LANGUAGE AND SOCIETY

Number **31**, Summer 1990

IF CANADA SUNDERS?...

SAULT STE. MARIE IN PERSPECTIVE

The Annual Report makes waves
HAS THE 1988 OFFICIAL LANGUAGES ACT BEEN FORGOTTEN?

THE SUPREME COURT SUPPORTS MINORITIES

CONTEST
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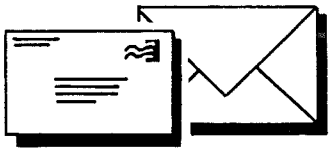
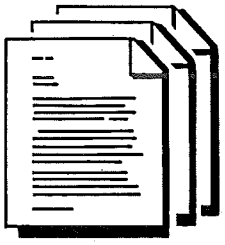
Letters





Hungary and Canada: Similar Issues

I have been receiving *Language and Society* since late 1987. I am teaching Canadian culture and literature at L. Kossuth University, Hungary, and have found *Language and Society* extremely helpful in my endeavours to make Canadian culture and literature become better known in my own country.

My particular field of interest and research has become English language writing in Quebec since the early 1970s and your quarterly has continually provided me with very useful background material to understand what was going on in the field of literature, too....

I was delighted to hear that the Hungarian Academy of Sciences is planning a work on Canadian legislation. To some extent Canada and Hungary have similar issues to face concerning minorities, language rights and related issues.

I would like to thank you for your support.

Dr. Judit Molnar
Debrecen
Hungary

Iqaluit

In Number 30, Spring 1990, of *Language and Society*, the article of the Secretary of State Department drew my attention. I was very pleased to read about how French is expanding in Canada.

People often speak of the Northwest Territories without realizing their size; Iqaluit is as important a city in the eastern Arctic as Yellowknife is in the west.

Iqaluit has more than 3,500 inhabitants and Francophones represent 14% of the population. Today, thanks to the efforts of members of the Association Francophone d'Iqaluit, a community centre has been built where activities are held in French, there is a multicultural day care centre that opened in 1989 and looks after 25 children on an all-day basis, children receive 45 minutes a day of instruction in French in primary and secondary school and, finally, for each of the past two years, a trilingual calendar in English, French and Inuktituk has been published.

I simply wish to say that your article can only encourage us to continue to work to make French recognized as an official language throughout Canada.

Kim Ouellette
Iqaluit
Northwest Territories

Vigorous Debate

I am writing to congratulate you on your timely article published in yesterday's [14 February] *Ottawa Citizen*. You hit the nail on the head when you deplore the general public's ignorance of linguistic matters as well as the lack of leadership at the federal level on this most sensitive of public policy issues.

I have been a keen observer and student of the evolution of official and non-official bilingualism since the late 1960s. I feel the country is at a crucial crossroads, one which will determine whether we can go forward with confidence or retrench to rethink and reformulate existing linguistic policies and practices at all levels of society, public, non-profit and private....

I agree with your view that a "vigorous debate" will help to reinforce public support for bilingualism. Yet, I do not believe that this debate should be allowed to become eternal. After all, the country must get on to other public policy matters. It would be detrimental to national unity to "constitutionalize" at this or any other time a perpetual confrontation between divergent and competitive linguistic visions....

Michael D. Behiels
Professor and Chairman
Department of History
University of Ottawa

Letters
continued on page 40

LANGUAGE AND SOCIETY

This quarterly review is published by the Commissioner of Official Languages, D'Iberville Fortier, who is also head of the editorial committee, 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.

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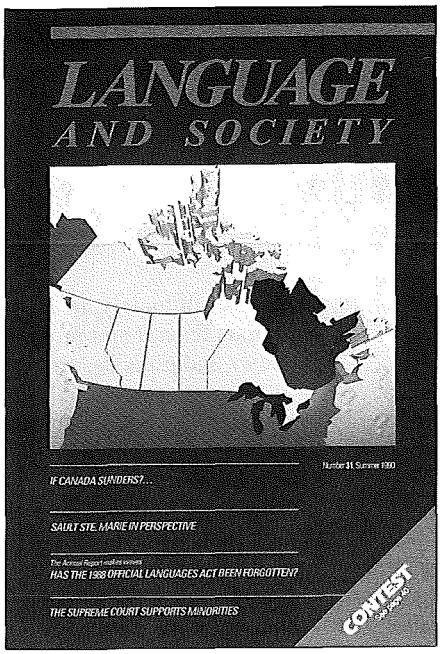

Cover:

The map of a splintered Canada shows only one of many conceivable possibilities for the future. While the editorial speaks of a "Trans-Canadian bridge", two experts, John Meisel and Réjean Pelletier, ponder the repercussions of a possible rupture.

NOTICE

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:
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COMMISSIONER OF OFFICIAL LANGUAGES
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LANGUAGE AND SOCIETY

COMMISSIONER'S EDITORIAL

A Trans-Canadian Bridge:

Growing Recognition of Our Duality

D'Iberville Fortier

Canadians are rightly worried. They are questioning their remaining together, their identity and their values. Certain groups or factions are calling for the rejection of official bilingualism and of the French fact outside Quebec. Meanwhile, many Quebecers are questioning the very basis of our federal system.

"Can we still speak of one Canada?" I was anxiously asked by a political scientist the other day. It would be easy to dodge the question by answering that our country is characterized by its diversity, "the Canadian mosaic". While not completely inaccurate, this description has the defect of making our identity rest solely upon our differences. Linguistically speaking, the options of the impracticable principle of territoriality or of its complicated opposite — individual choice — attract or repel, like the poles of a magnet, depending on the social or political trends of the moment. And the immediate problems often make us forget the concept of historical continuity along the path of progress.

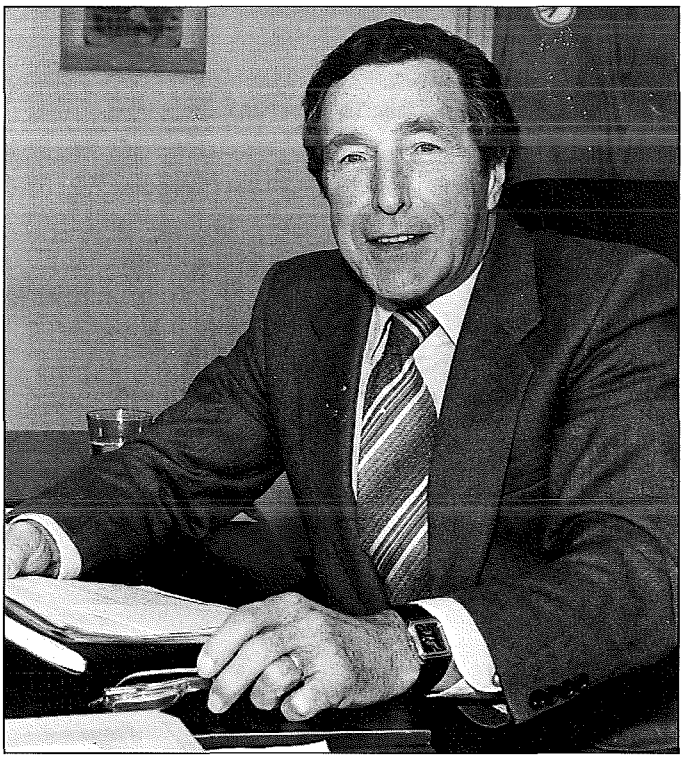
A sage offered the following definition of national identity:

> A nation is a soul, a spiritual principle. This soul, this spiritual principle, consists of two things, which in reality are only one. The first is the common possession of a rich legacy of memories; the other is the present agreement, the will to live together, the desire to continue to enhance the heritage that has been passed down intact. (Our translation.)

Is it possible that the soul of our country, its spiritual principle, is above all its linguistic duality?

There is no doubt about the importance of English and French in our collective history. The concept of an association between English- and French-speaking communities dates back to a time even before Confederation. Throughout our evolution as a nation, language, which has fuelled so many quarrels, has also played a role going well beyond the need for communication. The status given to our two national languages is the very symbol of the equality between their speakers, who form two linguistic communities within a single territory. The Supreme Court of Canada once again pointed out the importance of this vision of our country in its decision of March 15, 1990, on the right to instruction in the language of the minority (Section 23 of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms):

> ...history reveals that s. 23 was designed to correct, on a national scale, the progressive erosion of minority official language groups and to give effect to the concept of the "partnership" of the two official language groups in the context of education.



In defining linguistic duality as a fundamental characteristic of Canada, we have over the years accepted the need to develop, in accordance with the thinking of the Supreme Court, a "variable scale" in the exercise of rights, recognized and applied by our governments. The dynamic elements of this consensus, as codified in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the 1988 Official Languages Act, the Criminal Code and, ultimately, in numerous federal and provincial laws and policies, are:

- the formal acknowledgement that English and French are the official languages of Canada and have equality of status and equal rights and privileges as to their use in all institutions of the Parliament and Government of Canada and in the courts in criminal proceedings;
- the right of Canadians to have their children educated in the official language of their choice where numbers warrant;
- national access to CBC radio and television in both languages and bilingual labelling of commercial products;
- co-operation between the federal government and the provinces to promote the development of English and French linguistic minority communities by offering a range of essential services;
- progress towards the full recognition and use of English and of French in Canadian society;
- promotion of the learning of English and of French as second languages;
- along with the affirmation of the status of the official languages, recognition of the legitimacy of preserving and enhancing languages other than English and French.

These principles are the expression in linguistic terms of the overall commitment that Canadians have accepted to promote equality of

Reader Survey

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	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Don't know
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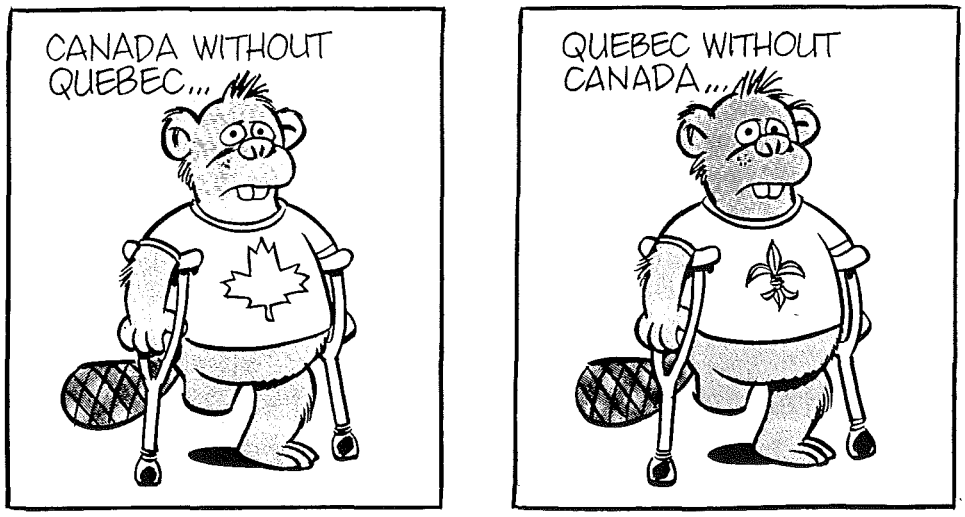


See also the French cartoon

opportunity while striving for their collective well-being. This commitment lies at the heart of our societal goals.

Do Canadians still accept this linguistic heritage? Recent polls continue to confirm that the vast majority of them, both in Quebec and in the other provinces, subscribe to these values. In the context of the often stormy debates surrounding the Meech Lake Accord it is important to emphasize that these basic principles in themselves have not been questioned by the principal players. Moreover, one of the stated purposes of the Accord, in addition to clarifying the status of Quebec, which everyone acknowledges is not a province like the others, is precisely to put the development of our linguistic communities on a more solid footing. That is why more and more Canadians see in our linguistic duality a powerful buttress reinforcing our national identity and adding lustre to our democratic freedoms. The strength of our duality lies in the fact that it ties in with our concern for justice, tolerance and generosity by proposing a balanced system of individual and collective rights respectful of the interests of our two great linguistic communities. Finally, if further proof is needed of the powerful attraction of this social ethic, it suffices to recall the desire of three out of four Canadians, according to a February 1990 survey, that their children have the opportunity to learn the other official language.

Canada is a human community united by certain spiritual values and a common heritage. We must not be afraid therefore to speak openly of a Canadian culture that now possesses its own foundations. Foreigners often see this more clearly than we do. Does this culture not derive its richness in large measure from the creative symbiosis of our linguistic and cultural communities? By speaking of "two solitudes" do we not risk losing sight of the many things that we have in common? It would be tedious to list here the names of all those whose intellectual labours have helped to create and promote our identity. Let us simply say that in the eyes of the world the word "Canada" very often stands for an ideal nation. Are we, Anglophones and Francophones alike, prepared to renounce this nation out of frustration, when it has already required of us, as of so many other peoples, so much patience?

Having said this, linguistic duality clearly is not the panacea for our constitutional problems. We wrote elsewhere that if the Meech Lake Accord did not exist it would be necessary to invent it to enable Quebec to become a signatory to our constitutional reform of 1981-82. Recognition of this duality nonetheless seems to me to be the most tangible sign of our "present agreement", of our will to live together. Like any value of society, it provides, in a difficult period, a vital strength that protects us, a hope that inspires us. Wisdom therefore dictates that we continue to build our collective future by making full use of these linguistic materials for our common home. ■

The present time is one of uncertainty, of insecurity about the future of our country. With the aim of encouraging reflection,* Language and Society *asked two distinguished university professors to describe for us what Canada would be like without Quebec and what Quebec would be like without Canada.
Neither we nor the authors are attempting to make predictions. What follows is and, let us hope, will remain purely hypothetical.

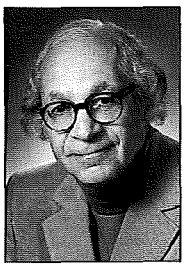
Canada without Quebec

*John Meisel**

For the first time ever, many Canadians outside Quebec are seriously asking themselves what their future would be like if Quebec were to separate. This is both agonizingly disquieting and salutary. Disquieting because it reveals how close we think we have come to the country's possible dissolution and because such speculations can become self-fulfilling prophesies; salutary because a rupture cannot be ruled out and its painful consequences can best be reduced if we are prepared to face it calmly and reflectively. The least harm will come if no separation occurs, of course. Every milligram of resourcefulness, energy and goodwill available should therefore be devoted to the working out of an arrangement permitting the various major Canadian communities and mobilized groups to continue sharing one state. If we fail, then a divorce of Quebec from the rest is inevitable.

Infinite complexities

The aftermath of Canada unravelling would be infinitely complex and would depend on the specific reasons for the split and the manner in which it occurred. Furthermore, long-term effects would differ substantially from those of shorter duration and the impact would vary dramatically from region to region. A truncated, essentially English-speaking Canada would also be affected by the new status in different ways, depending on which aspect of life is in question. A realistic appraisal must distinguish at least between three interrelated but distinct domains: economic consequences, political effects, and the impact on dominant values.



***John Meisel is the Sir Edward Peacock Professor of Political Science at Queen's University and is editor of the *International Political Science Review*.**

Economics

Economic consequences have received the most attention, the others much less. It is reasonable to assume that the rupture would not be total but would take the form of sovereignty-association: political uncoupling but continued economic links and joint endeavours. Thus for some time, at any rate, a common currency is likely to continue and therefore a shared central bank. How efficiently (and hence how beneficially) these and other institutions are organized would depend on the spirit in which the changes are negotiated. An atmosphere of bitterness and recrimination is not likely to enhance the quality of the outcome but might be hard to avoid. Negotiations would likely be excruciating over issues like the respective responsibilities of the two governments for the national debt, the future of federal properties in Quebec, the share of Quebec in such properties outside, and the freedom of movement of people and goods between the new political entities.

One thing is obvious: the economic uncertainty associated with the unravelling of Canada would at first adversely affect credit ratings and foreign investment. This might have salutary political consequences for the new Canada but would lower living standards. Furthermore, since Canada's economic base would be materially diminished, the federal government would have to reduce certain payments. The heavy spending items, like transfers reducing regional disparities and certain social services would, therefore, be under pressure and might have to be curtailed substantially. Decisions would therefore have to be made about how the burden of our being in reduced circumstances would be allocated between individuals and provinces. Decisions about future winners and losers would be affected by the values emerging from the new circumstances and the configuration of the new political forces.

The new states?

The central question occasioned by the possibility of a divorce, though affected by economic issues, is political: could a Canada *sans* Quebec survive in the long term as an independent country or would it ultimately merge with the United States? Some jeremiahs argue that the one critical feature distinguishing Canada from America is the English-French mix here: it provides the country's uniqueness and the *raison d'être* for its existence. Without the French fact English Canada would meld into the States. This view overlooks other, quite basic, differences between the two countries and the enormous nation-building potential of the tearing asunder of the "first Canada".

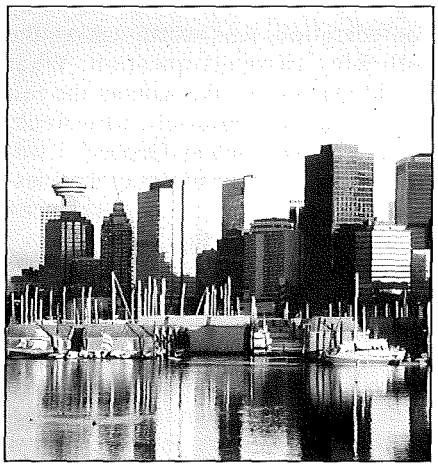
While Canadians, particularly Anglophones, are in many respects similar to Americans, there are significant differences of which most Canadians are deeply aware and which they cherish.

The Canadian mind set is one of a small country, not that of a world power; Canadians are well aware that they are not perfect and are notoriously self-deprecatory and certainly more deferential than their neighbours; they lack the messianic proclivities of Americans, are more laid back, more tolerant (although not as tolerant as they like to think), conciliatory and law abiding; their society is less violent. Canadians are strongly committed to their social and health services safety net and have no intention of voluntarily giving it up.

One of the reasons for Canada having so far had a relatively low sense of national identity is that we have never shared a cataclysmic, consciousness-raising experience like a revolution or invasion. The trauma of Quebec leaving and the challenge of fashioning a new country could endow the new Canada with such a formative shared crisis and could powerfully enhance the sense of Canadian solidarity and of being different from the United States. The national crisis could deepen the differences between the two countries.

Another political question going to the very heart of the viability of a "second" Canada is whether the Atlantic provinces would remain a part of the new country, disconnected as they would be, geographically, from the rest. It should not be too difficult to arrange suitable forms of transport and communications without clumsy impediments, linking the regions separated by Quebec. The absence of contiguity, while inconvenient, would not be paralysing, provided the political will was present to create a country that would stretch from sea to sea, even with a gaping hole in the middle. It is likely that the required determination would exist on both sides, although the Meech Lake experience and recent reactions to bilingualism have revealed that Canadians are not quite as tolerant or accommodating as is sometimes claimed.

The English Canadian consciousness and the sense we have of Canada acquired, particularly since the end of the Second World War, a character in which the French fact was an indelible (although not always consciously perceived) element. Many came to see this country as a partnership between Anglophones and Francophones. But even those who rejected this perception had a deep awareness that one of the key features of Canada was the co-existence of the two linguistic societies, and the presence of the government of Quebec which often pursued goals diverging from those espoused by the rest. A fundamental feature of the national psyche was, therefore, an awareness of Canada's duality. This state sometimes led to hostility but more generally contributed to a rather tolerant, conciliatory and compromising outlook. The dissolution of the old Canada would lead to the attenuation of this perspective and the values it engendered and would weaken the tendency to see Canada as a partnership.



Vancouver

The fate of Canadian Francophones

A major conundrum confronting the new Canada would be the fate of its Francophones. Their assimilation west of Ontario, which has been going on for years, would accelerate. But what of Ontario and New Brunswick? In these provinces considerable and sustained efforts at nourishing Canadian dualism have borne fruit in the past but it is not at all certain whether the currently enlightened policies would survive the separation of Quebec and the emergence of an unmistakably multicultural and unilingual Canada. The future of Francophone minorities, who have never fared particularly well, would therefore cease being bleak and become catastrophic.

