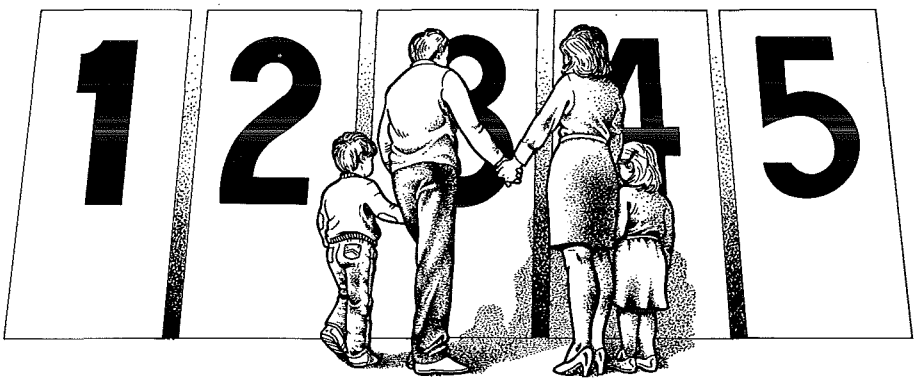
Jean-Claude Le Blanc

The role of schools in the quest for bilingualism is often misunderstood.

Six years ago, Michel and Marcella Cassivi, two Francophones born in the Gaspé, moved to Kirkland, a section of the Island of Montreal known as the West Island. They were looking for a community where their children could learn to speak English but at the same time attend a French-language school. Although the French-speaking population of the West Island has increased by more than 30% over the past decade, the Cassivis find that their children's preference for English makes it difficult to maintain the use of French in the home; they are thinking of moving to a Francophone neighbourhood. In an article published by the *Gazette* last November 28, dealing with changes in the linguistic make-up of West Islanders, Stephanie Whittaker notes that we are witnessing a strange phenomenon: here and there, children are speaking English on the playgrounds of many Francophone schools. If children are becoming anglicized in this area of Metropolitan Montreal, where the French language receives significant institutional support, what is happening to young Francophones outside Quebec who, in many parts of many provinces, do not always have access to French-language schools?

Theoretical choices

Five types of schools exist where Francophone parents may have their children educated outside Quebec. The first is a homogeneous French school where, except insofar as English is a subject of study, the language of instruction is French. The pupils' first language is French, and they study in their own linguistic and cultural environment. The second type is a bilingual school, where the language of instruction is sometimes English, sometimes French, following a more or less equal division of time. The third is a mixed school, where the student body consists of young Anglophones and Francophones who study in their respective languages, under a single administration. The language of communication in the school and on the playground is therefore English. The same holds true of the prevailing culture. Francophone parents may also enrol their children in an immersion program designed for young Anglophones who are learning French as a second language and where the amount of French-language instruction decreases year by year until it is usually no more than 30% by the beginning of high school. Lastly, they may send their children to a homogeneous English school for Anglophone children, where instruction is in English except during French class.



Of course, not all Francophone parents, particularly those outside Quebec, have access to this full range of choices. Let us examine the criteria which influence their decisions when they are able to choose any of the options described above.

For argument's sake, let us assume that the parents who belong to the minority group consider it vital for their children to master the language of the majority. In their opinion, the children absolutely must be bilingual because their survival depends on it. This is especially true for unilingual Francophones who moved to Northern Ontario or the West. Given the difficulties they encountered as a result of their unilingualism, it is hardly surprising that they were determined that their children would master English. Even today, these same people impress on their grandchildren the importance of fluency in English.

In such a situation, Francophone educators and leaders often found themselves obliged — especially in the absence of French schools — to press immersion on their fellow Francophones. However, despite the fact that immersion was recently (and in some locations still is) presented as a means of enabling Francophones to maintain their language in an Anglophone environment, the focus has now shifted toward the French school. The question then becomes one of determining which type of school is most likely to make the children bilingual. Opinion seems to differ, depending on whether the issue is examined with the objectivity of a researcher or by parents who live with the situation.

Dangerous illusions

Studies in this field show us that, regardless of the country, the more one language is a minority language, the easier it becomes to learn the language of the majority. In such a situation the majority language is learned almost effortlessly, and only minimal formal instruction (spelling and grammar) is required for the second-language proficiency of minority youngsters to equal, if not surpass, their first-language proficiency.

In Canada there are five types of schools to which Francophone parents may send their children.

In other words, whatever the language, minority language instruction in schools intended exclusively for young minority pupils is the only way for them to preserve the use of their first language.

Research by Professors Rodrigue Landry

and Rhéal Allard of the Faculté des sciences de l'éducation de l'Université de Moncton over the past few years shows that only under these conditions can members of the minority learn the majority language without their mother tongue suffering as a result. This contention is generally supported by a whole body of research conducted over several decades, especially in the United States, which finds bilingualism to be usually an "additive" phenomenon for the majority and a "subtractive" one for minorities.

But there is also the solution favoured by parents. The more a community is dominated by the majority language, the more members of the minority group consider it essential to learn that language and therefore (herein lies the paradox) the more they also tend to believe that majority language schools are the ideal solution. Francophone parents, particularly those outside Quebec, often perceive English-language schools as the solution. In other words, the less Francophone parents have to rely on schools to teach their children English (the community being able to meet this need), paradoxically, the more they consider it important, even vital, to enrol their children in English-language schools — a route which is guaranteed to produce unilingual Anglophones.