Bilingualism would be determined at the federal level, the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages would be abolished and, yes, dear reader, you would have to do without *Language and Society*.

A new federalism?

If the break-up were seen as resulting from the failure of the Meech Lake Accord, then a good many Canadians might hold the governments of Newfoundland and Manitoba, and possibly that of New Brunswick, responsible for the political and economic problems besetting the country. Under these conditions the traditional Canadian predisposition to support redistributive policies between provinces would likely evaporate. The more favoured regions might no longer be prepared to subsidize the less fortunate ones.

But even if a more benign climate were to predominate decisions would have to be made about the extent to which the policies of the new federal government could or should respond to the needs of the various regions and provinces. Ontario would, no doubt, continue to play a powerful role and its interests could be expected to deviate substantially from those of the Atlantic and western parts of the country. It might be inclined to forge ever closer economic ties with Quebec rather than with other provinces of the new Canada. This could lead, over time, to a revision of the mental map guiding the economic and political decision makers in the new Canada's most populous province.

Canada's political culture would also undergo other changes. In the new country the western provinces would play a much more influential role than heretofore and their preferences would be reflected more strongly in the country as a whole. The greater conservatism and market-driven perspective evident in Alberta and other parts of the west, the more pronounced class-based approach to politics associated with British Columbia, distrust of certain eastern traditions and institutions, a more pronounced predilection for so-called third parties would, among other things, become more dominant features of Canada.

Institutional changes would likely be far reaching. A new constitution would reflect western concerns more than has ever been the case before. Thus the further attenuation of the Westminster model of parliamentary government could be expected, particularly with respect to a Senate embodying most features of the Triple-E model.

The domination of federal governments by the traditional parties would probably be challenged. Electoral support for the N.D.P. has been strongest in Ontario, British Columbia and the Prairies and weak in Quebec. The new electoral map would therefore favour the left-wing party. There is also a possibility that heretofore minor parties, like the Reform Party, might attract

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unprecedented support in a new Canada, although Quebec's separation and the weakening of central Canada might take the wind out of the sails of recent new participants in the party game. The tensions which might emerge in a post-rupture Canada could nevertheless so strain the existing party system that new players might emerge, enhancing prospects for the emergence of a multi-party system.

The foregoing speculations (and they are, of course, no more than that) touch on only a tiny number of the developments that might characterize and challenge the second Canada. The impact of a separation and the forces unleashed by the transformation of the country would be so profound and wide-ranging, and would depend on so bewildering a number of factors, that a realistic estimate of all the consequences is quite impossible. Much would depend on attitudes and frames of mind brought to the negotiations with Quebec and to the tasks of defining the new state. A number of influences would lie outside the control of Canadians altogether.

Dangerous speculations

Speculating about the possible nature of a Canada without Quebec is dangerous, as was noted above. Among other things, it could hasten the advent of the dreaded event and make acceptable an idea that was originally deemed unthinkable. Yet, since the possibility of a break-up can no longer be eliminated, Canadians must prepare themselves psychologically for something they would very much prefer to avert. Such a preparation could ensure that the conditions antedating the creation of a Canada *sans* Quebec would encourage the emergence of a humane, caring and successful new state, embodying and building upon some of the best features of the first Canada, and perhaps even salvaging many of the contacts that made the old dual partnership attractive and creative.

The desired psychological state and perspective takes the long, not the short, view; it stresses substantial rather than symbolic goals and brings an open mind to dissenting opinions. It avoids recrimination and pettiness. Above all it recognizes that the circumstances required for the highest flowering of the individual spirit invariably transcend political and economic constraints although both of these affect the preconditions for its *épanouissement.* ■

What Would Quebec Be Like without the Rest of Canada?

*Réjean Pelletier**

At a time when Canada is pondering the meaning and scope of the Meech Lake Accord and Quebec seems to be questioning its membership in the Canadian confederation, it is worth asking the following two-part question: What would Quebec be like without the rest of Canada and, conversely, what would Canada be like without Quebec? I will take up only the first aspect of the question here, leaving it to an Anglophone colleague to explore the second.

Though hypothetical, this question is not irrelevant. Need we recall that recent public opinion polls show that Quebecers today would give massive support to the question they were asked in the 1980 referendum? A clear majority now also supports the sovereignty-association option, while 55% say they favour Quebec's becoming an independent nation.

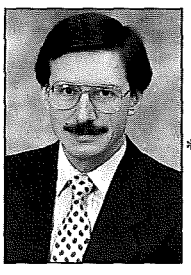
These surveys, which indicate a strong upsurge of nationalist sentiment in Quebec, show that Quebecers are increasingly comfortable with the concept of sovereignty, but they do not mean that they have embarked irrevocably on the path to independence.

A Francophone culture

If Quebecers decided to cut the umbilical cord, what would Quebec be like without the rest of Canada? Let us begin this investigation with an analysis of Quebec society and, in particular, of its culture. For a long time the two major cultures have tended to coexist within Canada's borders like twin brothers used to living together, but not like Siamese twins. Such an existence does not necessarily forge durable links between the two. Living side by side and sometimes engulfed in multiculturalism, the two cultures most often seem like strangers to one another — strangers in terms of their television and radio programs, their newspapers and periodicals, their literature, songs and music, and above all in terms of their language — in short, in terms of all the basic expressions of a culture. From this point of view, Quebec without the rest of Canada would continue to develop its Francophone culture, largely centred on France and the Francophone community and in many respects oriented more towards the United States and the rest of the world than towards English Canada.

Moreover, Quebec nationalism, long inward-looking and concerned with traditional values, has broadened its horizons since the Quiet Revolution. It is no longer merely defensive, but increasingly on the offense, sure of itself and open to the outside world. Paradoxically, at the same time as it was opening up to the world outside this nationalism was becoming more Québécois: it was no longer a Canadian nationalism based on emancipation from the home country, or even a French-Canadian nationalism concerned about preserving the French language everywhere in Canada and defending the Francophone minorities in the other provinces.

The change came in the 1960s with the beginning of a division of labour between, on the one hand, the Canadian central government, which saw itself as the protector and defender of the French fact throughout the country, and, on the other, the Quebec government, which the new political elite used to accomplish significant reforms. As a result, the new Quebec nationalism had no choice but to restrict its sphere of activity to the province of Quebec, and this would have a considerable impact on the Francophone minorities outside Quebec. They too might benefit from a politically stronger Quebec. But this political crutch would disappear with Quebec sovereignty, at which time the



***Réjean Pelletier is a professor at Laval University and Vice-Dean of the Faculty of Social Science.**

Photo: Y. Tessier / Réflexion Photothèque

Quebec City's Grande Allée

"French-Canadian nation" would be called upon to develop links solely with the Canadian central government.

And the Anglophone minority?

What would become of Quebec's Anglophone minority under this scenario? Accustomed to defining itself in terms of Canada as a whole and identifying with the majority group, it has really only become aware of its situation in the past 15 years. It was above all the Charter of the French Language (Bill 101) and Bill 178 on public signage which made English-speaking Quebecers aware that Francophones attached the utmost importance to the defence of their language, which is the minority language in Canada and in North America, but the majority language in Quebec. Accordingly, Francophones saw the setting of limits to the use of other languages, and especially of English, as the only means of preserving their own language within Quebec. Such a position, based on the principle of territoriality rather than of individual rights, could not help but conflict with the Canadian policies of bilingualism and with the Charter of Rights, which are based primarily on the protection of individual rights.

As long as linguistic insecurity continues to prevail in Quebec it is unlikely that the restrictions imposed on the English language can be abolished. Paradoxically, however, a sovereign Quebec where French would automatically be the dominant language might be more tolerant toward its Anglophone minority. Freed of the constant fear of becoming a minority, Quebec Francophones might more easily accept the presence and use of other languages. At a time when bilingualism is increasing in Canada, it is the all-pervasiveness of English that Francophones fear. Such a fear might diminish and perhaps disappear in a different political context.

Economic realities

But would harsh economic realities remind Quebecers that the struggle to establish a position in the world economy may be even more difficult than the struggles for language and culture? The confrontations of the 1980 referendum showed that the economic viability of an independent Quebec is without doubt the most crucial issue in the debate.

In this regard the situation has changed a great deal in 10 years.

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The Opposition to Meech: The Recalcitrants or the Amending Formula?

It is generally thought that the amending formula of the Constitution Act, 1982, as it applies to certain provisions of the Meech Lake Accord, requires its unanimous ratification by the provinces within three years at most. The application of this formula, which also permits legislatures to rescind their approval, lends itself to some interesting calculations of probabilities.

Taking the past 15 years as a base, during the average three-year period there were nine federal or provincial elections, and three of these elections resulted in a change of government. Changes of government usually involve the accession to power of an opposition that has disagreed with fundamental policies or positions of the preceding government. These would no doubt include constitutional positions which have already been agreed to by the federal government and the 10 provinces.

In the circumstances, what chance does the Meech Lake Accord, or any other political accord, have of being ratified within the allotted time? In the light of history, nothing will, of course, diminish the responsibility of the ultimate recalcitrants. Even to a layman in the science of probability the answer seems clear and obvious. If Meech fails, to the legitimate disappointment of Quebecers, who will be to blame? The "English", as some say, or the constitutional amending formula?

Recent analyses by such economic and financial institutions as the Bank of Montreal, the Toronto-Dominion Bank and Merrill Lynch have concluded that the Quebec economy could no doubt survive independence. In other words, if Quebec were to separate it would not be the economic catastrophe that many people very much feared at the time of the referendum and that some still may fear.

Quebec entrepreneurs, accustomed to looking increasingly to external markets in this period of internationalization of the economy and fervent supporters of the Free Trade Agreement with the United States, gradually came into their own in the 1980s. Francophones now control 60% of the Quebec economy, compared to 47% in 1961. The economic obstacle no longer seems to exist and an independent Quebec appears viable. The Canadian market is nevertheless the natural outlet for a large share of Quebec's production. The two markets are so closely linked that any separation would have to be accomplished amicably in order to preserve the reciprocal benefits of these economic exchanges for Quebec and the rest of Canada.

A major share of Quebec production is already destined for markets outside the province, and half of these exports go outside Canada, mainly to the United States. An independent Quebec would want to retain and even expand these privileged markets, without, however, neglecting the Canadian market. Similarly, it would be interested in looking more to a unified Europe and gaining a firm foothold there without forgetting the huge Asian markets, especially those of China and Japan. In short, an independent Quebec would still be based on a market economy and would be firmly positioned in the currents of international trade.

And the rest of Canada?

We have only to recall the motto of Canada to realize the considerable impact that the separation of Quebec would have on Canada as a whole. Quebec would control the St. Lawrence Seaway and the Maritimes would be isolated from the rest of Canada. Considering in addition the important contribution made to Canada's uniqueness by the presence of Quebec, it is easy to understand the fears aroused elsewhere in Canada by the possible separation of the province, despite the sentiment that seems to prevail among many Anglophones, at this time of Meech Lake, that it is time for Quebec to decide to leave the Canadian abode.

The departure of Quebec, however, could be the prelude to the break-up or disintegration of Canada. And a broken Canada would be easy prey to the United States. In such a context, Quebec's position would become more difficult to defend, so that the reconstruction of a different Canada, on a clearly federal basis along the lines of the European model, might appear as the most advantageous solution for all. It must also be remembered that the separation of Quebec would make the survival of Francophones elsewhere in Canada almost impossible. Confronted with galloping assimilation and declining immersion, the French-speaking communities in Canada would no doubt gradually disappear. The result would be a more heavily English-speaking Canada and a more heavily French-speaking Quebec. In the final analysis, Canada as we know it would never be the same. ■

(Our translation.)

Fortier on the Meech Lake Accord

In a submission to the Special Committee of the House of Commons studying the proposed companion resolution to the Meech Lake Accord, the Commissioner of Official Languages stated that "the recognition of linguistic duality as a 'fundamental characteristic of Canada' represents significant progress", but that in the absence of a commitment to promote this characteristic, the role of Parliament to "preserve" this duality was only "a small step forward....At the national level, it clearly needs to be promoted as well as preserved."

Fortier said the role of promoting linguistic duality would in no way affect the balance of powers or the distinct society concept of the proposed constitutional accord. He stated that Quebec's "distinct identity is a fact that history and common sense demand that we acknowledge...it has always existed and indeed has been recognized in law and in fact." He added, "today, certain changes, particularly of a demographic nature, make the entrenchment of the "distinct society" concept advisable and indeed essential."

The Commissioner also recommended "that the federal government propose to the provinces the adoption, at one of the next constitutional conferences, of a formula designed to support the development of the English and French linguistic minorities... by extending services to their minority in the appropriate language....In a federation such as ours," Fortier said, "provincial solutions to the linguistic problems of all our official language minorities must be able to rely on provisions common to all and be adapted to the realities of each one."

The Commissioner noted with satisfaction that New Brunswick proposes to entrench in the Constitution the principles of its Bill 88 on the equality of its two linguistic communities and hoped that this initiative, which requires only the consent of Fredericton and Ottawa, will be implemented in the near future.

Committee members were clearly interested in the Commissioner's views and asked several questions regarding the impact of including a federal promotional role. *M.O'K.*

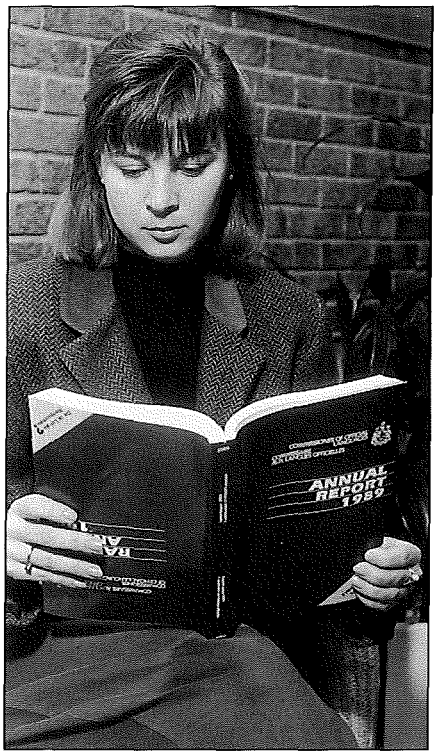
The 1989 Annual Report

Is the Will of Parliament Being Ignored?

*Peter Cowan**

As well as surveying 50 federal institutions and studying the usual themes, the Report points out that if justice delayed is justice denied, then, by the same token, those who delay the administrative actions that give effect to Parliament's laws flout democratic principles.

Canadians who support official bilingualism and welcomed the 1988 Official Languages Act will be angered by what D'Iberville Fortier, Commissioner of Official Languages, has to say in his 1989 Annual Report. The main focus is on bureaucratic foot-dragging that has delayed drafting and application of the policies, directives and regulations that



set the ground rules that allow Canadians to deal with and work within federal institutions in Canada's two official languages and describe everyone's rights and obligations under the new Act.

***Peter Cowan is an Ottawa-based media consultant who, as a journalist, has followed the evolution of bilingualism since the early 1960s.**

New Act, no action

Fortier's 1988 Report was entitled "Act to Action". The 1989 version bears the same title with a question mark.

In his 1988 Report Fortier discussed a direction for language policy and emphasized the urgency of drafting the directives and regulations that would, in practical terms, define the ways in which the Act would be applied.

At the time, he wrote: "Our thesis is that, however improved the 1988 Official Languages Act may be in relation to earlier legislation, it is not likely to bring about substantial change unless the promotional nature of its Preamble is fully reflected in the leadership, spirit, management, structures and rules that will give to it its full meaning."

A few words from the preface of Fortier's most recent Report sum up where things stand.

"This Report shows, in fact, that with a few laudable exceptions, the era of renewal has yet to begin. Our analyses reveal that the 1988 Official Languages Act has, to this point, had little impact in at least 80% of federal institutions. If indeed some three years must elapse between adoption of the Act and the coming into force of the first regulations arising from it, how long will it be before all its provisions take full effect?"

Blueprint

In his 1988 Report Fortier suggested a number of measures as part of a "Blueprint for Action", including a continuing communications program for federal government managers and employees, as well as for Canadians generally. The goal was to make people aware of the new Act's provisions so that they would understand their rights and responsibilities under it.

Fortier says that information provided so far has been "very meagre." What has been disseminated was uncoordinated "and did nothing to counter the misinformation [about the new Act] shamelessly propagated by certain groups and individuals."

Fortier takes the Privy Council Office and the Treasury Board Secretariat to task for spinning their wheels. Pointing

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Letters, Letters

The tabling of the Annual Report always brings a flood of mail in its wake. This year we received a batch of about 250 more or less identical letters from Pembroke, Ontario. The writers denounced, among other things, the exorbitant cost and devastating impact of official languages programs and declared themselves in favour of an entirely English Canada with Quebec, if necessary, allowed to be bilingual.

We answered that the internal cost to the government of official languages programs represents less than one quarter of one per cent of federal expenditures and that the turmoil we are currently experiencing should not make us lose sight of the objective of doing justice to Francophones outside Quebec and Anglophones in Quebec.

out that no one challenged his proposed 1988 Blueprint for Action, he writes that when it is used to measure progress much remains to be done.

Treasury Board

Fortier reveals that not only has the Treasury Board Secretariat failed to deliver the regulations called for in the Act, it has also failed to revise directives which guide federal employees in putting the Act into effect. The upshot is "a cloud of uncertainty" hanging over departments about their obligations under the new Act.

Fortier describes how the absence of regulations has hampered the Act's goal of promoting Canada's two official languages.

Crown corporations have not received precise language directives since the early 1980s.

Regulations that would define what constitutes significant demand to justify bilingual service are hanging fire.

Fortier's Report says that this "lack of commitment" by the Treasury Board has meant that in federal institutions a "wait-and-see attitude prevails over motivation, and stagnation over progress."

"It is no surprise, in the circumstances," writes the Commissioner, "that the number of complaints rose by 25% in 1989."

The reader learns that language of work regulations are still at the "embryonic stage." This has a direct bearing on establishing the conditions that will allow many English- and French-speaking public servants to work in their own language. The analysis of factors that hamper or help the use of both languages in the workplace is done, meaning the data needed to develop the regulations have been gathered.

"But when will these regulations see the light of day? And will they be consistent with the framework we recommended last year?" Fortier asks.

In Chapter One Fortier lists the recommendations he made last year to follow up on passage of the Act. Beside each suggestion, the action taken to date is listed. While there is progress in some areas, it is not reassuring reading.

Regulations that should have been delivered in 1989 are now scheduled to be published this year. If there is a one-year period before they take effect, it will mean three years will have elapsed between the time Parliament passed the new Act and key measures, which spell out the ways in which it will apply.

Meech Lake

The Commissioner reiterates his support for the Meech Lake Accord. He repeats his contention that the "distinct society" clause, as an interpretive constitutional provision, simply recognizes what has existed, in fact, for two centuries. Fortier also emphasises provisions in the Accord that call for recognition of country-wide language duality as "a fundamental characteristic of Canada."

Some may differ with Fortier over the importance of the Accord itself, but they cannot take issue with his assertion that bilingualism, despite all the current controversy, continues to enjoy the support of most Canadians.

The will of Canadians

The tortoise-like pace underscored by Fortier not only delays effective implementation of the new Official Languages Act, it thwarts the will of Parliament and the will of most Canadians, for if official bilingualism is going through a rough phase, polling data repeatedly show that a majority of Canadians in all regions support it.

Fortier argues that recent setbacks, such as the language acts in Saskatchewan and Alberta and the sign law in Quebec, tend to loom large because of the real progress that has been made in the last two decades. "We continue to urge and hope that over time these wrongs will be righted," he says. "However, it is worth remembering that two decades ago any one of the current initiatives in favour of minority rights would have seemed impossible."

This is why Fortier's observations are so alarming.

It is a time when official bilingualism is under assault by a vocal minority.

It is a time when many French-speaking Canadians feel forsaken by the rest of the country and many English-speaking Canadians wonder about the accommodations that must be made to keep Canada together.

In short, it is a time to show Canadians that their national government and those who implement its policies see the promotion of both official languages as a duty that must be performed with resolve.