This is also why, even in the absence of a real choice, Francophone parents refrain from demanding the type of school best suited to the needs of their children — schools which would almost certainly make their bilingualism dreams come true. Thus, in immersion schools, even those which boast a solid French program, Francophone children seem to encounter difficulties early on. Their language development is usually slow because they are also learning the mistakes of Anglophones. This is probably what made Stacy Churchill of the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education say that "Francophones who study in English are receiving a poor education, because Francophones cannot become Anglophones."

Evidence

Professor Churchill's extensive research has also brought to light the disastrous failures of bilingual and mixed schools, evidenced in the clearly inferior mastery of young Franco-Ontarians of English and French and the low esteem they have for their language and culture. Churchill's analyses show that in such cases less than half as many Francophones as Anglophones will pursue post-secondary studies. He also states that "even with instruction exclusively in French throughout elementary and secondary school, young Franco-Ontarians are in the process of losing their attachment to French in localities where Francophones are a minority."

Professor Landry reminds us that many parents who consider a knowledge of English essential to social mobility mistakenly believe that their children will be more educated if they study entirely, or at least half the time, in English. In his opinion, "that is a myth". Children of any minority group who study in their first language are better able to preserve it and can master a second language as well as minority children educated entirely in that second language.

It is interesting to observe the response of Francophone parents in Ottawa-Vanier to the key question of a recent survey by Professor Lionel Desjarlais of the Faculty of Education at the University of Ottawa:

The success of French schools is little known but nonetheless real.

"Why do you send your child to a French-language school?" Most answered: "So that my child will be bilingual." The perceptiveness of these parents seems to indicate that, at least in certain areas, they clearly understand the paradox. This study corroborates the appropriate interpretation of such a statement. What Francophone parents in Ottawa-Vanier are saying, despite the fact that they live in a community where the French language enjoys relatively significant support compared to that in many other Canadian localities, is that unless their children attend a French school, they will inescapably become bilingual Anglophones.

Success at French schools

The success of French schools is a little known but real matter of record. As proof, students attending the Maurice-Lavallée school in Edmonton scored significantly higher than average on provincial examinations just one year after the school's establishment.

Recently, the Centre de recherche du Collège de Saint-Boniface has also published the very interesting results of a five-year study on what French-school students do after graduation. The study reveals that their unemployment rate is significantly lower than the average. Language of work data indicate the importance of bilingualism and of French, particularly in getting a job. It should also be pointed out that 46.7% of respondents work in both official languages, while 14% work primarily in French.

Even more striking is the high number of graduates, among respondents, who pursue post-secondary studies: 53% at universities and 27.7% at community colleges. We also know that at least 40% of graduates from Franco-Manitoban schools reach the post-secondary level, a figure well above the provincial or national averages. In another survey, conducted by Professor Raymond Théberge in 1986 among grade twelve students in Manitoba, 77.7% said they intended to pursue post-secondary studies, indicating the institution and program of their choice: Collège de Saint-Boniface (51%), University of Manitoba (28.9%) and Red River College (25.7%).

Despite this, as Professor Landry notes, "because of low numbers and sparse population density among Francophones outside Quebec, and especially because of the numbers clause in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, many Francophone parents are reluctant to demand their constitutional rights in education. The legitimacy of this constitutional right is not always accepted wholeheartedly, particularly when the community lacks spirit. In the eyes of some Francophone parents, the demands of other Francophone parents seem unjustified or exaggerated."

Necessary choices

It is true that Francophone parents are reluctant to demand the type of schools which could make their children genuinely bilingual, skilled and well-equipped to compete with the best in the work world. However, experience over the past two decades also shows that Francophone parents outside Quebec who have been able to choose French-language schools have obtained the most satisfying results. Although uncertain at first, the experience has borne out the wisdom of their decision and has strengthened their convictions. Some experts remind us that whenever a minority is involved, whether in matters of education or government or private services, market forces dictate that the supply must precede the demand. In communities where French-language schools are in their infancy, growing enrolment, beyond all, and even the most optimistic, expectations, lends weight to this argument.

If anglicization threatens even young Francophones in French-language schools in the western part of the Island of Montreal, can the parents of Francophone children outside Quebec afford *not* to demand French-language schools to educate their children? If they want bilingual children, the evidence shows that they have no alternative. ■

Quebec's English School Boards: Decline and Fall?

*Karen Seidman**

The number of Anglophone students enrolled with Protestant school boards is declining and the student population in the Francophone sector has been exploding.

Alliance Québec and almost every Anglophone education association in Quebec say that Anglophone Quebecers could lose the control and management of their education system as early as 1992 unless the government moves quickly to create linguistic school boards.

The Protestant School Board of Greater Montreal (PSBGM), the province's largest English school board, expects to have 50% of its students enrolled in French schools in five years.

Gaby Ostro, co-chairperson of Alliance Québec's Education Committee, says that there could be only two or three majority Anglophone Protestant school boards in Quebec by 1991.

Francophone Protestants

What is happening in Protestant school boards throughout the province is that the number of Anglophone students is declining, but the number of students in the French Protestant sector has been exploding. Between 1975 and 1986, the Anglophone student population of Quebec dropped by 53%. Board projections to the year 1990 show a further 11% decline in the number of Anglophone students, compared with a projected provincial growth of 2% for Francophone students.