Regrettably, the Commissioner of Official Language's 1989 Annual Report indicates that in key areas of language policy the opposite is happening. ■

What Was Said

In an interview given on April 4, 1990, to Gilles Proulx of the Montreal radio station CJMS, the Commissioner said:

"You ask me if I take the situation seriously? I take it very seriously. I have been Commissioner of Official Languages for five and a half years now. Throughout this period, and according to my mandate before Parliament, I have called for a renewal of linguistic reform.

"We had legislative renewal with the 1988 Official Languages Act. That's a definite plus. But 20 months after its adoption, except where support to minorities in co-operation with certain provinces is concerned, we have only inertia within most federal institutions, just as if one were afraid to give full effect to the Act. This Act was adopted almost unanimously by Parliament. Almost unanimously because there are certain dissidents, there are some groups here and there who do not agree.

"This can hardly be taken seriously. One way or another, there must be action and minority clients must be able to obtain the services in the language they have the right to be served in. To underline my protest against this state of affairs, I may seriously consider resigning if the appropriate steps are not taken. I hope this will not be necessary but I do not intend to endorse "the tortoise's pace". That is not the mandate that I received from Parliament."

Canada's Press Reacts to the Commissioner's Annual Report

Tom Sloan

It is often, if not invariably, the fate of those who try to bring adversaries together to find themselves either simply ignored or under attack from both sides, each accusing the would-be conciliator of supporting their opponents and ignoring the self-evident righteousness of their own cause.

The 1989 Annual Report of the Commissioner of Official Languages, which dealt largely with federal government responsibility in the slow implementation of the 1988 Official Language Act, was not deemed worthy of editorial notice by some major newspapers, including Toronto's *Globe and Mail* and Montreal's *La Presse*. Those that did run editorials and other commentaries were divided to a large extent, but by no means exclusively, on the basis of language.

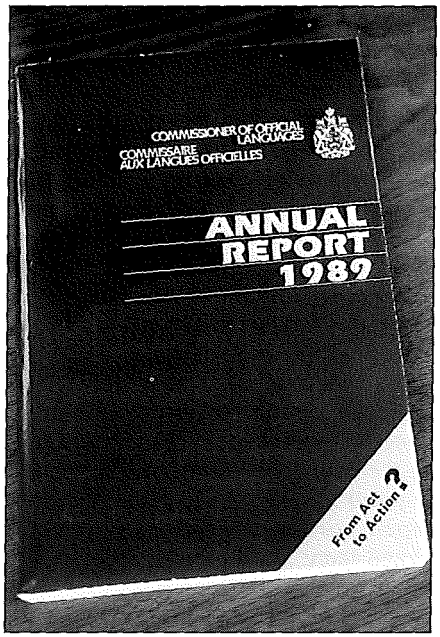
From some French-speaking commentators came fierce complaints that the Report coddled English-speaking Quebecers while systematically ignoring the anti-French backlash in Ontario, epitomized by the decision of the Sault Ste. Marie city council late last January to declare the city unilingual English. The argument that the event had occurred well after the period covered by the Report was considered by some commentators as evasive and irrelevant.

On the other side, the document came under equally fierce fire from some Anglophones for allegedly underplaying the plight of the Anglophone minority in Quebec.

Pan-Canadian theories?

The strongest Francophone assault came from Quebec City's *Le Soleil*, where editorialist Raymond Giroux took Official Languages Commissioner D'Iberville Fortier severely to task for his actions, both past and present. "His inflammatory and simplistic Reports, founded on ethereal pan-Canadian theories, have completely missed the target. He hits the victim as well as the aggressor."

Not only did the Report ignore the anti-French backlash elsewhere, Giroux wrote, it also unfairly suggested that Quebec's Bill 178, which prohibits English outdoor signs, could be a factor in current linguistic problems. It is a law which suppresses a superficial freedom of the minority without meeting the concerns of the majority. The whole Report, Giroux contended, represents "this same current of false equivalence between the situation of the Anglophones of Quebec and Francophones elsewhere....Not to bring to light the Ontario language crisis while ceaselessly harping on the so-called



anguish caused by Bill 178 shows a failure to understand Quebec and Canadian realities. In fact, Mr. Fortier is feeding the machinations of the francophobes in denouncing this law, which is simply a pretext to the adversaries of the Meech Lake Accord." The thousands of horror stories against French-language rights across Canada not mentioned in the Report "make Bill 178 nothing more than a fairy tale."

Columnist Michel Vastel took up a similar refrain in Ottawa's *Le Droit*. "As in past years, the Commissioner...treats the Anglophone minority in Quebec with the same compassion, if not more, than he treats French minorities outside Quebec."

Attacking from the opposite flank, Montreal *Gazette* columnist William Johnson claimed that it was Anglophone Quebecers who were badly served. In addition to everything else Quebec Anglophones are now undergoing a pervasive ideological assault. It is found in literature...in songs, in films, in employment as well as in politics." This phenomenon, he wrote, was totally ignored in the Report.

Another columnist, Ottawa-based Claire Hoy, found nothing good to say either about the 1989 Report or any of its predecessors, which he said were entirely predictable: "each year you can be guaranteed that the languages commissioner will discover, breathlessly of course, that not enough is being done to promote the French language....And, of course, he'll ignore the growing trend of blatant anti-English activities in Quebec because, after all, that's a cultural matter. This year, Fortier was true to form."

Between the extremities of the two solitudes there was a wide range of editorial opinion, much of it pessimistic, all of it concerned about the future.

An old ideal?

Writing in Sherbrooke's *La Tribune*, Roch Bilodeau saw the document as a continuing reflection of an old ideal: "a coming day when Canadians will be able to express themselves in English and French from one ocean to the other. Who still shares this vision? Who still believes that it is anything but a utopian dream?"

The relatively optimistic tone of the Report is, according to Bilodeau, due to

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the fact that it is primarily concerned with legal rights and their gradual extension. But the real world is different. Laws are, of course, important. "But it is hard to imagine how this country will arrive at real linguistic justice if one of its two founding peoples does not recognize the rights of the other — not merely in a constitutional text, but above all in soul and conscience....That is why Meech is so important. For its contents certainly; but even more for what it represents and symbolizes."

While agreeing with the criticism that the Ontario backlash should have been more in the spotlight, *Le Devoir*'s Paul-André Comeau appreciated the Report as a human document. "A certain style and a personal stamp render less indigestible a ritual exercise which strongly resembles a sort of diagnostic." As decision time approaches for the Meech Lake Accord, the Report "throws a sharp, accurate and uneasy light on the state of health of a country still looking for its identity." A major problem is the continuing reluctance of the federal government and the higher echelons of the Public Service to vigorously implement the provisions of the 1988 Official Languages Act.

Political leadership?

Lack of federal leadership also preoccupied editorialist Adrien Cantin of *Le Droit*. With the regulations still unpublished 20 months after passage of the Act, some questions must be posed. "We can only wonder whom the government is afraid of displeasing, and whether this fine legal text is, after all, nothing but a sham."

As for the suggestion in the Report that Bill 178 is, in fact, at least partly responsible for the increasing tensions, Cantin concludes: "Whether we are for or against this law, we must recognize that is true."

Cantin found the Report's relative optimism about the future unconvincing. "At the present time, the climate is simply impossible, and we can only wait to see the real consequences of the backlash that is occurring on both sides."

L'Acadie Nouvelle, New Brunswick's only French-language daily, found the Report's criticisms of the federal government fully justified. "Reflecting the climate that now prevails...D'Iberville Fortier has issued an unprecedentedly severe judgement on the federal government for its lax approach toward the whole realm of official languages...." It is time, wrote editor Jean-Marie Nadeau, for Prime Minister Brian Mulroney to show leadership both within cabinet and in putting English-language extremist groups in their place.

The promotion of the official languages, Nadeau wrote, continues to be a priority. But, "It is strange that, in linguistic matters, words of action like 'promotion' tend to be inert in practice when these terms refer mainly to the Francophone realities of this country."

The federal government's reluctance to act swiftly, however, found a supporter in the *Winnipeg Free Press*. The 1988 Act was, in fact, a basically flawed document concerned more with the rights and privileges of public servants than with the real issue of service to the public, the paper argued. "Since the 1988 Act was a poorly designed solution to unimportant problems, lethargy is probably the best approach. The less done to implement it, the better."

Delays in the implementation of the law were also the subject of editorial comment in the Victoria *Times-Colonist*. They are, the paper suggested, a warning to the government. "In that national hesitation to respond to the spirit of the law there is a message which seems lost on the federal government: governments may write laws on language rights, but that doesn't mean the majority will accept them. In matters which involve accommodating cultural differences, governments lead, persuade, convince, rather than demand and impose. The Mulroney government (and the Trudeau government before it) has failed miserably to provide this moral leadership."

The Montreal *Gazette* more or less agreed. Complaints in the Commissioner's Report about government inertia were justified and Ottawa should respond quickly. Unlike the Victoria paper, however, the *Gazette* is convinced there is no problem concerning public opinion. "All the polls show big majorities for Canadian duality, bilingualism and Quebec's distinctiveness. That's what the people want. What bothers Mr. Fortier and a lot of other Canadians is the chronic failure of governments to give the people what they want and what the country needs."

A similar note was struck by the *Edmonton Journal* in a wide-ranging editorial linking provincial and national issues in the language field. Noting that the French community in Alberta itself is in danger, the paper looked to the future. "This impending cultural tragedy need not happen, if the federal and provincial governments do a proper job of promoting and preserving both the Canada's official languages."

On the national scene, the *Journal* commended the Commissioner for using "unusually frank language" referring to governmental foot-dragging. "Fortier is right in telling politicians to show leadership, to shrug off the tactics of pressure groups. Canada's bilingualism is a just and rational policy. It's not intended to force English down anyone's throat. It's not intended to force people to become bilingual. Its intention is simple: if you're a Canadian who speaks only one of the official languages, you have a right to be served in that language anywhere in Canada, when you're dealing with the federal government or its institutions." As restrictive as it may be, the Quebec sign law is irrelevant to the national law, the editorialist argued.

Urging quick movement by the federal government to implement the 1988 Act, the *Journal* concluded in a similar vein to the *Gazette*: "The people are ahead of the politicians in accepting official bilingualism. It's time the Prime Minister caught up." ■

Is the Official Languages Budget Increasing or Decreasing?

In the *Ottawa Citizen* (February 23, 1990), Daniel Drolet looked at the budget cuts proposed in the most recent federal budget. Concerning official languages, he wrote, "Despite cuts elsewhere, the purse strings are loose for bilingualism." Chantal Hébert, writing in *Le Devoir* on the same day disagreed. Her article, entitled, "Budgetary austerity paralyses bilingualism programs" began: "At a time when the federal government ought to be preparing to make good on the nearly two-year-old promises in the new Official Languages Act it is instead reducing some of its bilingualism programs, caught in the squeeze of its austerity plan." (Our translation.)

Unilingualism: Municipal Revolt or "Anti-French" Tradition?

*Clinton Archibald**

Linguistic tensions have made the front pages of newspapers in this country since the beginning of the year, especially those arising from municipal motions in more than 60 of the some 800 cities, towns and villages in Ontario. Some analysts maintain that the Alliance for the Preservation of English in Canada (APEC) is behind all this hullabaloo. The nation's leaders could do without language disputes in these difficult times! Others contend frankly that nothing has changed in Ontario because Ontarians never liked the French fact. They say that it represents a threat, an intrusion as well as a cost to the public purse!

We must look at the history of the relationships between the two linguistic groups, as well as public perceptions in the communities involved, before we can pass judgement on the scope and significance, for the future, of the declarations which spread like wildfire following that of the city council of Sault Ste. Marie. We cannot ignore the sociological reality of the French fact in these industrial cities, where a tacit agreement between the citizens of two nations (or two peoples, if you will) had, up to that time, permitted a certain social peace.

Bilingualism (meaning, availability of French-language services) entails costs, requires expenditures which are difficult to make in a period of economic austerity and should not be the first priority. This, in any event, is the view of Ontarians who support the declarations establishing unilingualism in these municipalities.

It is true that the French Language Services Act (Bill 8) of David Peterson's Liberal government requires the hiring of some bilingual staff so that the various ministries can offer services to Francophones "in their own language." It is also true that the translation of certain documents and the delivery of certain programs in French have resulted in public expenditures. However, the cost of all French-language services represents less than 1% of total Ontario public expenditures. Furthermore, the law does not require municipalities to provide these services.

Yet other economic "grounds" are invoked to explain the actions of those who emulated the city councillors of Sault Ste. Marie. Now and then it is said that the cities in question face a high unemployment rate, countless difficulties in attracting new industries to create jobs and an extremely precarious future. In this context the majority will always look for a scapegoat. The Francophones automatically become the perfect target because they take jobs that were designated as bilingual, they demand French-language schools which entail additional expenditures and they "will always want more."

May we remind those who advance these arguments that Francophones represent only a handful of the population of these cities, now unilingual, that they have never made excessive political demands on the municipal authorities involved and that many of them "have always been there." They did not appear suddenly...they were there a long time ago!

The history of French Ontario did not begin with the federal proclamation of official bilingualism and even less with the birth pangs of Bill 8, which lasted three years.

Remember the famous (or infamous?) Regulation 17 and the survival ensured in Catholic parishes by resignation to the anguish of life on earth. Those who persisted in keeping their language did so in small villages away from the mainstream, in northern, southern and eastern Ontario. For these people, Ontario was a province of the majority. Their society was separate....They survived because Ontario soon became the most prosperous province in the country, as well as the most stable province.

However, after the Quiet Revolution in Quebec, Franco-Ontarians were told by experts from "la belle province" that they were not only marginalized (something Francophones could accept because it was their choice) but acculturated and assimilated, meaning that they had adopted the culture and language of the others without a word of dissent.

These revelations did not upset them. The realization that perhaps they did not fully enjoy the benefits of this prosperous society led to a kind of awakening on their part. It was revealed that they had lower-paying jobs, they had a lower level of education, their children were less likely to attend post-secondary institutions and their heads of household (to use the expression of sociologists) had great difficulty making ends meet, even in this wealthy province which they thought was theirs.

Their representative associations, with federal financial assistance, began to make political connections and insist

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Mayor of Vanier Offended by Unilingualism

On April 5, 1990, at a luncheon talk at the Vanier City Hall, Mayor Gisèle Lalonde said she was deeply offended by the resolutions on unilingualism passed by Sault Ste. Marie and other Ontario municipalities. She stated that the City of Vanier had sent 600 letters to mayors and other political figures in order to protest such resolutions. Mayor Lalonde also said, however, that she believed these resolutions are the work of a minority and that much progress is being made, without fanfare or headlines, in the Ottawa-Carleton region and elsewhere in the province, and that the rights of Francophones are gaining increasing recognition.

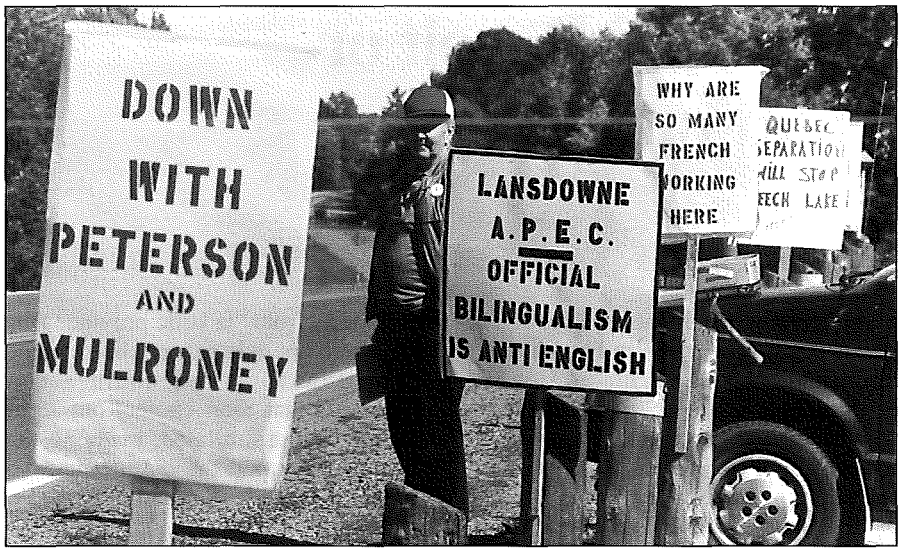

Photo: The Brockville Recorder and Times Ltd.

that their demands be taken into consideration. At first, Ontario was surprised by these demands. After all, Franco-Ontarians had been so docile in the past: except, of course, in their fight against Regulation 17.

Was the convenient tacit agreement between the leaders of the majority — the political and economic power — and the leaders of the French-language minority — the clergy, the traditional elite of the world of education, parish associations and other intermediate bodies in small villages — going to fly apart? Were they going to upset the nice *modus vivendi* that had permitted social peace? Above all, were they going to let the masses believe that, like the elite, they could improve their lot?

The agreement has always been difficult. It always will be. To want to keep one's language, to survive economically in this Anglo-Saxon world and to extol the virtues of bilingualism is a continual struggle and a cause that has champions everywhere in the province, because we are in fact truly bilingual. Paul-André Comeau, the current Editor-in-Chief of *Le Devoir*, following a sophisticated survey of Ontario Francophones, was amazed that many of them do not consider themselves Francophone or Anglophone (even less Anglophone), but rather "bilingual". To be bilingual means everything but it means nothing. One cannot speak "bilingualism".

Thus, this is a very special sociological reality. The socio-political stability of Ontario had always depended on the co-operation of the two groups to put their rivalries (aspirations, perhaps?) aside in order to struggle together for the prosperity of this beautiful, rich, and peaceful province where everything functions automatically.

Let us not exaggerate the importance of the anti-French movement in Ontario. And, especially, let us not give too much weight to the arguments of fanatics who perceive the use of French between the Outaouais and the Manitoba border as a threat to the survival of English.

There has always been a certain fear of increasing demands by Francophones. Not that French is dangerous in itself (after all, speaking French or hearing it does not cause death), but it could become dangerous if it takes something away from those in the majority, if they are penalized because they do not speak both languages.

But the French fact in Ontario has weathered many storms, surviving school battles, among others, which never seem to end. Do you know that French-language high schools have only been in existence since 1968? That the first independent school board was established only last year in the Ottawa region? That the French Language Services Act is not even eight months old?

The sociological and political theories about minority groups state the necessity for minorities to continually promote their points of view, specify their demands and make the point that meeting these demands will benefit society. However, before demonstrating that this would contribute to the betterment of life in the province, must we not always first show that it would not harm the majority or take anything away from it?

Perhaps those who speak for the anti-French tradition in Ontario are making more noise and receiving more attention than they deserve. Perhaps our media should not give them so much coverage. Are we not stirring up the prejudices of those who only wait for this opportunity to express the feelings they had kept hidden? Do we contribute to a kind of collective venting of frustration for a while at the expense of Francophones? And if there were no more French-speaking people in this beautiful Ontario tomorrow, would it be more stable, more prosperous, more peaceful, less inclined to prejudice?

That is why the leadership of any self-respecting society based on the richness of its diversified groups must explain and "sell" (to use the jargon of marketing specialists) the merits of a collectivity which, like the vast borderless Europe of 1992, has given thought to and has moved on to something else, looking to the future rather than the childish and useless parochial squabbles of the past! ■

(Our translation.)