By 1986 Francophone Protestant students represented 20% of all Protestant students in Quebec. By 1990 they will represent 27%. Many of these students are not Francophone, but immigrants who, under Bill 101, must attend French schools.

Anglophone Protestants worry that unless school board structures change, they could find themselves in the same position as Anglophone Catholics — a minority with little or no representation.

Double jeopardy

Flourishing French sectors in the Protestant school boards of Quebec pose two threats to the Anglophone community: the danger of losing the control and management of its network of schools and the possibility of English boards losing their status as English institutions under Bill 101.

"It is at the school level that decisions are taken and if the community does not control those decisions, then the community is not going to get the quality of education it needs," Royal Orr, the president of Alliance Québec, said in an interview. "No community can survive without that. The numbers are declining, control is slipping away and our community's best interests will cease to be served."

Numbers are declining, control is slipping away.

Bill Pennefather, vice-president of the Association of Directors-General of Protestant School Boards of Quebec, said that "five years down the road, most of the boards will be majority Francophone and the main interest of the board commissioners will be the French schools instead of the English."

Educational guarantees

To combat the situation, Alliance Québec has recommended that Section 93 of the Constitution be amended. It guarantees education rights to Protestants and Catholics, and establishes constitutional guarantees to permit the creation of a system of English and French school boards in Quebec to replace the current system of denominational school boards.

Bill 107

On December 15, Education Minister Claude Ryan tabled Bill 107, aimed at establishing such school boards. Since similar legislation introduced by the Parti Québécois in 1984 was struck down by the Quebec Superior Court, Mr. Ryan intends to refer a question to the Quebec Court of Appeal before enacting any of the controversial sections of the legislation.

The Alliance argues that a constitutional amendment could be worked out between Quebec and Ottawa, but Harvey Weiner, president of the Provincial Association of Protestant Teachers, disagrees. He believes that a deal should not be struck between Ottawa and Quebec only, because that would not be fair to Francophones outside Quebec, who have been lobbying for control of school systems of their own.

Anglophone Quebecers could lose control of their education system as early as 1992.

Weiner warned, "If we stick to the notion that constitutional guarantees are essential, we may be paralysing ourselves and foreclosing the future of our children and grandchildren." He said that while constitutional guarantees for linguistic education are the ideal, he also believes that getting those guarantees could take too long and that Anglophones are going to have to settle for another alternative — provincially legislated boards — or lose control of their education system. He said, "The system we have now is built on a foundation of sand. Unless we make a commitment to create a structure that consolidates English resources, our system will continue to fragment and that is surely not in the interest of English Quebecers."

"The system we have now is built on a foundation of sand."

But many organizations, including Alliance Québec, the PSBGM and the Quebec Association of Protestant School Boards, only support a linguistic division of boards if they are protected by constitutional guarantees. Royal Orr explains: "A school board, understandably, is not going to give away the [denominational] constitutional rights it has. At a certain level, it is ...irresponsible." ■

***Karen Seidman has been the education reporter at the Montreal *Gazette* for almost two years. This story is based on an article that appeared in the *Gazette*.**

Bilingualism and Multilingualism

John Newlove

The former Commissioner of Official Languages wants Canadian students to learn other languages in addition to, not in place of, English and French.

Keith Spicer, from 1970-77 Canada's first Commissioner of Official Languages and now editor of the *Ottawa Citizen*, hasn't changed his mind about English and French in Canada.

When he told an Alberta audience last November that the time has come to teach our children Japanese and Chinese because the world's centres of influence are no longer located in Europe or North America but rather in Asia, he was speaking with the admittedly idealistic assumption in mind that Canadians would have mastered their internal problems with language.

"When I made that statement, I absolutely took it for granted that we had accepted and digested the need to learn our other official language," Spicer says. He pauses, laughs, and amends the statement: "The need, if not the accomplishment.

Ignorance is bliss

"We seem to think, in English Canada, that English is *the* world language," he says. "Somehow we've got it in our heads that learning another language is crippling, that it's a limitation. English Canadians must be the only people in the world who actually brag about not knowing another language.

"After we have all acquired a useful knowledge of the other official language," Spicer says, "I think that we should try to give our young people a chance to master one other important world language."

Hopes and motivations

"I would like to see most people, when they get out of high school, having their first language under excellent control, talking clear, elegant French or English, and having a useful knowledge of the second language — being able to read a newspaper and carry on a conversation — and with a third level of mastery, a smattering, of another language, a basis on which to build," Spicer says.

The three most important things in acquiring another language are motivation, a predisposition towards learning a second language, and method, he believes. And when people tell him that they would give their right arms to learn French, he says he replies, "'Don't tell me that. Tell me you'll give it half an hour a day.' But they say that they can't do that. They don't have the motivation." ■

Challenges

Alberta

The Supreme Court of Canada has agreed to rule on the demands of a group of Francophone parents, under Section 23 of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, for complete French-language educational facilities for a group of Francophone children.

It will be the first case in which a key issue is the interpretation of the clause in the Charter limiting minority educational rights to situations "where numbers warrant". Another issue to be addressed is the extent of the presumed right of a minority to manage its own schools and educational programs.

In philosophical terms, the debate will revolve around the question as to the degree to which failure on the part of the province to legislate and act with diligence to put Section 23 into effect in its own jurisdiction constitutes an infringement of the constitutional rights of the linguistic minority.

One of the intervenors in the case on behalf of the parents involved and the Association de l'École Georges-et-Julia-Bugnet, is the Commissioner of Official Languages.

Ontario

A 174-page report calling, among other things, for the creation of an autonomous French-language school board in the county of Prescott & Russell in eastern Ontario, has received an enthusiastic reception among educators in the area.

The report, prepared by Marc Godbout, president of the Franco-Ontarian Council of Education, recommends a complete re-organization of the county's school system, including the setting up of four distinct boards of education, two public and two Roman Catholic.

Tabling the report in the legislature last November, Education Minister Chris Ward described it as a "comprehensive proposal" addressing the needs of the community, in which Francophones constitute about 75% of the population.

The challenge of defining the precise role and character of the French-language school system has been undertaken by the Francophone school boards grouped in l'Association française des conseils scolaires de l'Ontario (AFCSO).

While recognizing the importance of French-language immersion programs, AFCSO officials, at their annual meeting in December, insisted that more is necessary for Ontario's 96,000 Francophone pupils. "The French-language school must have its own distinct character, quite apart from that of immersion schools," said Ginette Gratton, general director of the association, in a speech to members.

British Columbia

Although it will not be officially inaugurated until next September, a new French-language educational institution has already started operating in North Vancouver.

While it is associated administratively with an English-language school, Larson-Annexe Elementary School has its own program for the almost 100 pupils in attendance.

It originated with an initiative taken by local Francophone parents in 1986, and was brought into being last year with the co-operation of the local school board, the provincial government, and with the help of grants from the federal Secretary of State's Department.

The Maritimes

The first school textbook written and produced by members of the Francophone community of the Maritime provinces was officially launched in November at a ceremony in Dieppe, New Brunswick. Titled *Les Maritimes: Trois Provinces à Découvrir*, it is for use in a new grade nine social studies course throughout the three provinces.

The Montreal Business World and the Language Revolution

For the Montreal business community, the psychological revolution in language attitudes has proven to be a decade of rapid economic progress.

In the course of the past decade, Montreal's business world has undergone a profound psycholinguistic revolution. This has transformed not just the language practices of the Anglophone and Francophone business communities, but also the perception each has of the other and of itself.

On the English-speaking side, the whole process has involved an intense and often painful effort of introspection. Time-honoured patterns of thought have had to be scrutinized, altered or discarded.

A fresh resiliency

The result is seen in the emergence among Anglophones of a fresh resiliency, a growing self-confidence born of the discovery of an unexpected flexibility and capacity to adapt.

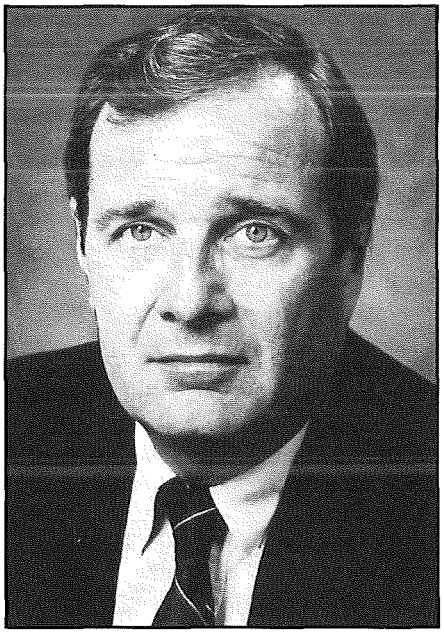
In the French-language sector, the revolution has been even more far-reaching in its immediate effects and its implications for the future. Over the space of 10 years, Francophone Quebec has evolved a dynamic business ethos. With the language now perceived as secure at home, the French-speaking business community is eager to talk to the world.

The perception the Anglophone and Francophone business communities have of each other, and of themselves, has been transformed.

The root of the resurgence

Is the revolution in language attitudes really recognized as the root of this resurgence?

Business leaders on both sides of the language equation like to include a number of other factors, such as the overall economic context or the climate of political stability in recent years. But the burgeoning of business confidence, they admit, owes much to social harmony based on mutual respect and a sense of individual worth. In this respect, there is no doubt that the acceptance of French as Quebec's official language of work has been a driving force for a decade of progress. Basically, the period 1977-87 has seen the final disappearance of what was virtually a master-servant relationship between the English and French components making up the Quebec business mosaic.

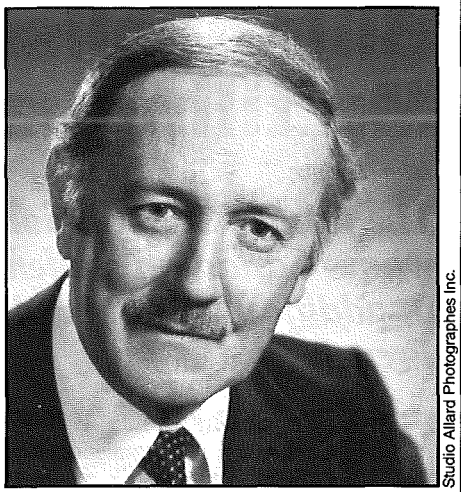


Paul Martin Jr.

Bill 101

Before the 1977 adoption of the Charter of the French Language (Bill 101), bilingualism, in practice, meant a never-ending Francophone struggle to speak the language of the management class. And, since the word is the vehicle for thought, the Francophone came through, all too often, as a business anomaly at best, or an ineffectual figure of fun at worst.