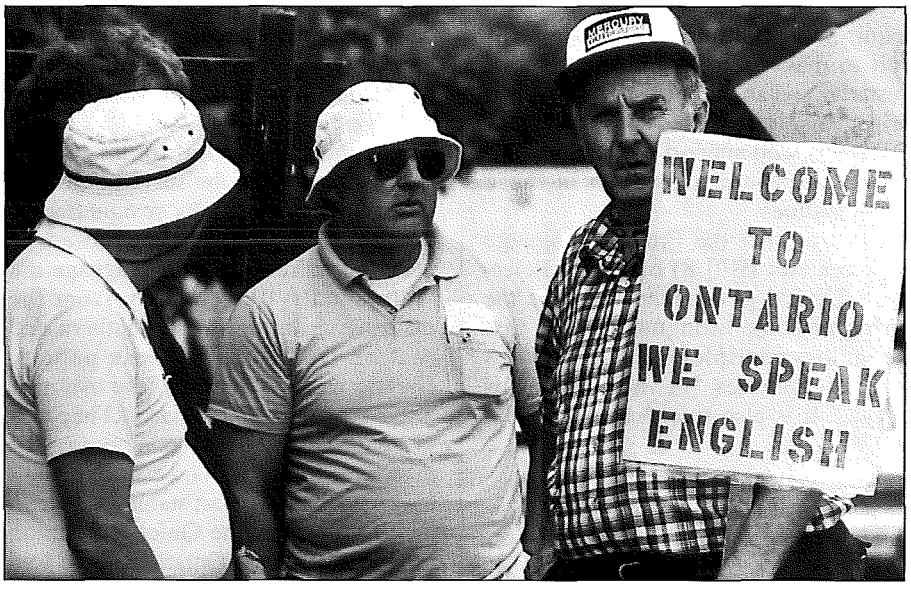

Photo: The Brockville Recorder and Times Ltd.

On Declarations of Municipal Unilingualism

The House of Commons Is Unanimous

"It is time for all of us to stand up for Canada again because in recent days we have witnessed regrettable denials of some of Canada's fundamental values."

Those words of Prime Minister Brian Mulroney set the tone for a debate that took place in the House of Commons on February 15, coincidentally the 25th anniversary of the Canadian flag, during which representatives of all three major parties expressed their strong support for the official languages policies of successive Canadian governments.

The debate was on a special government motion, introduced in response to the decisions of the councils of a number of Ontario municipalities to declare themselves unilingually English in reaction to the province's French Language Services Act, which went into effect in November 1989. The two largest cities to take this action were Sault Ste. Marie and Thunder Bay, both in the northwest area of the province.

The resolution introduced by the Prime Minister was brief and to the point: "That this House reaffirms its commitment to support, protect and promote linguistic duality in Canada, as reflected by this House in the Constitutional Amendment, 1987, and the Official Languages Act, 1988." Speaking on behalf of the other parties were the leader of the Official Opposition, Herb Gray, for the Liberals, and Lorne Nystrom, MP for Yorkton-Melville, for the New Democratic Party, in the absence of party leader Audrey McLaughlin. The motion was passed unanimously on a voice vote.

Introducing the resolution, Prime Minister Mulroney said: "Linguistic duality and the protection of minority language rights are not abstract concepts. They are given life by legislative enactments such as the Official Languages Act. They are given permanence and protection by the Constitution and they are given meaning by the national will of a generous and tolerant people. The rejection of minorities is an attack on the nature of Canada. When language becomes a motive for exclusion and fear, it is time for all Canadians who love their country to speak up and speak out."

The importance of the resolution was underlined by Herb Gray. "I see this resolution as a vehicle which enables parliamentarians of all parties to send this positive message to Canadians.... Official language equality is one of this country's most distinctive and positive features." Any rejection of this principle would imperil the very survival of Canada.

Also at stake is the very concept of multiculturalism. "After all, if we cannot recognize the value of having two official languages, can we long continue to recognize the value of the many non–English and non-French cultural heritages of some one-third of Canadians?"

Mr. Gray was severely critical of any and all unilingual measures. "I hope all Canadians will agree with me that you do not build yourself up by tearing someone else down."

Leadership was a concern for Lorne Nystrom. "I think it is very important this House take a very firm stand, and a very quick stand in support of duality....

The N.D.P. spokesman said it was essential for Parliament to go on the record. "The debate today is a debate about linguistic minority rights."

An essential element in the struggle for unity, Nystrom said, must be the solidarity of the three major parties. "I really fear that in some ways maybe the country is beginning to slip away. That is why it is so important that we not play politics with this issue. That is why it is so important that the three national political parties remain firmly and solidly united in terms of promoting duality...." *T.S.*

Just What Was Said

"Events resulting from the declaration that Sault Ste. Marie intends to be a unilingual city go far beyond municipal affairs. They have a far-reaching and profound impact on Canada as a whole. In our view, it is a thinly veiled attack on the very principle of language duality in its various forms.

"Therefore, like you, we felt it necessary to denounce the extremism, injustice and damage associated with this incident. And how! I think I myself have given more than 35 interviews over the last three weeks. We have tried to set the record straight as regards costs involved, and to allay certain fears that one organization in particular has managed to create in the minds of some Canadians.

"That is what we did. We once again offered our support to the victims of these cruel attacks, as we do again today....

"But there is also the other side of the coin. Just to set things in perspective, we should not forget that during the same period, when the tensions were so high, there were three public opinion polls, and I just give the most significant items drawn from those three polls. One of them was that 64% of Canadians nation-wide are favourable to official bilingualism. The second one is that three out of four Canadian parents want their children to be bilingual. The third one is that 80% of the Canadian population is favourable to our two official languages being treated on an equal footing. So this is very impressive, and some people might say if that is the case there is no real problem.

"But there is obviously a real problem, as was demonstrated by the tensions created by the incident at Sault Ste. Marie. This is why we set out a very specific proposal in our Report last year for a national campaign of information to give the facts to the people and to assuage the number of quite unjustified fears....

"We hope it will take place, and in a democratic society such a campaign should of course associate the politicians, ministers, MPs and all the voluntary associations that form a part of our society."

The Commissioner, appearing before the Standing Joint Committee on Official Languages, March 14, 1990.

Press Review

English-Only: To Be or Not to Be

Sault Ste. Marie city council's English-only declaration brings a variety of editorial responses from across the country.

An Ontario city found itself at the cutting edge of the recurring official languages debate early this year, and could not seem to decide whether it enjoyed all the national attention it was getting.

Some of the 85,000 residents of Sault Ste. Marie apparently relished the symbolic status of their town as the first relatively large municipality in Canada to declare itself unilingual English. Led by Mayor Joe Fratesi, city council voted 11-2 at the end of January to declare English as the sole official language of the city. The vote was in response to a 25,000-signature petition presented by "English-rights" activists, many of whom crowded into the council chambers the night of the vote, shouting down opponents.

Although opponents of the measure, including French-speaking residents of the area, quickly launched a counter-campaign, council refused to budge, buoyed perhaps by the local demand for a new product — T-shirts proudly bearing the mayor's likeness.

The resolution, Fratesi insisted, was "harmless", and certainly not anti-French. It was, it supporters said, essentially a warning to the Ontario government not to force municipalities to provide French-language services to their citizens. The dispute was fuelled by the province's new French Language Services Act (Bill 8), which provides for provincial government services in French in areas where the number of Francophones is sufficient to warrant them.

A strong critic of the action was the local daily newspaper, the *Star*. Noting that the Ontario law explicitly excludes municipalities, the editorialist argued: "The resolution was a response to a threat that does not exist....There have been no signals that council will be forced to use French anytime in the foreseeable future." In fact, the paper argued, the resolution in practice had changed nothing. "City council has made it clear that it will continue to conduct its affairs in English, something that was not being challenged. However, with this resolution, it has indicated an intolerance toward the French language that may damage the Sault's reputation, and justifiably so."

The editorialists of the French-language press in Quebec and Ontario were not about to give the lie to the *Star*'s fears.

Writing in *Le Droit* of Ottawa, Adrien Cantin epitomized the bitter Francophone reaction. In passing the resolution the Soo councillors "have displayed their collective rudeness and crass ignorance....It is a deliberate insult to the Francophones of the province and the country....It is an unacceptable act of aggression and provocation towards the Franco-Ontarian community."

Quebec reactions

Editorialist Valère Audy of *La Voix de l'Est* of Granby, Quebec, was in full agreement. "The decision...is an insult, a veritable provocation towards not only the Francophones of the area but also the 500,000 Francophones of Ontario and those of the other provinces of the country." The action was a manifestation of narrow mindedness and a negation of Canadian reality. "In short, the fanatics are still jumping into the same slimepit: trying to destroy instead of recognizing and respecting the Francophones who have, nevertheless, always been the partners of the Anglophones in the building of this country."

For Alain Dubuc of Montreal's *La Presse* the action was more than simply an isolated gesture. It exemplified "a profound sickness — the Canadian cancer.... The violent reaction of these Anglophones illustrates the fragility of the principles that form the basis of Canada.... These Ontario excesses will provoke a backlash in Quebec. For decades the nationalism of Francophone Quebecers has been fed by the conviction that the basic attitude of Anglo-Canadians towards them was one of contempt, intolerance and rejection. They will see here a confirmation of their fears."

Another *La Presse* editorialist, Pierre Vennat, waxed ironic: "At least the gesture has the merit of not being hypocritical. Even the most optimistic defenders of the Meech Lake Accord admit that these days English Canada is not overflowing with tender love towards the French fact." Perhaps, however, he conceded, there was some reason for the Anglophone backlash. "Anglophones, in general, have the impression that the Québécois couldn't care less about them or Canada....In fact, all that the council of Sault Ste. Marie has done is to proclaim out loud what many of us already knew. Bigots and fanatics are still numerous in this country — in Ontario and also, unfortunately, in Quebec."

Jean-Claude Leclerc of *Le Devoir* had a slightly different perspective. It is simplistic, he wrote, to interpret the affair merely as yet another rejection of Francophones by the English-speaking minority. Taken as a whole, he suggested, Ontario has shown marked improvement. It is Sault Ste. Marie that is exceptional: "We

are dealing with a rear-guard reaction of a marginal group, nourished by the fear of losing, as a result of justice finally being granted to the Franco-Ontarians, the old Anglophone monopoly of the Public Service." The fears are not groundless because in fact French-speaking public servants will, increasingly, be serving their own community. "A whole category of Anglophones is going to lose the privilege of administering to its own advantage government services to Ontario Francophones."

The present backlash, Leclerc suggests, is largely caused by an overly prudent gradualism that has caused confusion and uncertainty as to where the province is heading: "By going slowly, the province exasperates both the Francophone minority, which has not yet received its full measure of justice, and the Anglophone population that no longer quite knows what to expect."

Ontario

The same cry was, ironically, taken up by those Ontario English-language papers that partially or fully defended the Sault Ste. Marie council.

One such was the Peterborough *Examiner*. While the paper rejected the motion as "totally unnecessary", it nevertheless had some criticism for the provincial government "Queen's Park has never really explained what Bill 8...is all about. So the void is filled with rumour and innuendo — which silences any real debate."

The St. Catharines *Standard* was more specific: "Ontario's municipalities are creatures of the province, and if the provincial government says 'jump', they have no choice but to say, 'how high?' Thus, the Peterson government's move toward official bilingualism... justifies apprehension among municipalities that before long they may be forced to spend millions of dollars to provide French-language services whether they're needed or not."

The harshest comment came from the Oshawa *Times*. It denounced "the sneaky Queen's Park gang" which, it said, was secretly preparing to impose official bilingualism on the province. "Citizens in many areas of Ontario are afraid they will be forced into time-consuming and expensive bilingualism."

Perhaps the strongest stand of all was taken by the Thunder Bay *Chronicle-Journal* which, during the height of the controversy, published half a dozen long editorials vigorously defending first Sault Ste. Marie and then its own city council, which took the Soo's lead and passed its own unilingual resolution a few weeks later.

To a large extent, the *Chronicle-Journal* editorialists based their support for the motions on the expressed belief that, despite its denials, the government is seriously considering extending minority language services to the municipal level, citing as evidence a provincial task-force report recommendation to that effect. "Municipalities are right to worry about the prospect of bilingualism spreading to include municipal services," the paper warned.

It also, however, appeared to reject in principle the whole thrust of government policies. The unilingual motions, it wrote, represent "the long-term view of a fast-growing number of disenchanted Canadians who want real language fairness....French has come far enough. It is alive and well where it lives. Government is being forced to understand that it mustn't be injected into the unwilling womb of Anglophone Canada and artificially kept alive with scarce resources — especially when English is being strangled in Quebec."

Bill 178

The situation of Anglophone Quebecers, and particularly the law prohibiting outdoor English signs, was on the minds of other editorialists. The Victoria *Times-Colonist* berated as hypocritical political leaders who objected to the unilingual resolutions. "These denunciations would have sounded more deserved and less unctuous had they been preceded...by equally forthright attacks on Quebec's sign law that so blatantly infringed on the rights of its English minority."

The *Toronto Sun* was characteristically blunt: "the knee-jerk condemnation of the Soo's move from Prime Minister Brian Mulroney, Premier David Peterson and senior Quebec cabinet ministers was predictable. But where were these great defenders of minority rights when their pal Premier Robert Bourassa was steamrolling over English-language rights in Quebec?"

For their part, Quebec Francophone editorialists firmly rejected all criticism of the sign law (Bill 178). The response of Roch Bilodeau in Sherbrooke's *La Tribune* was the most vehement: "It is true that Bill 178 is a factor in the anti-Francophone backlash. Not that it really deprives our Anglophone fellow citizens of their basic rights, but very simply because they have succeeded in persuading English Canada that it does so. In fact, out of the simple prohibition of English signs outside businesses many Anglo-Quebecers have created a veritable psycho-drama. Ignorance or prejudice have a fertile field for disinformation and demagoguery." It is time, he concluded, for Anglo-Quebecers to tell the truth about the range of services they receive. "There must still be a little place for rationality and good faith in this country."

According to Alain Dubuc of Montreal's *La Presse*, any comparison between Quebec's sign law and the Ontario unilingual resolutions is futile. "The comparison is also indecent when we remember what many Anglo-Canadians want to forget, the fact that French is threatened, while no one would dare to claim this is the case with English. You don't have to go far. It suffices to look at the history of Sault Ste. Marie and the assimilation of what remains of its Francophones."

While English-language papers across Canada made clear their distaste for Bill 178, a large majority of them had no use for Soo-type response.

The *Vancouver Sun* neatly brought the two issues together in one short paragraph: "True, Quebec's notorious French-only sign law has broadly angered English-speaking Canadians. The unpardonable thing is that some of them are enjoying it. Just the sort of respectable cover they crave for their bigotry."

The North Bay *Nugget* concurred: "the Sault Ste. Marie council, as well as that of Thunder Bay, are using events in Quebec...to justify their unkind treatment of their Francophone populations. An English Soo has nothing to do with Quebec's sign laws. It is a disavowal of one of the fundamentals that make Canada the nation it is."

Broader responsibilities

One of the stranger aspects of the whole affair was noted by the *Calgary Herald*. "There is an absurd and cruel irony in the fact that a city founded by French-speaking missionaries should serve itself up as a symbol to pig-headedness and blinkered intolerance." The paper saw possible tragedy ahead. "If council in a city the size of Sault Ste. Marie can be hoodwinked and/or bullied into sending out this kind of message, just what hope does

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Canada have of staying together as a bilingual nation?"

The Soo resolution, wrote the Toronto *Globe and Mail*, "changed nothing except to chisel another chip off the exhaustible supply of Canadian tolerance." It was a message to Ontario Francophones that they are "interlopers" in their own province. The same message was also being sent to Francophones in general about their place in Canada. "Mayor Fratesi and the others cannot shuck off this broader responsibility for their actions. In their small corner of Canada, they are playing chicken with national unity."

The *Winnipeg Free Press* saw historical parallels at work: "The future of Canada does not in fact hang on whether the municipal council of Thunder Bay or Sault Ste. Marie declares English to be the town's official language....Like the hanging of Louis Riel and the conscription crisis, however, such disputes can split the country along the linguistic fault line which is its built-in weakness."

There was no disagreement between the two Winnipeg dailies on this issue. The *Sun* saw the Ontario cities' actions as a sign that "Mean spiritedness is sweeping the country....The rationale for this gratuitous anti-French action is usually monetary. The councils say they can't afford to offer services in French. There may be an element of truth in that, but the sentiment underlying it is virulently anti-French."

Along with several other papers, the *Windsor Star* ridiculed the idea that English needed to be defended in Ontario. "If the councillors of communities who voted for English-only services did so through patriotic zeal, to defend English from the inroads of a foreign tongue, they did so in a most unpatriotic manner and they should think again....Declaring a municipality 'English only' means nothing. It offers no advantages to the community, but it shows an appalling degree of ignorance and intolerance by those who invoke it."

A lack of political leadership, especially at the national level, was pinpointed by editorialists in several cities as a major factor in the situation.

The *Toronto Star* editorialized: "Sadly, at a time when the future of the country might very well be at stake, an appalling dearth of leadership and vision has allowed meanness to supplant good will and bigotry to overcome reason."

The Montreal *Gazette* spread the blame, including the Ontario and Quebec premiers in its criticism. "But the fires of prejudice would not be raging so fearsomely if the Prime Minister of Canada had provided national leadership."

While the English-only resolutions were "deplorable", the *Ottawa Citizen* argued that they were not "completely unexplainable or unexpected, given the lack of leadership in this country on important issues of nation-building. The failure of the Mulroney government to set the tone for national unity, to explain clearly why policies such as the Meech Lake accord are important, can partly explain the actions of these civic leaders."

The gloom was not, however, seen by all commentators as impenetrable. Glimpses of sunshine were seen. Montreal *Gazette* editor Norman Webster pointed to a nationwide poll commissioned by Canadian Parents for French showing that 74% of parents across the country want their children to learn their second official language.

The *Toronto Star* saw light right at home. "While 47 of Ontario's 839 municipalities, representing only 300,000 people, petulantly declare themselves English only, another 33 larger municipalities, representing 635,000 people, proudly declare themselves bilingual."

At least one prominent French-speaking journalist also saw reason not to despair. He was *La Presse* editorialist Marcel Adam, who wrote a long, personal reflection published under the title: "Just supposing the facts indicated that bilingualism has been a success and not a failure?"

Citing several phenomena, including recent public opinion polls on language and the success of French-language immersion schooling across Canada, Adam saw the history of Canadian bilingualism as a modest success, even when recent negative events are taken into consideration.

"The dinosaurs of those municipal councils that made official their own narrow-mindedness in officially renouncing a bilingualism that in any case didn't exist are not, in my eyes, witnesses to failure, but rather the vindication of a policy that has had infinitely more success than many in Quebec might think. Thanks to them, we can measure how much minds have evolved in matters of bilingualism." Federal language laws, Adam argued, have been generally successful in providing a considerable range of services to minority communities across the country. In addition, these laws have had a real educational impact on English-speaking Canadians, large numbers of whom have adopted bilingualism as "a *sine qua non* for those who want to reach the heights in politics and in the Public Service at the federal level, to mention only those two sectors."

If we keep a cool head and look beyond immediate appearances, even those such as the events in Sault Ste. Marie, there is every reason for encouragement, Adam insisted. *T.S.*

Stereotypes

"You may have noticed the word 'strident' back in the news lately. Be prepared to see a lot of it since Sheila Coops has joined the Liberal leadership race. Whenever a man is forceful and outspoken in his views, that is what he is called — forceful and outspoken. When a woman is forceful and outspoken, she's called strident.

When a man expresses justifiable anger, he's called justifiably angry. When a woman does the same, she's called hysterical." (Sharon Fraser in the Halifax *Sunday Daily News*.)

A Dialogue of the Deaf: APEC and the Standing Joint Committee

The differences between the Standing Joint Committee on Official Languages and the Alliance for the Preservation of English in Canada are unbridgeable. The Fédération des Francophones hors Québec, the Canadian Teachers' Federation and Alliance Quebec also appeared before the committee.

Should or should not English be the only official language for the government of Canada? In 1990 the question might appear, to say the least, somewhat bizarre considering the history of steady development of the recognition of the rights of French across Canada since the passage of the original Official Languages Act in 1969. Nevertheless, early this spring the question was on the agenda of the Standing Joint Committee of the Senate and the House of Commons on Official Languages.

It was there, not through an initiative on the part of the committee, but rather as a result of the appearance before it of the leader of a group that has as its sole aim precisely that — the installation of official English unilingualism Canada.

APEC

Meet APEC, the Alliance for the Preservation of English in Canada, and its president, retired Toronto lawyer Ronald Leitch.