At the same time, it was somehow assumed — by both language groups — that the Anglophone was congenitally incapable of mastering French. But, since



Studio Allard Photographes Inc.

Marcel Bergeron

control of the economic levers was firmly in Anglophone hands, this did not seem to matter. And so the whole charade served only to reinforce the disparity in the work world.

It was somehow assumed that the Anglophone was incapable of mastering French.

With the passing of Bill 101 a decade ago, all this altered overnight. Henceforth, with French the only official tongue in the workplace, the onus was squarely on the Anglophone to learn. Now even the boss had to stumble along in another language and bear the brunt of any ridicule. Initially, this proved painful to the point of outright rejection. A host of Anglophone business leaders simply quit the province. But many more stayed, determined to adapt and to survive. Then something unexpected began to happen.

To everyone's surprise, English-speaking business people found that not only could they get along in French, they actually enjoyed it. As a bonus, they discovered that exposure to other thought patterns made for a broader, more flexible approach to their business perspectives. Today, as Montreal Board of Trade Vice-President Alex Harper says, "the last thing the Anglophone business community wants is any return to the old unilingual world."

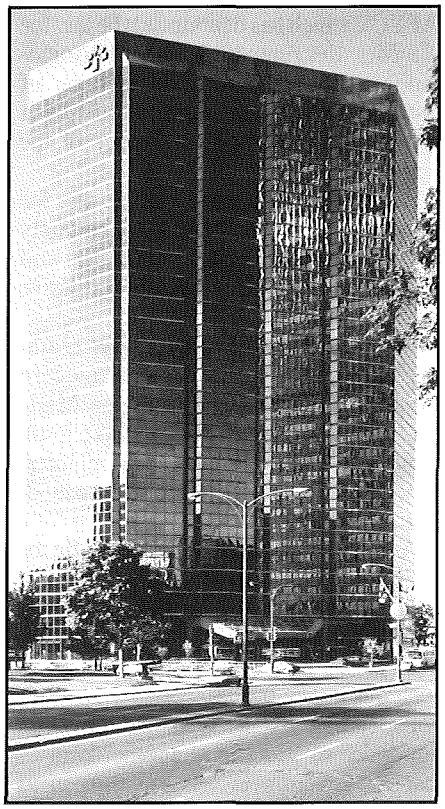
Self-confidence

On the French-language side, the new relationship in the business world seemed too good to be true. And, for the first few years, it was, understandably, "French only" everywhere. But awareness that this French primacy could be a normal state of

affairs began to build self-confidence. The language was protected, enshrined in law. Francophones began to enjoy the experience of dealing with the rest of the world in English — or any other language.

The burgeoning of business confidence owes much to social harmony.

In Montreal today bilingualism in business is demonstrably more natural and widespread than before the language legislation. Now that the rules are clear, Quebec's Francophones are eager to match the newfound language skills of their English-speaking counterparts. But it has to be a two-way street.



Laurentian Group headquarters

Marcel Bergeron

"What it boiled down to, essentially, is that we are no longer obliged to distort ourselves, to go through contortions and try to cram ourselves into an alien mould," says Deputy Minister of Foreign Trade Marcel Bergeron.

Today, this cosmopolitan Quebecer recalls his early feelings of rejection in a Canada where the Anglophone-dominated business world was a closed shop. "This is an experience which the new generation of young Quebec business people we see today has happily been spared."

Bergeron has watched the workings of the psychological revolution. He can see a clear relationship between today's Francophone confidence in international business and language security in the home base. "This simply means that now all Francophone Quebecers take it for granted that they can carry on business anywhere in their own language, except, of course, when practical circumstances require communication in another."

"We are no longer obliged to distort ourselves."

The Laurentian Group

It is, perhaps, in the private sector that evidence of Quebec's opening up to the world is most dramatic. In terms of transition from Quebec-oriented insurance venture to multi-billion dollar international powerhouse, Montreal's Laurentian Group empire tells the story of the decade.

Launched in Quebec City in 1938, Laurentian aimed at offering insurance protection for the local population, while generating capital to help economically stagnant areas climb out of the Depression. By its nature, its horizons were virtually circumscribed by French Quebec. Today, as a streamlined, comprehensive financial conglomerate — which includes the nation's eighth largest bank — this rescue mission of half a century ago has become an international giant. The Laurentian Group's ultra-modern building also houses the world-class engineering firm of Lavalin Inc. The combination is eloquent evidence of Quebec's international business success throughout the decade of the language revolution.

Paul Martin Jr.

What of the English-speaking side of the equation? What better bellwether than that traditional Anglophone bastion, the shipping world, personified in Montreal by 75-year-old Canada Steamship Lines?

When Paul Martin Jr. took over some 10 years ago as head of the CSL Group — which operates more than 30 vessels on Canada's inland waters — he launched "an unofficial affirmative action" program, hiring Francophones for management jobs and promoting use of French in the workplace. Though under federal charter, and thus not legally bound by Quebec's language laws, the firm also paid for language courses for any of its 2,000 employees in need of help. Today, bilingualism is the operating norm.

For the future, Martin sees a growing need for emphasis on the international aspect of business planning. "Today, it is no longer biculturalism, but multiculturalism. And in hiring, I look first for third language skills."