Fresh from a series of victories for his unilingual cause in several Ontario municipalities, and with a 30-page brief, appropriately unilingual, in hand, Leitch, flanked by a dozen or so supporters, duly appeared before the committee on March 28. It was standing room only in Senate hearing room 250 as the APEC president began his presentation at 3:30 p.m. Almost three hours later, after what can be described only as a dialogue of the deaf, the only agreement between Leitch and the committee was that neither had convinced the other of anything at all.

The stage for the APEC appearance had been set during the preceding two weeks when the committee heard successively from the two principal minority language rights groups in the country, the Fédération des Francophones hors Québec and Alliance Quebec, and from the Canadian Teachers' Association.

Both the FFHQ and Alliance Quebec referred frequently and negatively to APEC and its opinions. Both denounced it as a threat to national unity and a standing insult to French-speaking Canadians.

Ronald Leitch, president of the Alliance for the Preservation of English in Canada, appearing before the Standing Joint Committee

FFHQ

Appearing March 14, FFHQ president Guy Matte told committee members that his association could no longer keep silent about APEC and its activities: "We decided quite a while ago that we would simply ignore the far right groups... thinking that they would remain marginal. However, that is not what has happened over the past few months. We are aware of the way they are tearing at the Canadian social fabric."

Referring to the municipalities, mostly in Ontario, that have passed unilingual resolutions and to "the pervasive influence" of APEC in many communities, Matte said the political climate was an important factor: "their ideas may have found fertile ground because this outburst of unilingualism is happening at a time when political tensions are already very marked, especially over the issue of the Constitution."

APEC, as any other group, has the right to propose changes in government, Matte acknowledged. "But where proposing change takes the form of attacks on a legitimate group within

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society, it becomes unacceptable. And that is precisely what APEC is doing." As for its denial it is anti-French, "APEC's structure and goals, the literature it distributes and the public statements it makes are in every way a direct attack on the Francophone community....Once APEC's underlying motivations have been grasped, and all the harm it has done, in Ontario in particular, has been understood, it is much easier to see how profoundly injured our community feels."

Canadian Teachers' Federation

The Canadian Teachers' Federation, which comprises 13 provincial and territorial organizations representing 225,000 elementary and secondary school teachers, also appeared before the committee on March 14.

The organization was concerned that Canadians were becoming less tolerant of each others' differences and said that the failure of leaders at all levels of government and from all segments of society to address the issue of linguistic tensions constructively has compounded the problem.

Alliance Quebec

In its submission a week later the English-language rights group Alliance Quebec fully agreed. The various unilingual resolutions could have only one message for Franco-Ontarians. "Quite simply, they are being told that they are viewed as undesirable and alien in the very place they call home."

Noting that the municipalities concerned were already in practice operating only in English, and not required by any law to do otherwise, Alliance president Robert Keaton concluded: "This attack on bilingualism...is a smokescreen for something much more insidious. It is an attack on people, on their identity, on their right to be who they are. It is an attack on one of the essential values of any modern civilized society — respect for and appreciation of its minorities."

APEC claims that it was simply retaliating for restrictions on Anglophone rights in Quebec — specifically the banning of English on external signs by Bill 178 — were dismissed out of hand. No matter how much they resent Bill 178, Keaton insisted, Quebec Anglophones want no retribution on Francophones elsewhere. "Does anyone honestly believe that by diminishing one minority group they are contributing to improving the situation of another minority?"

Alliance Quebec also criticized Canadian political leaders for being too timid in defending measures taken to promote linguistic duality. "Canada's commitment to two official languages deserves coherent, consistent, unapologetic, unequivocal advocacy on the part of our political leaders."

Ronald Leitch

One week later Ronald Leitch made it clear he could not have disagreed more with the earlier witnesses before committee. Dismissing Alliance Quebec as unrepresentative of Anglo-Quebecers, he attacked Canada's official language policies as wrong all along the line. In a quiet tone that belied the toughness of his statements, Leitch assailed every facet of official bilingualism. It has, he said, no historical, constitutional or legal warrant. It encourages "an artificial need for the use of the French language at the federal, provincial and municipal levels." He quoted former Senator Eugene Forsey to deny the historical validity of giving any special status to French beyond the specific, limited guarantees included in the British North America Act. He quoted historian Donald Creighton to show that Quebec's language laws were a repudiation of the whole federal bilingualism programs; and he quoted Pierre Elliott Trudeau biographer Richard Gwyn to suggest that same program had been foisted on an unsuspecting public by the former prime minister.

In fact, he insisted, no Canadian government has ever received a mandate to set up two official languages. One of the results of the policy, he claimed, was a consistent pattern of overrepresentation of Francophones in all levels of the federal administration, particularly in the Ottawa area.

Leitch's solution for the problems of national unity was blunt and simple: the repeal of the 1988 Official Languages Act and the imposition of English as the sole official language in Canada, while allowing some French-language services in Quebec. "Canada is in fact a multilingual country made up of some 30 to 40 ethnic groups. Under such circumstances, the language of government is not a matter of culture, but of communication." With English as the sole official language there would be no misunderstanding of what government is saying nor any difficulties concerning translation. "Our position is that two official languages create division, not unity."

Ronald Leitch speaking with reporters after his appearance

Attack and counter-attack

The APEC president found no support for his ideas from any of the 10 senators and MPs who participated in a confrontational and often stormy discussion that followed the hour-long reading of the brief. "Offensive, divisive and incorrect" was the reaction of Warren Allmand, former cabinet minister and Liberal MP for Montreal Notre-Dame-de-Grâce. "Paranoid and bigotted," snapped Port Moody-Coquitlam New Democrat Ian Waddell. "Where does your hatred come from?" asked Conservative Ricardo Lopez, MP from Châteauguay. Another Tory, Beauce MP Gilles Bernier, called Leitch "a dinosaur" and claimed that English-speaking Quebecers were "10 times" better off than French-speakers elsewhere, "including New Brunswick."

Much of the assault concerned the relationship between APEC and Jock

Andrews, a former military man whose book *Bilingual Today, French Tomorrow* was quoted with approval by the APEC leader. Pressed on whether he agreed with certain allegedly racist statements made by Andrews in the book and in speeches to APEC groups, Leitch distanced himself from them. "They do not represent the philosophy of APEC," he repeated on several occasions.

Throughout the discussion Leitch insisted that APEC is neither racist nor anti-French. "When the language policies of any government are challenged, why do politicians shout 'racists' or 'racism'? Is the language issue in this country some sort of sacred cow which makes it untouchable?" Leitch challenged the committee to find any instances of racism in his speeches or in APEC literature. On several occasions he claimed that many French-speaking Canadians were active members of his organization — a claim challenged during the discussion.

The only slight hint of the possibility of conciliation came during the final question of the afternoon when the Liberal MP for Stormont-Dundas, Bob Kilger, asked the APEC president whether he would disassociate himself from recent racist comments made by some local APEC members in Cornwall. All those involved had, in effect, been expelled from APEC, Leitch replied.

A brief final exchange between the two, however, summed up the whole session. Thanking the APEC president for his appearance, Kilger concluded: "I heard nothing, read nothing here, that is going to build the kind of community and nation that I want to leave for my children." Leitch concurred: "And I echo your sentiments. I have heard nothing today in that same way". *T.S.*

Apecalia

The Alliance for the Preservation of English in Canada met a different form of resistance from school trustees in suburban Victoria. One of the Sooke trustees took the association to task for the 53 spelling and grammatical mistakes he found in APEC's five-page brief. Samples: "devisive", "aparthied" and "beaurocracy". The *Toronto Star* wondered if perhaps the English language is threatened by APEC ?

The Official Languages Act: Does It Protect Majorities?

Jacques Robichaud

English and French are not only Canada's two official languages; they also enjoy equal status in federal institutions. This is proclaimed in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and in the Official Languages Act, one of whose stated purposes is to ensure their "equality of status and equal rights and privileges as to their use in all federal institutions."

This equality of status requires that the government follow a very specific approach in formulating policies and programs that the administration will adopt in this area. It must always bear in mind the interpretation that the courts may give to this equality of status, rights and privileges.

Contrary to what might at first be thought, equality of status at the national level does not imply rigidity. It rather adds an element of flexibility and adaptability that can temper the application of the Act, and this, in practice, tends at the regional level to safeguard the majority communities while promoting the development of the minorities.

The meaning of equality of status is made clearer in the sections of the Act that deal with the proceedings of Parliament, legislative and other instruments and the administration of justice. It may be noted in passing that, with regard to the latter, the Act is binding only on federal courts in relation to their adjudicative functions. In regard to most of such courts it provides for a gradual phase-in of this requirement over a five-year period; final decisions of federal courts are to be made available simultaneously in both official languages in certain cases. This does not prohibit the decision from being handed down in only one language or make it invalid on that account. This is another element of flexibility applicable to both languages.

With regard to communications with the public and the provision of services, the Act in principle subordinates the obligation to use both languages to the concept of "significant demand". In the absence of such demand the use of only one language is permitted except in specific circumstances that relate to the health, safety or security of the public, the location or nature of the office or facility, or the national or international mandate of the office.

It is, of course, mainly with regard to language of work and the participation of the members of both language groups that the equality of status of the two languages has prompted the legislator to provide for flexible implementation procedures. The practical effect of these provisions at the national level is to provide safeguards for both the majority and the minority against any imbalance that might arise from the use of the two languages.

The following are, for the sake of illustration, five brief examples of such flexibility:

1. Section 39 specifies the obligation of the federal government to ensure equal opportunities for employment and advancement in federal institutions without regard to ethnic origin or first language learned; to ensure that the composition of the work force of its institutions tends to reflect the presence of both the official language communities of Canada, taking into account the characteristics of individual institutions, including their mandates, the public they serve and their location. Because of these obligations, institutions must ensure that employment is open to all Canadians, whether English-speaking or French-speaking, having due regard for the merit principle.

2. Section 35(1)(a) states that the obligations of federal institutions concerning language of work apply in the National Capital Region and in any part or region of Canada or any place outside Canada that is prescribed by regulation. Section 35(2) makes reference in this regard to a previous Treasury Board and Public Service Commission circular which cannot be amended, according to Section 87, with regard to its

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Towards a New Social Contract: Public Servants' Language of Work

Too many Francophones are still obliged to check their language at the door when they are hired by the federal government. At the same time, many Anglophones still do not have the opportunity to use their second-language knowledge in the workplace. Yet the Constitution and the Official Languages Act grant federal employees working in designated regions the right to use their language in the institutions of Parliament. Section 16 of the Constitution states that English and French are the official languages of Canada and that they enjoy equal status, rights and privileges with regard to their use in the institutions of Parliament, while the Act restates and clarifies these provisions. The legal framework is in place, but the reality is quite different. We will attempt to focus on this reality in this second report on the Complaints and Audits Branch of the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages. In* Language and Society *No. 30 (page 16) Jean-Claude Nadon, the Branch's Director, spoke about service to the public in both official languages. Now freelance journalist, Colette Duhaime takes up the question of government employees' choice of language of work. How far we have come in the past 10 years and what still remains to be done.

— **Language and Society:** *Are the rights of government employees respected, as provided for in the Official Languages Act?*

— **Jean-Claude Nadon:** Experience shows that in itself a sound legal framework is not enough to truly ensure the equality of status of the two official languages in the designated regions. I would go so far as to say that despite this framework, despite second-language training and more balanced participation of the two language groups, French outside Quebec and English in federal offices in Quebec are in suspended animation. While it is true that initiatives are being taken in this area there is still far too much procastination. The horse has long since been brought to water, but it still refuses to drink.

— *What is the reason for this lack of progress?*

— The question of language of work is one of the most complex there is. Although Canada is one of the countries that has devoted the most resources and energy to the issue of official languages, we are far from having achieved our objectives. In the

territorial application, without the approval of Parliament.

3. Section 35(1) also states that the work environments of federal institutions must be conducive to the effective use of both official languages and accommodate the use of either by their officers and employees. It also provides that, in all regions of Canada not prescribed as bilingual, the treatment of both official languages in work environments in regions where one official language predominates must be reasonably comparable to that of these languages in work environments in regions where the other predominates.

4. Section 91 provides that the official language requirements set out in the sections of the Act concerning communications with the public, the provision of services and language of work shall apply to a staffing action only if they are objectively required to perform the functions in question. This precludes the frivolous or arbitrary proliferation of the number of positions designated bilingual.

5. Section 43 sets out measures to be taken by the Secretary of State to give effect to the federal commitment to enhance the vitality of the English and French linguistic minority communities, to support their development and to foster the full recognition and use of English and French in Canadian society. These measures include encouragement and support for the learning of English and French. This too is something of which both the majority and the minority can take advantage.

Finally, the sections of the Act concerning court remedy and the Commissioner of Official Language's role as linguistic ombudsman open many avenues of intervention to everyone. By thus affirming the status of the official languages and extending their use, the Act's intent is to give all Canadians the benefit of its provisions, whether they belong to the linguistic majority or the minority. In fact, the Act is for everyone's benefit. It provides additional rights and extends its protections to all members of Canadian society, regardless of ethnic origin or first language learned, by strengthening the bilingual character of the institutions it governs.

We are not dealing with an adversarial situation where one of the parties can enhance its position only at the expense of the other, but rather with one of balance and partnership, where each partner is better served. The 1988 Official Languages Act represents a new national compact of which all Canadians can be proud. Majorities too will be well protected when the Act is fully implemented. ■

(Our translation.)

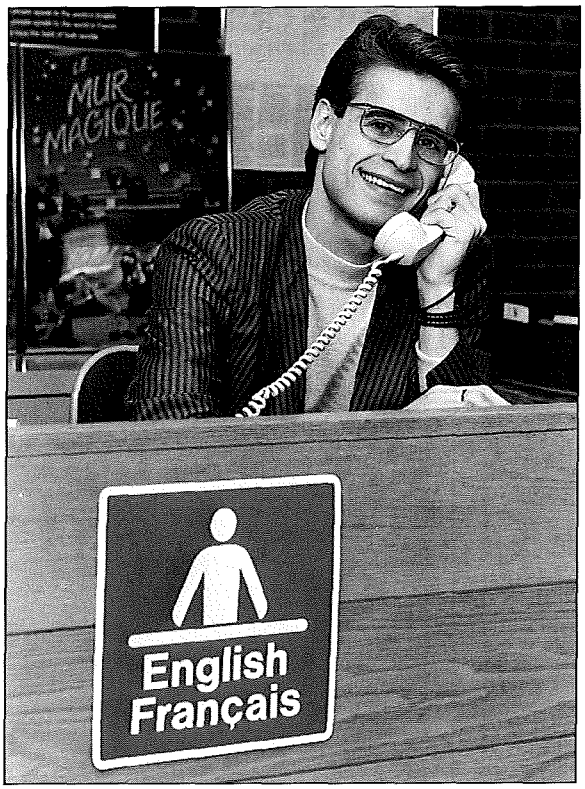
case of service to the public the procedure is relatively simple. Everyone agrees that the customer should be satisfied, and that includes linguistically. In the workplace the situation is far more wide-ranging and complicated. There it is not enough to cite policies. Existing policies have to be revised in accordance with the new Act or with systems, but also with the will and attitudes of people interacting. This opens up the whole area of respect by one culture for the other.

— Are the problems associated solely with the question of respect?

— Nothing in this area is simple, but if we succeed in making senior management feel truly responsible, I believe we would made definite progress. But too often the implicit messages received from above say, If you want to be understood, speak English. At present, nearly a third of supervisors cannot perform their work satisfactorily in both official languages.

I believe one of the keys to change is real bilingualism among managers. If we manage to convince supervisors to set an example by using both official languages in the workplace and by encouraging bilingual Anglophones and Francophones to use both languages, it will be a major step forward. It should be noted that some federal departments and agencies have made enormous efforts to promote the use of both official languages in the workplace. For example, the management committee of Treasury Board usually operates in both official languages and there appears to have been a definite improvement at Employment and Immigration and at Revenue Canada. The Bank of Canada has developed an exchange program between Quebec and the National Capital Region for its employees. Transport Canada and Environment Canada still have a long way to go.

— What is the reaction of Anglophones to the use of both languages in the workplace?



— It is an unending frustration for many Anglophones who have received second-language training to find themselves in a work environment where they have no opportunity to apply their new knowledge. Unless something is done about such work environments the government is fated to devote resources to language training that will yield little or no return in the medium or long term.

— Do you think Francophones must accept some of the responsibility?

— For the sake of efficient communications, no doubt, many Francophones in the National Capital Region and the bilingual regions outside Quebec switch to English when they are among insufficiently bilingual Anglophones. In doing so they do not promote the use of French in the workplace. It should be strongly emphasized, however, that they are not to blame; the entire administrative system around them prompts them to bracket their language if they wish to do their work efficiently. We cannot ask that every Francophone be a linguistic hero. It is the supervisor's responsibility to make every effort to foster a work environment conducive to the free choice of language by the employees.

— Does fear of reprisals prevent public servants from making complaints to the Commissioner?

— I think some public servants do fear reprisals. It should be pointed out, however, that all investigations into complaints are confidential and that the names of complainants are never divulged without consent. In the area of language of work, we often consolidate complaints or, as far as possible, ensure the anonymity of the complainant. Despite that, some employees are afraid that they might win the battle of the complaint but lose the war. Reprisals can be subtle and can occur months after the complaint was made. We constantly follow up on complainants to be sure that they are not the subject of delayed reprisals. Compared to ordinary citizens, public servants submit few complaints. Last year only 172 of the 2,387 complaints received were from public servants. Three-quarters of these complaints were well founded and were resolved.

— In addition to the tensions that can arise in the work environment from non-compliance with the Official Languages Act, do you see other problems?

— The right to work in the language of one's choice in the regions designated by the Act is not only a fundamental right but also an important element in productivity at work. Too often managers forget that language is an important work tool and that there is a considerable waste of talent when people have to work in their second language. They simply do not perform to their full capacity. In the context of the government initiatives known as Public Service 2000, it seems essential to us that federal government productivity take into account the linguistic potential of public servants. This is an important aspect that should not be neglected at a time when productivity is increasingly under discussion.

— How do you view the future?

— The language of work of government employees is the barometer of the linguistic climate of an institution. When the two linguistic groups use both official languages freely and in a balanced way in the workplace, the

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program as a whole is usually on track.

The actors have been on stage for a long time and they seem frozen. A catalyst must be introduced and the catalyst is clear and consistent government policies — which are still to come — to explain the obligations of management and the rights of employees, in addition to the will of those in authority, especially managers, to set an example. Here, as elsewhere, the example comes from above. But there is more. Aside from policies and regulations, it is the responsibility of managers and employees to influence the linguistic environment. We have repeatedly advanced the concept of the reciprocal civic obligation of both linguistic groups, showing respect for each other's language, to strive to carve out the proper place for the two official languages in the work environment, a concept on which the authorities have not yet taken a stand. In our view, the future of federal employees' choice of language depends on this social contract. It is the essential factor in linguistic relations in the workplace. ■

(Our translation.)

***History of the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages,* from 1970 to mid-1989, by Maurice Héroux**

The creation of the position of Commissioner of Official Languages in 1969 was a major innovation. As the only linguistic ombudsman in the world and, in addition, linguistic auditor and promoter of language reform in Canada, the first Commissioner and his successors have had to shape their own models of these three functions.

The history written by Maurice Héroux, a historian by training and a former manager at the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages, traces the influence of the three Commissioners, the evolution of the institution's policies and structures and the impact of linguistic developments in Canada. The Office of the Commissioner has all along pursued action on various fronts to promote the equality of the two official languages and to accelerate the reform of linguistic arrangements that this objective requires.

This work will be of particular interest to historians, researchers and specialists in various disciplines who want a better understanding of the role that the Commissioners and the Office of the Commissioner have played in the federal administration and in the two official language communities, as well as of the genesis of an institution unique of its kind.

You can obtain a copy of the *History of the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages* from the Communications Branch, Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages, Ottawa, Canada, K1A 0T8.

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Towards Linguistic Justice

Your language rights are guaranteed by the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the Official Languages Act.