And so the story goes, all across the city. For the Montreal business community, the psychological revolution in language attitudes has proven to be a decade of rapid economic progress. To dismiss this as mere coincidence is a mistake no thinking Quebecer would make. *H.W.* ■

Press Review

Tom Sloan

Ontario and Quebec have recently been confronting the issue of minority language rights, and the press has been in the middle of the battle.

Bill 101

Was it a necessary decision to preserve "social peace" in Quebec, or the betrayal of an election promise to the English-speaking minority of that province? Whatever it was, Premier Robert Bourassa's refusal, before a ruling by the Supreme Court, to modify Bill 101 to allow some English on outside commercial signs caused much ink to flow.

Premiers Robert Bourassa and David Peterson

Commenting on the situation, the *Ottawa Citizen* editorialized: "...there's no conceivable Supreme Court ruling that would relieve Bourassa of the responsibility to make some tough decisions. The co-operative spirit of Meech Lake will disappear overnight if it becomes clear that he feels it removes the obligation to protect the constitutional rights of Anglophone Quebecers."

More specifically, the St. Catharines *Standard* noted that there was already a backlash in Ontario to the prospect of a bilingual province. "Only by fulfilling his promises to his Anglophone community and proving that Quebec respects the historic right of a minority can Bourassa hope to counter that backlash."

Some French-language commentators saw the question differently. To *Le Devoir* editor-in-chief Paul-André Comeau "It is in no way shameful to choose the path of wisdom, even in politics. We should be grateful to the Premier, who invoked arguments of social peace to justify his decision not to liberalize this regulation of the Charter of the French Language.... Behind the symbolism of the signs issue is the terrible question of the survival of the Francophone collectivity in America...".

In Quebec's *Le Soleil*, editorialist Raymond Giroux noted that, faced with its increased dependence on immigration, Quebec must ensure the preservation of its French character. "As long as a single waiter or a single taxi driver in Montreal cannot properly serve his client in French, the need will exist for coercive measures...".

For Michel Roy, associate editor of *La Presse*, the essential question was that of the character of Montreal: "...by sliding gradually towards an external bilingualism, French Canada's principal city...will lose, in just a few years, the French countenance that it has gained in the past decade, and then only partly."

In an editorial reply, the Montreal *Gazette* took issue with Roy's contention that the face of Montreal must be unilingually French. What about the large non-Francophone component of the city, the paper asked? "Can a 'face' that denies them expression be anything more than a mask?"

While the battle lines were generally drawn linguistically, some commentators on both sides tried to bridge the gap. *La Presse* columnist Marcel Adam called the "social peace" issue "a specious argument....If the government really believes it has received the mandate to deliver the promised merchandise to the Anglophones, it must do so, whatever the social upheavals that might result."

From the Anglophone side, *Gazette* columnist Greta Chambers wrote: "In defence of the very negative Francophone reaction to the growingly strident Anglophone demands, it must be said that some English-speaking Quebecers have given provocation by posting unilingual English signs."

Taking a slightly different approach was Steve Kowch writing in the weekly Quebec *Chronicle Telegraph*: "A lot of Anglophones who feel the Bourassa government is letting them down on the sign issue tend to forget what has already been accomplished. Is allowing English on commercial signs more important than a child's education...more important than being able to walk into a hospital emergency ward...and getting treatment in our own language? Of course not! It is a question of priorities."

Bill 8

In Ontario, as in a mirror image, the issue was French minority rights, specifically the French Language Services Act (Bill 8) designed to provide a wider range of services to the nearly half a million Franco-Ontarians. Although it was passed in November 1986, it is still a matter of controversy to groups such as the Alliance for the Preservation of English in Canada (APEC), which has denounced the law for allegedly discriminating against Anglophone public servants. The reaction of Ontario newspapers has generally, but not unanimously, been in favour of the legislation.

Reflecting the majority attitude was the Pembroke *Observer*: "Bill 8...is certainly not an attempt to split communities and we must not allow it to become a divisive factor."

References to APEC were often scathing. Referring to such groups as "modern day dinosaurs", the *Star* of Sault Ste. Marie wrote: "Call this group what you like, it still comes out being an anti-French organization, which is the last thing Canada or Ontario wants."

A more sceptical view was taken by the Belleville *Intelligencer*: "The fact is, bilingualism has been a divisive subject from the word go....The Peterson government...has a fight on its hands if it tries to push this policy further...".

Defending Bill 8, Ottawa's *Le Droit* responded to criticism of another kind — that the government was too slow in its plans for practical implementation. According to editorialist Alain Dexter, it is doing all it can: "No preceding government had the courage to commit itself, in such a global fashion, as has the Peterson government, to the recognition of the cultural and linguistic specificity of the Franco-Ontarians."

As for APEC, editorialist Hector-L. Bertrand, S.J., of Sudbury's *Le Voyageur* had some advice for his readers: "Let us simply ignore these ranters of the 'Alliance' — a mere handful — and turn towards the real Ontario, as long as we, too, are willing to make some sacrifices." ■

Book Reviews

Another Language and Society

In *Langue et société* (Mondia, 530 pp.), Jacques Leclerc argues that language is not simply an instrument of communication, but the vehicle for an entire range of social, economic and political values. As an educator and sociolinguist, he examines the relationship between language and society from a broad space/time perspective that focuses on Quebec's position in the world at large.

Communications have become the major pivot of the modern world, a field in which language plays a special role. Language, like society, is constantly subject to change and can be a major instrument of social progress. But it is also a double-edged sword, a symbol of unity for some and of oppression for others.