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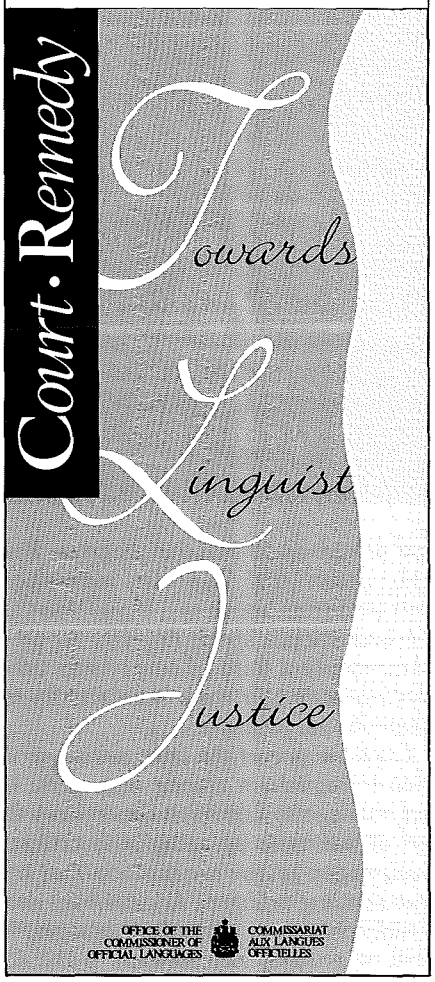
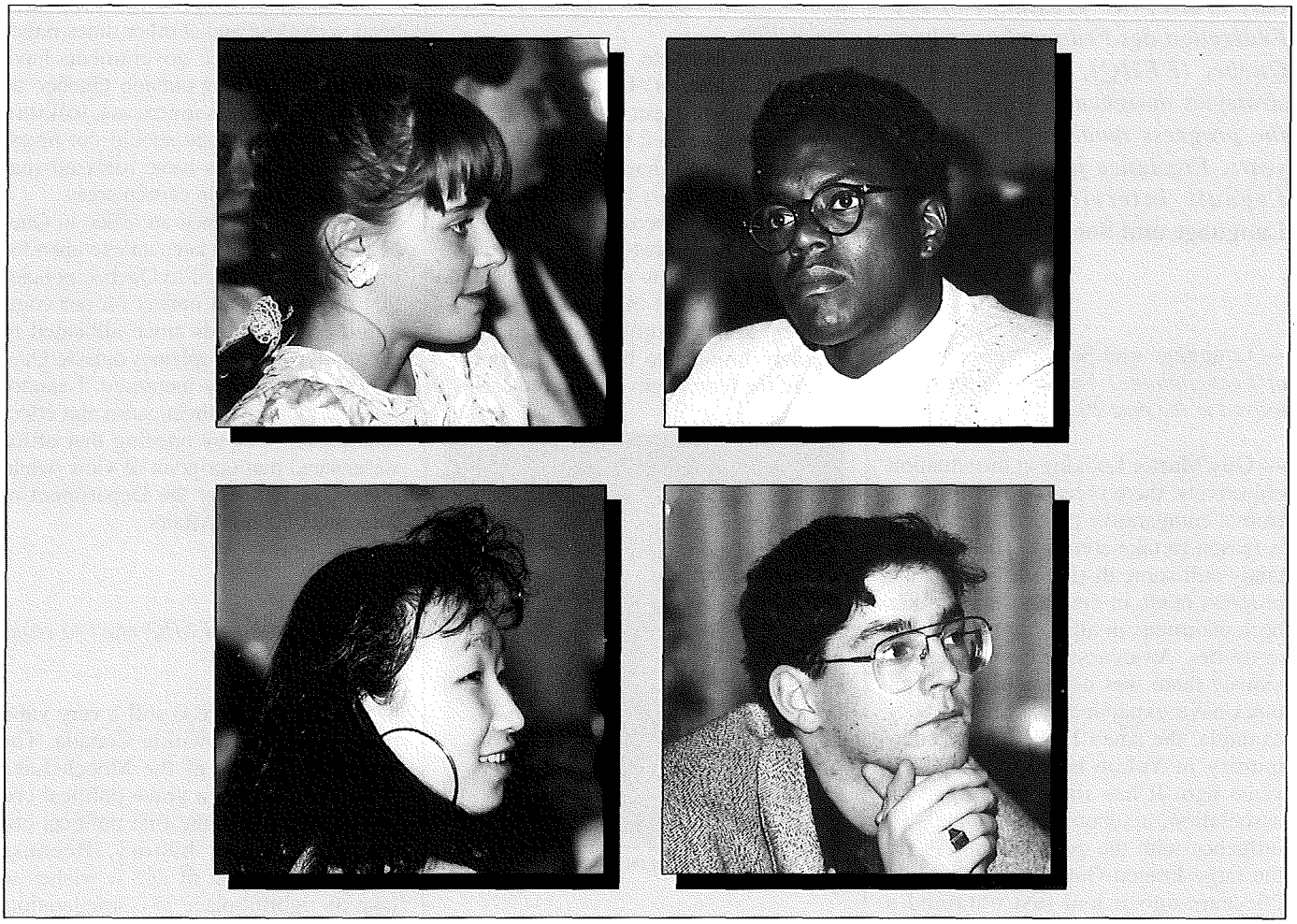
or call collect: (613) 992-LANG.



The Youth Program



"Forward together" — that is the theme on which D'Iberville Fortier was invited to speak on April 7 to the 43rd annual congress of the Key Club International, Eastern District of Canada, on the linguistic situation in Canada.

The Key Clubs are for young people between 13 and 19 and are sponsored by the Kiwanis Club International. There are nearly 3,600 Key Clubs in a dozen countries. They share a common desire to encourage their members to serve the community and school to which they belong. Some of tomorrow's leaders are gaining valuable social experience from the clubs.

More than 250 young people participated in this congress, which was held in Toronto. Since there were approximately equal numbers of Anglophones and Francophones many activities and presentations were bilingual, giving the participants the opportunity to apply what they had learned in their second-language courses.

In his talk the Commissioner observed that in the past the two linguistic groups were able to find ways to live in harmony and that today most Canadians fervently wish for a generous and tolerant approach to relations between Anglophones and Francophones. "The young people of your generation are well aware that diversity is not a threat but an asset. I see this as a sign that the era of two linguistic solitudes is reaching an end and that many are ready to take up the challenge. It is just as important to build a tolerant and open society as to clean up our lakes and protect our forests. You cannot change the past, but you can shape your future in your own image. It belongs to you. Canada is you. Make a point of being informed and dispelling misunderstandings. You have the power to change this country, to build a better society where understanding, tolerance and friendship reign among all, Anglophones and Francophones alike. It's your turn."

The Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages is well aware that it also has a role to play among young people. The first information program it established was the Youth Program, aimed at making young people aware of the linguistic duality of Canada. Readers will find a detailed report on the achievements of this program in our next number.

For the members of the Key Clubs who took part in the Toronto congress, to be open to the future is have an open mind and heart. They have shown that they are equal to the challenge. ■

The Consolidation of French-Language Services

Guy Matte, the president of the Fédération des Francophones hors Québec (FFHQ), reports on new strategies designed to capitalize on the progress made in the past 20 years. Freelance journalist Benoît Legault interviewed him for **Language and Society.**

— **Language and Society:** *Has the lot of Francophones outside Quebec improved in the past 20 years?*

— **Guy Matte:** Looking at the situation objectively, there is reason for disquiet; from a comparative point of view there is reason to take comfort. There is certainly still some distance to go, but the progress made in the past 20 years has been enormous in all the provinces and territories. Awareness exists where previously there was none and infrastructures have expanded enormously. For example, the small Francophone community in Yukon hardly existed 20 years ago. It has since developed an association, a school and channels of influence with the government. As for the large Franco-Ontarian community, 20 years ago it had just obtained a publicly-funded secondary school. Now it has a complete system for French-language instruction throughout Ontario. It has also been given the right to manage its schools in various ways and has a community college. In addition, there are business people's associations and cultural groups.

In every Francophone community outside Quebec there has been a degree of improvement in the past 20 years of which we can be proud.

— What role has the FFHQ played in these improvements?

— The local Francophone organizations have been the driving force behind the improvements. The FFHQ is a political organization that lobbies the federal government and the government of Quebec. It is also an organ for joint action by the various members of the Fédération.

Take, for example, the Francophones of Saskatchewan. Under a federal-provincial agreement they received the right to manage their own schools.

This agreement had a spin-off effect in Manitoba and is about to have the same effect in Alberta. Our role in this affair is to exert pressure on the federal government for it to assume its responsibilities as set out in the Official Languages Act. I firmly believe that the pressure brought to bear by the FFHQ forced the federal government to act.

Guy Matte, president of the FFHQ

We also exert pressure on the government of Quebec, which calls itself the homeland of Francophones in North America. The FFHQ asks it to act accordingly and suggests avenues it can follow in order to participate in the development of Francophone communities outside Quebec.

— Has the FFHQ grown much as an organization in the past 20 years?

— The budget of the organization has not increased substantially. We have 12 full-time employees, which is not a large number.

— How would you assess the relations of the FFHQ with the government of Quebec?

— It varies. At some times they have been very close and at other times rather cool. Some Quebec governments have seen Francophones outside Quebec as remnants of a disappearing folklore culture in which they should not invest very much; others have realized that they could help us in certain areas.

We therefore opened an office in Quebec City in 1987 to keep an eye open for problems with regard to Quebec policies that might have an impact on our communities. The funds since allocated to programs for Francophones outside Quebec have definitely increased. I cannot say that there is a direct cause and effect relationship, but by opening that office we ensured that our point of view would always be heard by the Department of Intergovernmental Affairs.

— How would the FFHQ react to separation?

— We believe there is still a very valid place for Quebec within Canada. The approval process of the Meech Lake Accord is causing a grave political crisis, but this is not the first political crisis in Canadian history. Because Quebec has come of age it wishes to take its rightful place in Confederation, which is natural. But we believe it will be possible to find accommodations, if not under Meech Lake then in some other way. We must adapt to any constitutional changes. As for a sovereign Quebec, that is a bridge that we may cross one day, but at present we do not foresee that possibility.

— What do you think of CoR and APEC, which are defending what they regard as their linguistic rights?

— In our view, CoR in New Brunswick and APEC are extreme right-wing groups that are attacking minority language rights in Canada. They are attacking the rights of all minorities. Under cover of their opposition to Bill 178 they would be prepared without hesitation to write off Quebec Anglophones, because what they really want

is a unilingual English country that would also revise all its social policies. These marginalized groups exploit any grievances people may have, including the Goods and Services Tax, to channel an anti-bilingualism protest movement.

They protest at the municipal level because they are not well enough organized to protest at the provincial level. These idiots — let us call them what they are — are anti-social, and the more public attention they receive the more people will see them for what they are. That's why it is important to let them speak, for the more they speak the more they will hang themselves.

— Where does the FFHQ stand politically?

— We have no political position as such. We just work to develop strong Francophone communities from coast to coast. I don't care if that means we are on the left, the right or in the centre, but we are certainly not on the extreme right like APEC because we support social development in which the government must intervene in people's affairs to ensure the development of certain communities.

— From what walks of life do the leaders of Francophone movements outside Quebec come?

— They come from all walks of life, but proportionately more from the teaching field because this sector has such Francophone organizations as the schools and school boards. I myself am a teacher.

— Are there many Quebecers now living outside their native province who are active in the Francophone movements outside Quebec?

— The recent immigration of Quebecers has been mainly to the West; there has been little to Acadia. This immigration westward is a major factor, especially in the academic field. Each year hundreds of Quebecers come to Ontario and Alberta to teach French because the Francophones living there cannot supply enough teachers for immersion classes. Some come for a limited time and then remain permanently and join the Francophone movements.

— Is there a limit to the extension of Francophone rights outside Quebec?

— I am more interested in the development of Francophone communities than in the extension of Francophone rights. The 1982 Charter of Rights and Freedoms grants Francophones the right to manage their own schools, but today, in 1990, this right is still denied us by governments that signed the Charter. So, you know, rights are important but what actually happens is more important.

The question we ask ourselves is how can we make the French language and culture viable everywhere in Canada? That requires community infrastructures, it requires that French become a public language. It cannot be a language hidden in the homes and schools. French must be a visible language that has value. When you grow up in Alberta, Saskatchewan or Nova Scotia, where French does not have a visible place whose worth is recognized in society, why would you identify with or join the Francophone cultural community? You join something that has value and not something that is worthless and discredited.

That is why it is important to establish structures in every province that allow for the creation of environments that enhance the value of French, such as schools, cultural centres, and centrally located French-language social services, as in the Maison de la Francophonie now under construction in Vancouver. The Francophone community must be visible and speaking French must be normal.

There is still a long way to go to achieve this goal in every province, but it is the direction in which we are heading.

— Do Anglophones view French more favourably than before?

— A quarter of a million young Anglophones are attending French immersion courses. They are doing so because their parents believe that French has value because it improves employment opportunities. This is a major social change. It also sends a message to Francophones about the value of their mother tongue.

For 10 years there has been an overall enhancement of the French language everywhere in Canada. Currently we are in a trough that I believe will be only a hiatus in this development. It will end as soon as people see why these anti-bilingualism feelings emerge.

Many regions of Canada have serious economic problems. The country as a whole is faced with an enormous federal deficit. In the face of these economic uncertainties, some look for scapegoats. Some Anglophones believe that if we must cut the budget somewhere it should be in the area of bilingualism, which is too expensive in any case, although they do not know how much it costs and do not realize the value it adds to Canada. Others still retain the WASP and Orange Order reflex that holds that one people should be subjugated by another.

— What is the situation with regard to the assimilation of Francophones outside Quebec?

— There is less assimilation in Ontario and New Brunswick, where French is considered a useful language. But assimilation is still high in the provinces that do not have French infrastructures that make the language attractive to young people.

— Are Francophones outside Quebec inclined to welcome immigrants who speak French?

— The job of welcoming them does not fall to the FFHQ, but there are various groups that perform this function in the French communities, as in Toronto, for example. There are increasing numbers of immigrants who speak French as a second language and whose mother tongue is not English. These include Vietnamese, Lebanese, Moroccans and Egyptians who come to major cities like Toronto, Ottawa, Edmonton and Vancouver, but do not go to the rural provinces such as Saskatchewan and Newfoundland. These immigrants find it difficult to integrate into the native Francophone communities. We are, perhaps, not the most welcoming environment because it is more difficult to be open to others when you feel yourself threatened.

However, I now see a greater openness among Francophones to organizations

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that are both multicultural and Francophone. I think this is healthy. There are no pure or impure Francophones. We cannot afford to reject anyone. ■

(Our translation.)

Grist for the mill....

Figures and statistics
One of the factors used in assessing and promoting a researcher is the rating of the journals in which he or she publishes. An international journal has a rating of 3, a national one, 2, and a Quebec journal, 1.

For every 100 children with English as their mother tongue who enter kindergarten in Quebec, 44 go to university, compared to 29 among Allophones and only 23 among Francophones. (Figures published by the Conseil supérieur de l'éducation.)

Figures
About 75% of the young Natives (between 15 and 24) who leave Manitoba's 61 reserves for urban life lose their language. (CP story by LuAnn LaSalle.)

The number of English-speakers has doubled in the past 30 years: 350 million use it as their mother tongue today, another 350 million as a second language and "at a most conservative estimate 100 million are fluent in English as a foreign language." — Professor David Crystal, a British authority on language trends.

The choice has been made
Defence of the Francophone community of nations is one thing; international dynamism is another. At Rhône-Poulenc Agrochimie in Lyon, the choice has been made. The use of English is mandatory at internal meetings. *(Le Nouvel Économiste.)*

An affiliate of Rhône-Poulenc, Mérieux, has just acquired Connaught Bio-Sciences of Toronto; we'll have to wait and see....

The Voice of English Quebec

*Dorothy Guinan**

The Voice of English Quebec is interested in community development and the well-being of the English-speaking community in the Quebec City region, but political concerns are coming more and more to the fore.

David Blair has a message: Anglophones in Quebec City are happy. They do not feel threatened by the distinct society clause in the Meech Lake Accord and neither should the rest of Canada.

Blair went to Saskatchewan in March with this in mind after accepting an invitation from the Association culturelle franco-canadienne de la Saskatchewan to compare notes on the minority situation in both provinces. He arrived in Saskatchewan three weeks after the Voice of English Quebec (VEQ) had publicly endorsed the Meech Lake Accord.

Blair is spokesperson and past president of VEQ, a community-based organization serving the English-speaking population of Quebec City and the surrounding regions.

Correcting "mistruths"

He also devoted a day to the press to correct the "mistruth" that Anglophones are poorly treated in Quebec; an uncharacteristic gesture for a group that considers itself apolitical. He was the guest on a popular radio phone-in show in Regina, met with editorial staff of the Regina *Leader-Post* and held a press conference attended by both English and French media.

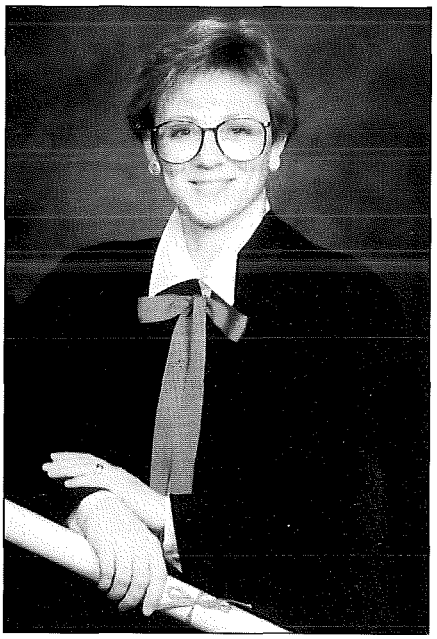
"People like Quebec Equality Party Leader Robert Libman are spreading the word around Canada that Anglophones in the province of Quebec are an oppressed minority. It isn't true. We love living in Quebec," Blair said.

Supporting Meech

VEQ is the first group representing Anglophones in Quebec to publicly support the Accord.

***Dorothy Guinan is free-lance writer and a political researcher for the Montreal *Gazette*. She has worked in the National Assembly press gallery since 1988.**

President Deborah Hook admitted the Accord is not perfect, but said the time has come for everyone who is in favour of it to speak up.



Deborah Hook, president of Voice of English Quebec

"You can have this debate on two levels, principle and reality. If you look at the document in black and white, there are faults. The Charter of Rights didn't satisfy everybody either. In reality, life is not bad for Anglophones in Quebec. If we close the door because of principle, we will block the road to further constitutional development. It's now or never," Hook said.

Although the VEQ executive was divided, 60% of the 21 board members voted in favour of supporting the Accord. The board represents about 1,200 Quebec City Anglophones.

"Since we came forward and endorsed the Meech Lake Accord, we've received a lot of positive feedback from both Anglophones and Francophones. But I think it has had

more of an impact on the French population," Hook said.

She explained that VEQ's stand has made some Francophones realize that the English-speaking minority in Quebec is not a threat to their culture.

"If we can make Francophones realize we understand their fears, maybe there wouldn't be a need for Bill 178, Quebec's law restricting English on commercial signs, or the distinct society clause," Hook said.

The organization

VEQ is a non-profit organization funded partly by the federal Secretary of State. Most of the $140,000 annual operating budget comes from the Secretary of State's Official Languages Program. Its budget is supplemented with a number of smaller federal and provincial grants and a six-dollar annual membership fee.

The organization has three full-time employees, three part-time employees and more than 30 active volunteers. Their small but efficient offices are situated one floor above the offices of Quebec's Justice Minister and Intergovernmental Affairs Minister, Gil Rémillard, about a 20-minute walk from the National Assembly.

VEQ's mandate is to try to give the English-speaking minority in Quebec City and the surrounding regions a sense of community. According to Statistics Canada there were 16,245 English-speaking people living in the Quebec City region in 1986, 2.7% of the total population.

"It's important to realize that all Anglophones living in Quebec are not those Anglophones living in Montreal," Hook pointed out. The percentage of Anglophones living in the greater Montreal region, 17%, far outweighs the 2.7% living in Quebec City. "English-French is not a problem here. Most Quebec City Anglophones live and work in French."