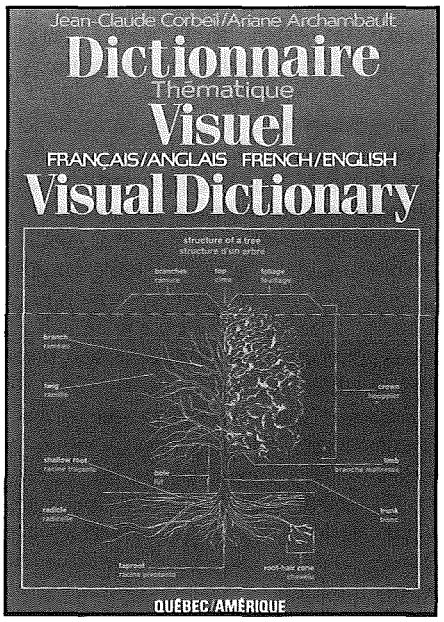
After listing the world's languages and analysing their geographical and numerical importance, Leclerc reminds us that warfare is a normal state of affairs between languages. Such conflict, however, casts only a thin veil over a much larger struggle for political and economic domination. Multilingualism, after all, is a product of military conquests that create states and displace populations.

Although today's world has 6,600 languages, it is dominated by English, Russian, French, German and Spanish, with Arabic, Chinese and Japanese exerting major influences. These languages reign supreme in all sectors and effectively control all demographic forces, whether economic, military or cultural. Most of the 137 unilingual states are in fact multilingual. In Leclerc's opinion, bilingualism is viewed as a burden, a practice that serves the dominant language. If extended to society as a whole, he says, it represents the first step in a pathological process leading to the extinction of one language.

When two languages are at loggerheads, governments can intervene to alter their natural evolution or status. A policy of non-intervention is the same as one of political assimilation by the stronger language; poor linguistic development may aggravate the conflict. The author appears to prefer a policy of territorial unilingualism because it eliminates competition between the stronger language and the weaker.

The author then deals with the language issue in Quebec, noting that some people are tempted to return to widespread bilingualism and that many young Quebecers display a worrisome lack of awareness about language matters. If current demolinguistic trends continue, Francophones will gradually decline in statistical importance within the Canadian federation, but Quebec will act as a counterweight by becoming increasingly French. *S.O.* ■

A Picture Is Worth a Thousand Words — Bilingually



Of specialized dictionaries, the bilingual ones are the most useful and popular — the first bilingual glossary to see print was a French-English one compiled for the use of travellers, published in England by William Caxton in 1480.

The *French/English Visual Dictionary* edited by Jean-Claude Corbeil and Ariane Archambault (Québec/Amérique, 1987, 924 pp., $39.95) eschews alphabetical order and standard modes of definition to present paired English and French words keyed to drawings of the objects the words represent. This is not a reference book that is "highly illustrated", but one that is wholly illustrated. In all, there are 3,000 drawings.

Editor-in-chief Jean-Claude Corbeil gives the objectives of this well-planned, well-executed project: to list the terminology and ideas needed to describe the physical objects of everyday life and to illustrate and label the objects, so that the illustration plays the part assigned to a definition in conventional dictionaries.

There are 28 thematic divisions in the *Visual Dictionary*. One example: under "Sports", with 11 subdivisions, 'Team Games' alone contains 14 entries, one of which is for hockey. This first diagrams the playing surface with its divisions and equipment, players and officials in place, the elements clearly labelled in both languages. Other illustrations for the game show a goalkeeper and a skater in full regalia, all parts of the equipment bilingually named. (Now I know the French word for another kind of cup.) Further illustrations dissect the puck and both kinds of sticks.

Though both visual and bilingual dictionaries have been produced before, this Québec/Amérique publication is superior in clarity of concept and illustration as well as in range of topic to other examples I have seen, and the concept in its many variations is enjoying a considerable worldwide success. An example of thoroughness: when American and British English usages differ, both are given, distinguished by type face; Quebec French and European French are similarly distinguished; and the two languages are always linked.

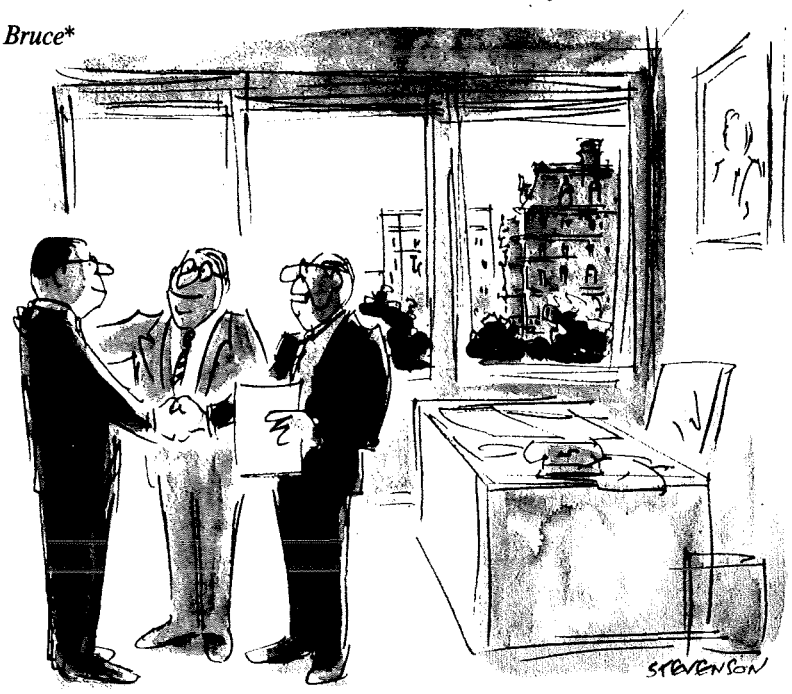
This is a valuable, instructive and entertaining bilingual reference to the complex technical world we all live in, ably produced. Montreal-based Québec/Amérique and publisher Jacques Fortin are to be congratulated. *J.N.* ■