The objectives

VEQ's primary objective is to ensure the well-being in Quebec City of such English institutions as health institutions, schools, community groups and churches. The group co-ordinates projects and has established programs aimed at helping the institutions survive and prosper.

It operates a part-time nursery school, has established a "job bank" to help young Anglophones find work in the area and publishes a newsletter and a directory of English-language services.

The group has been particularly interested in the welfare of senior citizens since the closing of Quebec City's only private English-language retirement home in January. The "Friends Project" encourages both high school students and adults to "adopt" a senior who lives either autonomously or in an institution, spend time with that person, run errands and help with everyday chores.

They also work closely with the provincial government to make sure the English health and social service institutions receive what they are entitled to by law. Bill 142, Quebec's law ensuring English health and social services, was passed in December 1986. Hook said the problem with the law is that it is not well publicized. She fears that if people

Dorothy Guingan

are not aware the law exists they will not use the institutions.

"It is important for Anglophones to exercise their right and use the English health and social services. If we don't, the government may take them away from us in a few years," Hook said.

VEQ's mandate has not changed since 1982, when the group officially incorporated. They are still a community-based group interested in community development and the well-being of the English-speaking community in the Quebec City region. However, Hook stated, "the political issues are coming a little faster and more furiously than perhaps they had before."

Hook said it is not easy for the group to separate itself totally from politics. "Many people see our mandate as being non-political. But as things come along, we have no choice but to react. When something affects our community as a whole we have to say something. It's almost our responsibility."

She explains that there has been a growing concern among local Anglophones since Bill 178 was passed two years ago. "Since then, we've become more mistrustful of Bourassa. Yet, just because we support Meech Lake does not mean we support Bill 178. Having your fundamental rights taken away from you after you were promised otherwise is a hard blow to take."

Participating in two cultures

David Blair believes the reason why the rest of Canada thinks the English-speaking minority in Quebec is mistreated is because of the turmoil that surrounded the passing of Bill 178 in December 1988.

"The reaction was three-fold. Not only did people object to the sign law, they objected to Premier Robert Bourassa breaking his promise to Anglophones and to the way the law was passed, by invoking the notwithstanding clause," said Blair.

He said that the sign law itself is a "non-issue" and the only people who are upset are the merchants, both English and French, appealing to the tourist trade. "It is important to tell the rest of Canada that Anglophones in Quebec are fortunate to be able to participate in two cultures, they are not treated badly, and there is not always a fight.

"Seeing how Francophones are treated in Saskatchewan helps one put into perspective the importance of Bill 178," Blair said.

Until 1967 the only French instruction available to Francophone children in Saskatchewan was limited to one hour a day in English schools. Despite legislation passed since 1967 to improve the education situation, Blair said that not much has changed. It is still difficult for Francophones in Saskatchewan to receive adequate instruction in French.

A more political direction

Hook admitted the group's recent activities seem to be pointing them in a new, more political direction.

"I realize it's a funny thing to say, that we are not political. VEQ was born out of a political issue, Bill 101, Quebec's controversial language law. But we are not a political group," she said.

Ed Murphy, one of the founders of VEQ, recalls the first formal meeting held at the Quebec City landmark, the Château Frontenac. The mood was undeniably political.

"It was 7.50 p.m., nobody had shown up, and we were starting to get nervous. Twelve minutes later the room was full. People were standing in the back of the

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room." He estimates that about 1,200 people had attended.

"Suddenly [after Bill 101], the English-speaking minority found themself without representation and with no one to defend their rights. We came to the conclusion that we would have to do it ourselves," Murphy said.

It was this evening in May 1977 that Murphy and a handful of other people realized the extent of concern among Quebec Anglophones about Bill 101. The group became known as the Metropolitan Quebec Language Rights Committee, the forerunner of the Voice of English Quebec.

Whether or not VEQ will go back to its political roots remains to be seen. Hook said the time has come to make a decision, even though what they do best is work within the community.

"In the future, i.e., the next annual general meeting, someone is going to have to bring it up and we are going to have to take a good look at this," Hook said. The meeting is scheduled for June 10. ■

More Grist...

Also Distinct

English Quebecers may soon be speaking an English so distinct that they will need interpreters in the rest of the Anglophone world. At least, that's the contention of Ronald Sutherland, published in the Toronto *Globe and Mail* on February 17. To prove his point he cites the use of such French words as autoroute, reunion, disponibility, manifestation and syndicate rather than highway, meeting, availability, demonstration or labour union.

"Stop Zapping and SAP to French!"

Know what SAP and MTS are? SAP means secondary audio programming and is a feature of our new television sets. Since the introduction of MTS (multichannel television sound) broadcasters can now add a completely separate sound channel to the regular stereo sound track. Equipment to generate SAP is not expensive; on average it costs little more than $5,000. WNET (PBS's New York flagship) has plans for around-the-clock SAP. Also slated for SAP is simultaneous Spanish translation of the MacNeil-Lehrer Newshour.

Quebec's Anglophone Leaders Adapt to Change

*Kevin Dougherty**

It is undeniable that many among the English establishment have left Quebec, following the shift of Canada's economic centre westward. Francophones now hold the key positions in Quebec's economic life that confer a leadership role, but not all "les Anglais" have gone away.

The transformation of Quebec over the last years from an inward-looking, backward enclave into a modern, outward-looking society has its parallel in the metamorphosis of the dwindling Anglophone elite of the province.

Descendants of the old Westmount families, who founded the banks and railways, still have their clubs and country homes but their profile is lower. Contrary to their image as the "white Rhodesians of Westmount", says Peter Blaikie, past chairman of the Anglophone lobby group Alliance Quebec, the old Anglophone elite was well integrated into Quebec society and, more often than not, its members spoke French. "The reality of Westmount, where a word of French was never spoken, was never accurate," Blaikie says. "There were always a lot of people in what I would have considered the elite community who were bilingual."

Offsetting the steady exodus of English Quebecers to a limited extent has been the immigration to Quebec of new Anglophones and "Allophones" — the term used in Quebec for people whose mother tongue is other than English or French.

Some in the English community have chosen to cut themselves off from Quebec's mainstream. Reacting to Bill 178, banning English from outdoor signs, enough Anglophones turned their backs on the Quebec Liberals in last September's provincial election to elect four Equality Party members to the Quebec National Assembly.

English-speaking Quebecers are split over the Meech Lake Accord with some, like Blaikie, opposing it for fear the distinct society clause could further diminish the position of Quebec Anglophones. Others, such as developer Phil O'Brien, have joined with their French-speaking counterparts in supporting Meech, in what he calls "a major turning point in Quebec because both the English and French have gotten together."

Blaikie was one of the leaders in the fight against Bill 178. But he speaks for many in the English leadership when he says that if Quebec did become independent, he would stay. "I love Quebec. I love Montreal," Blaikie said. "I've said many times that if Quebec were to become an independent state I can't see any reason why I would leave even then."

Institutions

Premier Robert Bourassa likes to boast that Quebec's English minority, with its educational system, three universities and a network of teaching hospitals affiliated with McGill University, is better treated than Francophone minorities in other parts of Canada. Now that they are provincially financed and the English population has fallen, Anglophones are wondering how long they will be preserved.

Outside Montreal it has already happened. The English communities in Quebec's industrial centres, such as Sherbrooke, Shawinigan and Drummondville, have all but disappeared. Cities once known interchangeably by English and French names, such as Seven Islands and Three Rivers, are now simply Sept-Îles and Trois-Rivières.

In Quebec City, where at one point in the 19th century the mayor was English-speaking, the Anglophone presence is invisible. "The children

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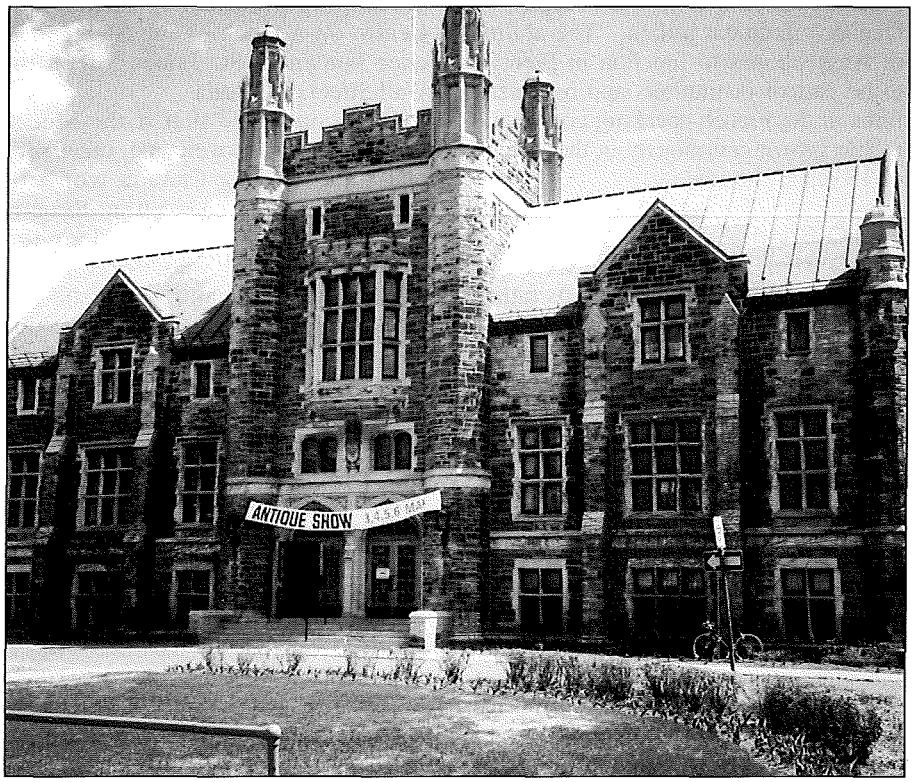

Westmount

moved out and the parents died," explains one former resident of Sillery, Quebec City's equivalent of Westmount.

But Quebec's new Anglophone leaders do not choose to dwell on the past. They speak French, some of them just as well as they speak English. They live in Quebec because they find life in the province agreeable.

Norman Webster and the *Gazette*

Quebec-born Norman Webster, was named editor of Southam's Montreal *Gazette* last year. He used to be editor of the *Globe and Mail* in Toronto, at one time owned by the Webster family.

"Clearly any young person who wants to grow old in Quebec is going to have to speak French," Webster said in an interview. "Anglophone parents, if they stay here, are going to have to make sure that they're bilingual. That's just the bottom line."

He describes editing the *Gazette* as a "fascinating opportunity", adding that he hopes they can make a positive contribution, building bridges between the two linguistic communities over time. With its high profile as Montreal's only English-language daily, the *Gazette* finds itself attacked by Anglophone readers who feel it is cosying up too closely with Francophones. It is perceived by many Francophones as exaggerating the plight of Quebec Anglophones. "Whenever the language issue really heats up I think the *Gazette* becomes a totem that people can throw things at," Webster said. "It signifies the Anglo establishment."

Under Webster's direction the newspaper has become more open to the Francophone reality and more curious about what is happening on the business front and in the cultural life of the province. Billboards to promote the redesigned *Gazette* proclaim "L'Esprit ouvert", its openness.

Webster recalled that when he was growing up in Sherbrooke, the minority Anglophone community in the Eastern Township city went about their lives in English. He learned some French in school and at Bishop's University in Lennoxville, but it wasn't until the mid-1960s when he became the *Globe and Mail* correspondent in Quebec City that he perfected his spoken French. "These days there are more mixed parties than when I lived here before," he said. "People speak both languages interchangeably. You can be talking to the person on your left in English, and then when the soup course comes you switch to the person on your right. It may be in French and it's not a big deal. It's whatever is most practical."

Peter Blaikie

Peter Blaikie grew up in Shawinigan. He remembers that even though Shawinigan was only 10% English-speaking, the majority of the managers and skilled workers and their families, who made up the English community, spoke English only. As a rule, even when English and French children played together, the language used was English, he said. But Blaikie remembers that he always played with French children in French. "I can't explain why that was, it just was. All my education was in English. I've never studied in French. But I always had a number of very charming French lady friends during those adolescent years," he said, explaining the secret he, and many other English Quebecers, used to become bilingual.

At his Montreal law firm, Heenan, Blaikie, where former prime minister Pierre Trudeau is counsel, Blaikie spends most of his working day in French. "This is an office where I would say 70% of the lawyers are Francophone and amongst the staff it's probably 95%," he said. "I have an absolute rule. With the exception of Pierre Trudeau, where our conversations are sort of randomly English and French, I never speak English with a Francophone. Ever."

Blaikie notes that Quebec's public English school system, acting on its own, has made a greater effort in the past decade to turn out bilingual graduates. "I have been fortunate enough to have all my kids go through one or other private school system where the programs are enriched," he said. "I had three girls who each spent about six or seven years with the Ursulines and emerged perfectly fluent in French, who then shifted into the English system and I don't think they are dramatically different from other children.

"My son Anthony is now in grade six at Selwyn House," a private English school. "The entire year is being done in French."

David Johnston

David Johnston, principal and vice-chancellor of McGill University, grew up in Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, and came to McGill 10 years ago from the University of Western Ontario, where he was Dean of Law.

"It saddens me enormously," Johnston said of the resolution adopted by Sault Ste. Marie's city council in January, declaring the Ontario community unilingual English. "Aside from the French-English issue, any kind of message that suggests a lack of welcoming to differences is not in the traditions of

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Sault Ste. Marie," Johnston said. "I played every sport there was [in the Sault] and I guess we had every name in the alphabet on each team."

He believes the Canadian experiment, trying to build a bilingual, multicultural country, is one of the particular attractions of the country and he worries that Canada could lose that. "I think the majority of people in Quebec understand what an attractive country this is and it is possible for the French language, the French culture, to be not only secure but respected within Canada and much more so than other scenarios that are offered to us which suggest that if there were separation of Quebec, within 15 or 20 years, Quebec would become part of the United States."

Like Blaikie, Johnston has brought his children up to be bilingual. Two of his daughters have gone to Collège Jean de Brébeuf, the school where Pierre Trudeau and other members of the Francophone elite were educated. His eldest daughter speaks six languages and wants to settle in Montreal after spending a year in China. "There's just one place in the world where she wants to live and that's Montreal, particularly if she can have an international career from Montreal," Johnston said.

Victor Goldbloom

Dr. Victor Goldbloom was a minister in Robert Bourassa's government before its 1976 loss to the Parti Québécois and he took a lot of flak over Bill 22, Bourassa's language law which was a forerunner to Bill 101 and Bill 178. He now heads the Quebec government's Fondation pour la recherche scientifique.

"People who try to build or maintain relationships tend to get a great deal of flak from their own community which says, 'You are not expressing our concerns. You are trying too hard to understand the other person's concerns and not hard enough to express and convey ours'," Goldbloom said. "There was a 15-year process between Bill 22 and Bill 178 and over those 15 years people like myself and like Clifford Lincoln and others in between tried to hold things together and tried to restrain the excesses on the governmental side and to allay the concerns of people in the English-speaking community," he added.

Goldbloom learned basic French in school and university. He perfected his French as a member of Quebec's Corporation of Physicians before he gravitated towards politics. His fluency in French ensured that he was accepted in Quebec's political milieu. "The ability of Anglophones to function in French, to be part of institutions and organizations in the French-speaking community, has grown enormously in the last 10 or 15 years," he said.

Phil O'Brien

Phil O'Brien grew up in the west-end Montreal suburb of Lachine. His father spoke French to him and his mother spoke English. He is completely at ease in both languages, although like other Quebec Anglophones he sometimes resorts to French terms in mid-sentence when speaking English.

O'Brien went to an English Catholic high school in Lachine and says most of his generation of Anglophones have left Quebec. "People talk about the Anglos of Montreal. There's none left. Of my high school, I think there is only one other [graduate] left in town."

When business confidence was shaken after the Parti Québécois came to power in 1976, O'Brien thought of leaving. Instead he stayed on, becoming president of the largely French-speaking Chambre de Commerce. He is now developing Montreal's World Trade Centre on a block of rue St-Jacques, once known as St. James Street, the Wall Street of Canada.

He is concerned that if the Meech Lake hurdle isn't overcome, other serious issues facing Canada won't be resolved. "Where do we want to be in the year 2025? We've got to look forward. If we don't we deserve to fall apart." But he remains optimistic that Quebec's English- and French-speaking communities can work together. "I think you're seeing more and more opportunity for Anglo kids in Francophone corporations in Quebec because they need people who are culturally in contact with the rest of North America," he said. "The Italian kids and the Greek kids are certainly taking advantage of it and whatever is left of the Anglos should be taking advantage of it as well.

"I dream in English," he said, trying to clarify his own identity. "I'm more of an Anglo than I am a French Canadian. I'm a Québécois. Twenty years from now everyone is going to say they are Québécois and I guess they're going to be able to dream in both languages." ■

DEATHS

Jean Darbelnet

We learned with regret of the death, on March 12, 1990, of Jean Darbelnet, professor and linguist. His teaching, lectures and writings had a major influence on several generations of students, translators, interpreters and linguists. His works on our two official languages resulted in a better understanding of their differences, similarities and peculiar genius.

Georges Forest

"Everyone was mindful of the coincidence: that Georges Forest, one of the founding fathers of the Festival du Voyageur, should die in the midst of the Festival, the major celebration of the vitality of Franco-Manitobans.

"The symbolism of his death cannot have escaped Manitobans, Francophones and Anglophones alike, who are familiar with his struggle. Once again, and for the last time, Georges Forest has succeeded in creating a vivid impression."

So began the tribute to Georges Forest by Bernard Bocquel in *La Liberté. Language and Society* joins western Canadians in paying homage to one of their sons who fought to defend a concept of Canada that is also the vision of the federal government and of the Commissioner of Official Languages.

Dialogue and Youth: Initiatives in New Brunswick

*Don Hoyt**

Young New Brunswickers from both official language groups are setting an example for their elders.

Of several initiatives announced last year by Premier Frank McKenna to defuse language tensions in New Brunswick, the most promising have involved the province's youth.

The reason is explained by Stephanie Kuttner, a grade 12 French immersion student at Fredericton High School and president of the New Brunswick Youth Council.

Unprejudiced Youth

"It is unnatural for young people to have prejudices," says Kuttner. "But when we are surrounded by a society where myths are publicized and the accent is placed on the problems, how can youth not learn those prejudices? It's not the youth who have the prejudices. We're open to language in any form."

She and another FHS immersion student, Andrew Scott, set the mobilization of New Brunswick young people in motion.

They showed up uninvited last year at a government-sponsored conference of 100 prominent adults from the two official linguistic communities, called Dialogue New Brunswick, and quickly won centre stage prominence of their own.

They proposed the first resolution passed by the participants. With unanimous approval, the motion urged that the necessary resources be provided by the government to encourage dialogue among young people.

Legislative seminar

It came to fruition in March when 58 delegates from 35 English and French high schools occupied all the seats in the legislature for a three-day legislative seminar and mock parliament.

Photo: A. Gardon / Réflexion Photothèque

Those activities, and ample opportunities for the students to exchange views, bilingually, in social situations, paid off for everyone.

Said Philippe Ouelette, president of the student body of Polyvalente Thomas-Albert in the bilingual town of Grand Falls: "I feel really better. I wasn't afraid when I came but I wondered how Anglophone people would respond. Now, I feel really convinced that we're going to work this out."

Fredericton's Andrew Scott added: "Everyone here has made a commitment that conflicts over language are not going to exist."

One of the most emotional statements came from Paul Lenarczyk of Fredericton, who arrived in Canada from Poland six years ago. He prided himself on being the first person ever to speak Polish in the New Brunswick legislature, voicing in his native language the words "freedom, equality, fraternity", adding that "that's what I think this dialogue is about."

Exchange programs

While the legislative seminar was the highest profile youth event to date, hundreds of students in the dualistic school system are involved in exchange programs between the official language communities.

They involve such communities as Saint John and Caraquet, St. Stephen and Tracadie and Edmundston and Fredericton.