New

December saw the publication of *Politique et Aménagement Linguistique* (Le Robert, Paris, 570 pp.), in L'ordre des mots series. The current volume, edited by Jacques Maurais, is an anthology of essays and reflections on the linguistic situations of various countries. As the preface by Joshua Fishman notes, this project is one of the first wide-ranging treatments of language as a societal resource to be published in French. *S.O.* ■

The Roots of Officialese

*Harry Bruce**



"Congratulations, Dave! I don't think I've read a more beautifully evasive and subtly misleading public statement in all my years in government."

The cost to society of everyday bad prose is incalculable. Consider the bum decisions that flow from bewildering advice; the train of correspondence launched by one jargon-choked letter; the long-distance calls for clarification; the computer time that's eaten by the slingers of gobbledygook and masters of obfuscation; the salaries of all those who wrestle with official prolixity; the expensive research that few can grasp; and the paper, printing and postage for the tons of padded pap that government publishes. The bill for boring and baffling prose in Canada each year must run to the billions.

Appropriated jargon

Specialized language is essential to most disciplines, but in education, social work, law, business, medicine, science, architecture, engineering, the military, art criticism, and indeed virtually any field that requires training beyond high school, learned illiterates wield their jargon not just to communicate but also to comfort themselves with proof of their importance. "The use of appropriated jargon," U.S. professor and language-watcher Richard Gambino once wrote, "serves an old priesthood mystique. Those privy to the code enjoy a special, privileged, sophisticated status making them superior to us ordinary slobs."

In government, too, the priesthood mystique matters. A senior civil servant once boasted to me that he owed his fast rise in the bureaucracy to his singular ability to write documents in a style that, while avoiding saying anything dangerously specific, impressed cabinet ministers. What he'd perfected was not so much a code as the expression of little in a way that made it sound like much.

He didn't know how he'd come by this dreadful facility. He was simply a natural, and he talked as though his bureaucratese were a secret branch of literature, one crucial both to the smooth governing of Canada and his chance of becoming a deputy minister.

Prioritizing viable ongoing functional parameters

Under contract to a task force in Ottawa, I once worked nine hours a day turning government research reports into language Canadians could read without falling asleep. This was in the days when I naively believed that sensitive, determined people still had a chance to drive *viable* and *parameters* from the language, not to mention *ongoing*, *interface*, *impacted*, *functional*, *input*, *matrix*, *prioritize*, *utilization* and all their repulsive allies and offspring. Each morning, I'd wake up with my head full of *-tion* words: *centralization*, *co-ordination*, *co-operation*, *implementation*, *rationalization*, *integration*, *facilitation*. I came to hate them.

The task force also brought in (*seconded*?) an expert in officialese — a career public servant from no less lofty a spot than the Privy Council Office — to translate its thought, the distillation of all the wisdom it had acquired at a cost of hundreds of thousands of dollars, into a chapter of conclusions and recommendations. His prose was abominable, and I set to work. It was like paring the rot out of a fetid potato to come up with something you might want to eat. The document went out of my office much smaller than it had come in and at first the commissioners accused me of having destroyed significant meaning.

But when they compared the edited and unedited versions, they realized there never had been much meaning to destroy in that final chapter; and the point about all this is that if they had not seen their conclusions in clean language they would never have known how weak their *content* was. They now had to think hard about what they really wanted to say. Whenever I see a gob of particularly offensive officialese, I think of what Donald Holden, a book editor, said about much academic prose: "Every experienced editor can tell you the real purpose of those turgid, ponderous sentences. They're designed to conceal the fact that the writer hasn't taken the time to figure out precisely what he wants to say.... He's dodged the writer's toughest intellectual job — to link his facts in a tight, logical chain." He is lazy.

Negative patient outcome

But if laziness and the priesthood mystique lie behind gobbledygook, so does evasion. While Holden complained about writers not taking the time to figure out what they want to say, bureaucratic writers were gladly taking the time to figure out what they did *not* want to say. You can't get nailed for what you've said if you've never really said anything, and analysis of much bureaucratic bafflegab is like discovering the emperor's clothes have no emperor in them.

Sir Ernest Gowers, an eminent British word-watcher, suggested in 1954 that one cause of official "pudder" was "a call to the instinct of self-preservation. It is sometimes dangerous to be precise." Sir Ernest was talking about what is widely known, 33 years later, as covering one's arse. It is the taproot of the language of irresponsibility that now flourishes throughout government. Lovers of plain English have lost the war on pudder. Its rule is as inevitable as *negative patient outcome* and *revenue enhancement*. ■

***The well-known Canadian writer and commentator on English usage, Harry Bruce, lives in Guysborough, Nova Scotia.**