Often, students on exchange visits take in sittings of the Legislative Assembly. On one occasion, Premier McKenna proudly pointed out that he and his daughter were hosting a student from an Edmundston group, which included the daughter of Tourism Minister Roland Beaulieu.

Influencing their elders

Together with budgetary commitments to expanded second-language training in the schools, the exchange programs and opportunities for dialogue among youth are beginning to pay off with their elders.

Brian Jenkins is a 41-year-old forest ranger in the all-English village of Florenceville. Although he had virtually no knowledge of French, Jenkins asked if he could spend three weeks in Edmundston, where 90% of the population claims French as its mother tongue.

"I got the idea from my two children, who have taken part in the education department's linguistic student exchange," he said. "I'm not doing this to get ahead in my job. I just wanted to learn the language."

Jenkins is an example of the effect New Brunswick young people hope to have on the older generation.

One English-speaking student put it this way at the conclusion of the legislative seminar: "We have set a good example for our parents. We've proven it is easy to get along. I hope they will follow in our footsteps before we follow in theirs."

She echoed the thoughts of Kelly MacDonald, from Sussex, a totally English community. "I'm glad we can build bridges, not walls. I hope we can come together again to discuss our similarities, not differences." ■

***Don Hoyt is a columnist for the Saint John *Telegraph-Journal*.**

In Western Europe, English Is Asserting Its Influence; Will the Importance of German in Eastern Europe Ensure the Status of French?

*Normand Labrie**

The official ideology of the European Economic Community is that of multilingualism. Some languages, however, seem to be more equal than others.

January 1, 1993, is an important date for Europe. That's when all the provisions of the Act establishing a common market will take effect in the 12 member countries of the European Economic Community (EEC) — the free movement of people, goods, services and capital from country to country and the gradual suppression of borders between the member countries.

The continentalization of European markets is leading to a form of political unification that some refer to, by analogy, as the "United States of Europe". The experience of the European Economic Community is the most advanced existing model of "supranationality", a concept to which new signatories of the agreements will have to refer. Since emphasis is usually placed on the economic aspects of the agreements a basic question remains obscured — that of the relationship of languages within the new community.

There is, in fact, no mention of language rights in the Act. It should be borne in mind that the Treaty of Rome, which deals, essentially, with economics, does not apply to the field of education. Consequently, the question of languages, with the exception of the languages used in the European institutions, has remained under the exclusive jurisdiction of each member country. Moreover, the attempts made in the past to integrate language into the regulations of the EEC have generally run up against a veto by member countries anxious to preserve their complete sovereignty in this delicate area of national interest.

***Normand Labrie has a Ph.D. in Sociolinguistics and is doing post-doctoral studies at the Centre de recherche sur le plurilinguisme in Brussels.**

The linguistic plan

The free circulation of goods requires linguistic support, if only with regard to labelling, billing or instructions for use. As for the free circulation of people and their right to settle freely, not only will these individuals be called upon to use the languages spoken in their new environment, but they will also help to introduce multilingualism there. That is why the issue of linguistic arrangements will become important for the Europe of 1993.

While English and French are the only two obligatory working languages within the Commission and its institutions, the community has nine official languages: German, English, Danish, Spanish, French, Greek, Italian, Dutch and Portuguese. Official documents issued by the institutions of the EEC must appear in these languages. In addition, working sessions are conducted in the languages of all the participants and simultaneous translation enables all to speak their own language. To facilitate the enormous burden of translation that results from the use of nine official languages, 43 million European Currency Units (ECUs) — $60 million Canadian — were earmarked from 1982 to 1990 for the EUROTRA automated translation research program. The Commission's EURODICAUTOM terminology bank now contains 470,000 entries in an average of five or six languages.

Each member state retains its full linguistic autonomy. Thus, some countries may be considered officially unilingual, such as France, which makes no mention of language in the constitution of the Fifth Republic (1958), while others are bilingual or multilingual, such as Belgium, where the existence of three language communities — Dutch, French and German — is recognized officially.

The minorities

All the member countries of the EEC, whether multilingual or unilingual, except for Portugal, have regional linguistic minorities within their territory. The number of linguistic minorities within the entire EEC is estimated at 35 to 37. Some are border area populations whose language enjoys official status in the neighbouring country, like the Alsatians, who speak a variety of German. Other regional langauge minorities are more isolated, like the speakers of Breton in France or of Sardinian in Italy, since their language is not spoken anywhere else in the EEC.

The preservation of such a rich heritage calls for heroic measures. Although a relatively modest step, the creation in 1982 of the European Bureau for Lesser-Used Languages represents the first community initiative in this direction. However, "trans-European" languages such as Yiddish, spoken by Jewish communities around the world, and Romany, spoken by Gypsy communities, are not represented.

All together, the 12 European countries that are signatories of the Act have approximately 13 million foreigners within their borders to whom they grant immigrant status. Each country has its own history of immigration. Thus, there is a new Arab minority in Italy, a Surinamese minority in the Netherlands and an Indo-Pakistani minority in Great Britain. The social condition of the various immigrant groups ranges from that of economic refugee to very well-off.

The poor relation

Despite the many mother tongue instruction programs developed by various member countries, the question of mother tongues threatens to remain the poor relation of Europe, no matter how multilingual it may be.

The LINGUA program, approved last July by the Conference of Ministers of Education of the Twelve, is highly indicative of the relationships that will prevail among languages in the Europe of 1993. It provides for assistance of 200 million ECUs ($280 million Canadian) over a five-year period, in the form of exchange scholarships for students and teachers, to "promote a quantitative and qualitative improvement in the knowledge of foreign languages in order to develop communication skills within the Community." The languages in question are the lesser-used or lesser-taught European languages. Without explicitly excluding English (the language most taught as a second language), it applies only to the teaching of the nine official languages of the European Community, with the addition of Irish and Luxembourgian.

The future

As in many areas of the globe, one language is asserting itself more than the others in the European Community: English. The "international" language, thanks to American influence and the development of new technologies, and the first second language in most EEC countries, English appears to be the lingua franca, the "modern-day Latin". Would it not be more economical to abandon all the languages of mainly national scope and adopt a single practical and efficient means of communication that is, in any case, known by a great many people? But the choice of English as a lingua franca has no basis in official documents or in the political will of the member countries. Europe is not seeking uniformity but harmonization. While it wants economic union, it is banking on cultural diversity. Thus there is no question of the European countries renouncing their individuality.

The official ideology is that of multilingualism. As early as the time of the negotiations for Britain's entry into the EEC in 1973, President Pompidou had taken precautions to ensure that the introduction of English would not supplant French, then the most commonly used language in community institutions. To this day, the principal bulwark against the massive use of English is the clear political position of France in favour of the multilingualism to which most of its partners subscribe.

While the costs associated with multilingualism are not overly burdensome, they are nevertheless real. Political decisions are therefore required so as to make certain that steps are taken to ensure that the European languages are learned and used by European civil servants, by the employees of major firms and by citizens in general. If insufficient resources are set aside to accomplish this effectively, the first tangible result of multilingualism might only be to improve the knowledge and use of English. The chief obstacle to multilingualism is inadequacy of the human and financial resources allocated. This is already a concern in Europe, as evidenced by the recent complaints by the battalion of translators (some 900) in the European Parliament, who say they are unable to cope with the task at hand.

New developments in the East

Current developments in Eastern Europe, however, might work in favour of multilingualism. The Europe of 1993 is in fact only the initial step in a much larger process of integration. In a second phase, new members will have to be accepted into the single market. Already there is talk of a Europe having a single centre or with variable geometry.

The reunified Germany will have 77 million speakers of German (Austria and Switzerland bring this figure to nearly 90 million). Moreover, German-speaking minorities are scattered in various Eastern European countries and help to reinforce that language's reach. Since German is the first second language in many Central European countries, it will no doubt be the language most suitable for economic co-operation with them. Some American multinationals are already using their affiliates or partners in the Federal Republic of Germany to penetrate the Central European markets.

The increased importance of German — a surprise to many observers — would no doubt be the salvation of European multilingualism. German, the lingua franca of Central Europe, serving as a counterweight to English, the lingua franca of Western Europe, could be the catalyst for multilingualism and hence for the preservation of an important status for French. ■

(Our translation.)

Photo: Rawi Maur / Réflexion Photothèque

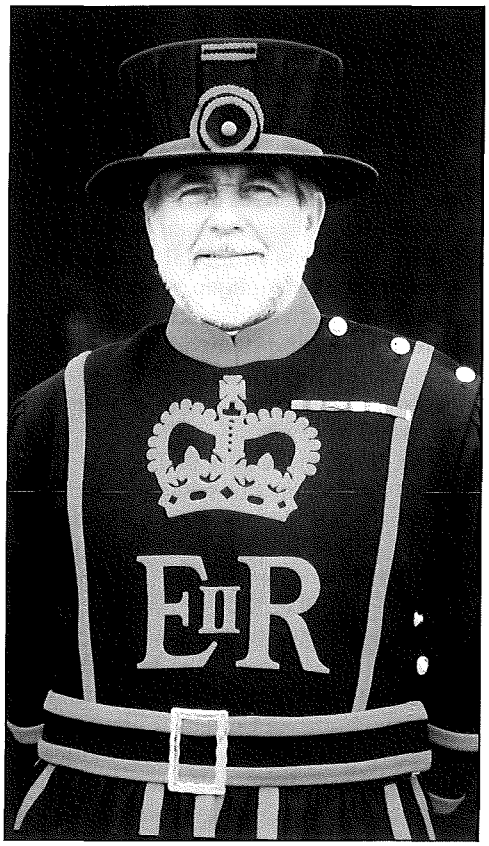

Photo: S. Burton Hori / Réflexion Photothèque

Photo: Y. Tessier / Réflexion Photothèque

The Supreme Court Clarifies Minority Language Rights

Eight years have elapsed since the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, which officially sanctioned the right of minorities to instruction in their own language, came into effect. Since then, extensive litigation has been carried on in most of the provinces, with the exceptions of New Brunswick and Newfoundland. While various decisions were made by the courts, no definitive interpretation had yet been developed, although a broad consensus seemed to be emerging from the jurisprudence.

In Quebec

The Supreme Court of Canada had previously ruled in 1984, in the case of a number of Quebec Protestant school boards, that the Charter guarantees could not be reduced by provincial legislation, regardless of whether the legislation predated the Charter. The Court thereby established that Canadian citizens who had received their primary school education in English anywhere in Canada could send their children to English-language public schools in Quebec.

In other provinces

Various provisions of education acts and the regulations under them were declared incompatible with Section 23 of the Charter in some provincial references (Prince Edward Island 1988, Manitoba 1990), and in cases brought by Francophone parents (Saskatchewan 1988), while other decisions held that there was no incompatibility (Nova Scotia 1988 and 1989).

Nevertheless, the conclusions to be drawn to this point seemed to favour the view that the right of minorities to their own schools implied the right to manage and control them (Ontario 1984) and that the determination of the practical meaning of "where numbers warrant" could not be left to the discretion of school boards but was the responsibility of legislative assemblies or governments. The latter had to take account of comparable situations and of the actual needs of the minority community (Ontario 1984). The minority had the right to separate facilities in which the quality of instruction was comparable to that in majority facilities (Ontario 1986 and 1987).

Quebec, New Brunswick and, to a lesser extent, Ontario already offered minorities the opportunity to participate actively in the management of their schools. In addition, these provinces went well beyond the established numerical criteria by striving to offer instruction in their own language to all eligible children. The other provinces had various thresholds for the number of children and did not offer any participation in management.

In response to a request from Manitoba concerning the compatibility of its legislation with Section 23 of the Charter, that province's Court of Appeal issued a very divided advisory opinion earlier this year that was negative with regard to minority management.

The Mahé decision

In Alberta in 1985 Francophone parents of students at the École Georges-et-Julia-Bugnet in Edmonton asked the Court of Queen's Bench to recognize the right of their children to receive instruction in their own language out of public funds and in a facility administered by a Francophone school board. The court of first instance said that it agreed with the principles but did not rule on their concrete application. Its decision was, on the whole, confirmed on appeal in 1987.

The Supreme Court of Canada has finally ruled on the whole question, thereby establishing a veritable code of ethics on the issue for the provinces. The Supreme Court in fact unanimously recognized in March 1990 that the general purpose of Section 23 of the Charter is to preserve the two official languages of Canada and the cultures they represent and to ensure that each language flourishes in the provinces where one of them is the minority language. The means of achieving this goal is to grant the right of official minorities to instruction in their own language everywhere in Canada. Section 23 is therefore designed to correct the progressive erosion of official language minorities and to give effect to the concept of the "equal partnership" of the two language groups in the area of education.

In order to achieve its purpose, Section 23 grants a general right to instruction in the minority language. There is, however, a "sliding scale", the upper level of the range of possible constitutional requirements being, where the number of students involved warrants, the right for them to receive instruction in minority language educational facilities provided out of public funds and managed by the minority, while the term "instruction" indicates the lower level of the scale. Nothing, however, prevents a government from providing more than the minimum required under this section.

Where numbers warrant, Section 23 grants parents the right to manage and control educational facilities where their children receive instruction. These are two elements vital to ensuring that their culture flourishes.

The degree of management and control intended may, in some circumstances and depending on the number of students, justify the existence of a separate school board. But this is not necessarily the best means of achieving the basic objective, although it is essential that the minority language group have control over the aspects of education that concern it or that affect its language and culture.

Although not sufficient to justify a separate school board, the number of students may be large enough to justify representation of the linguistic minority on an existing school board. Such representation should be guaranteed and the number of representatives at least proportional to the number of students. The minority representatives should also have the exclusive power to take decisions concerning instruction in their language and the facilities in which this instruction is provided. This would include, for example, the expenditure of funds, the appointment and direction of administrators, instructional programs, the recruitment and assignment of staff and the conclusion of agreements for education and related services.

With the appropriate degree of management the quality of instruction provided to the minority should, in principle, be more or less equal, without being identical, to that provided to the majority, and adequate public funds

should be allocated for it. The management in question should be exercised by parents belonging to the minority or by their representatives. Finally, in situations where the number of students does not justify representation on a school board, other degrees of management and control may be necessary.

Finally, taking up the concrete situation in the case at hand, the justices ruled that, at the present level of demand in Edmonton, a sufficient number of students exists to justify, in both pedagogical and financial terms, a separate school such as presently exists, as well as the establishment of a continuing course of instruction at the primary and secondary levels. The number of students likely to attend this school is not, however, sufficient at present to justify the creation of an independent school board. There is thus a right to representation on the Separate School Board and to a degree of management and control by parents of the minority language group.

Since there is no such representation at present, the province must enact legislation (and regulations, if necessary) that are consistent with the requirements of Section 23.

The Court rejected the argument advanced in the proceeding that the right to management and control contravenes Section 17 of the Alberta Act, 1905, concerning denominational schools. It pointed out that what was involved was simply management and control over a non-denominational aspect of education, namely, the language of instruction.

The Court also found that, although some of the contested sections of the school legislation do not guarantee that Section 23 rights will be respected, neither do they prevent the authorities from taking action to comply with the Charter. The Court feared, moreover, that if the School Act were invalidated, the authorities would temporarily be unable to modify the system to make it comply with the requirements of Section 23. After observing that the real obstacle to the exercise of Francophone rights is not to be found in the Act but in the inaction of public authorities, the Court stated that the province should delay no longer in putting in place an appropriate minority language education scheme.

In concluding, the Court ruled that an existing regulation requiring that at least approximately 20% of course hours be devoted to English language education poses a problem. The rights conferred under Section 23 include the general right to receive instruction in French; if some mandatory instruction in English may constitute one of the "reasonable limits" provided for in Section 1 of the Charter the province has not proved that it is necessary to provide a full 300 minutes a week of English instruction in Francophone schools. In the circumstances, this regulation therefore is not considered justified by Section 1 of the Charter and should not be maintained.

In this decision, the Supreme Court unequivocally assigned to the provinces the responsibility for creating equitable and workable systems in several delicate areas where it is not easy to reach a consensus. It nevertheless foresaw the need for other litigation if the spirit of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms is not respected. *J.R.*

(Our translation.)

Saskatchewan: The Governance Question

In August 1989 the Saskatchewan Minister of Education, Ray Meiklejohn, accepted the recommendations of the Gallant Committee on the governance of French schools and gave notice of legislation that would give the Fransaskois control over their own schools and a French school system by September 1990.

On April 23, 1990, a month after the now famous judgment of the Supreme Court on the Mahé-Bugnet case, the Minister announced that, because of legal and legislative complications, the governance component for Fransaskois schools in Saskatchewan would not be introduced during the current session of the legislature.

Prime Minister Brian Mulroney wrote Premier Grant Devine offering him all "necessary federal help" to implement the Bill allowing Francophones to manage their own schools. The Commissioner of Official Languages wrote to the Premier to express his disappointment at the delay and to encourage Premier Devine to reiterate Saskatchewan's fundamental commitment to its minority group and to the early implementation of a school system to meet its needs. Various Francophone minority groups have also communicated with Premier Devine, voicing their dismay about the delay and its effect on the minority community and its schools.

The Commissioner remains confident that the Saskatchewan government will resolve its difficulties in an expeditious manner and that the good will and good work of the Gallant Committee will come to fruition soon in Saskatchewan.

Letters

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West of Hull, Opposite Ottawa

A reading of "West of Hull and Opposite Ottawa: Aylmer, Quebec" (No. 30) ...calls for comment. Here is some.

With the exception of Impératif français, the author, Tom Sloan, interviewed almost exclusively people and representatives of organizations known to be favourable to the privileged status of the Anglophone minority in Aylmer.

The article has nothing to say about the problems faced by Francophones in their struggle to win respect for themselves and their language....

Language and Society highlights only one aspect of the linguistic situation in Aylmer, to the point of giving the impression that it wishes to attach special importance to the demographic and residential status of one linguistic group.

How is the article to be interpreted when, in the conclusion, it cites the case of a *unilingual English* resident of Aylmer who has been living in the region for 20 years and is still unilingual(!) and who states that he appreciates "the full co-operation that Quebecers have always shown?"....

An analysis presenting all aspects of the linguistic and cultural situation in Aylmer would provide a more complete and objective understanding of the entire issue.

...Francophones constitute nearly 70% of the population in Aylmer and, as in all of Pontiac, are often inadequately or poorly served in French and in many cases deprived of services in French.

...The arrival of large numbers of Francophones...who have chosen to settle in Aylmer has helped to give the city a more French and Québécois appearance....

Will *Language and Society* present the other side of the issue by dealing with the situation of the Francophones and the Francophone minorities of Aylmer and Pontiac?

Jean-Jacques Perreault
Aylmer, Quebec

Census Statistics and Bilingualism

Since 1971 Statistics Canada has been collecting data on bilingualism based on the census question: "Can you speak English or French well enough to conduct a conversation?" Social scientists have often been sceptical about the significance of the resulting data in view of the question's relatively lax formulation and because of the subjective nature of the answers, each respondent being left to self evaluate his or her personal linguistic abilities.

Statistics Canada's chief statistician has recently told the Standing Joint Committee on Official Languages that were the census question somewhat tightened up by asking whether the respondent is able to "conduct a fairly long conversation on different topics" a significant decline would be observed in the number of bilinguals compared to the 1986 census estimate. Results from a nation-wide test carried out in 1988, which are now available from Statistics Canada on request, show indeed that adding the words "fairly long" and "on different topics" would reduce the number of bilingual Canadians by approximately 25%.

A knowledgeable observer of the Canadian language scene would expect that this drop in bilingualism would affect the self-declared ability to speak French more greatly than that of English. This appears in fact to be the case. The text indicates that the tighter formulation of the census question would reduce by one-third the number of non-Francophone Canadians declaring themselves able to speak French, but by only one-ninth the number of non-Anglophones able to speak English. In Quebec the number of Francophones able to speak English would drop by one-sixth, while in the rest of Canada the number of Anglophones able to speak French would be practically halved.

These are, of course, only estimates, as the looser formulation of the official languages question will no doubt appear again on the 1991 census questionnaire. It will then once more behoove each user of Canadian census data to interpret the results accordingly.

Charles Castonguay
Hull, Quebec