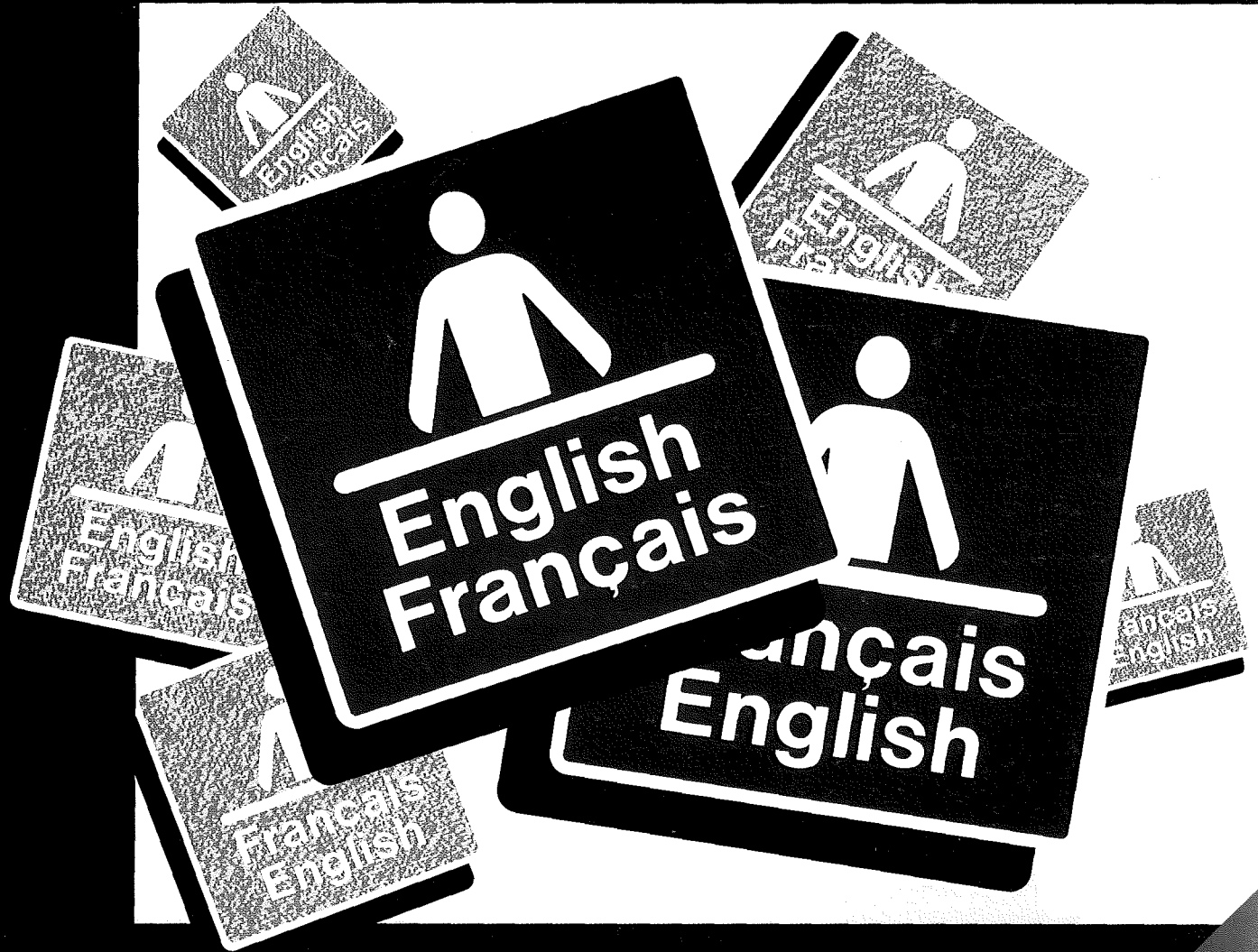


# LANGUAGE

## AND SOCIETY



*CONFIDENCE IS SHOWN THROUGH DEEDS*

*THE COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE AND YOUNG CANADIANS*

*WINNERS OF THE GREAT CONTEST*

*Panorama:  
IS CANADA'S CAPITAL  
TRULY BILINGUAL?*

*After Meech Lake*

# Facing the Future with Confidence

*Fuller recognition of our linguistic  
duality cannot in itself save Canada,  
but without it the country would surely  
be on the road to ruin.*

No sooner had the Meech Lake Accord failed than some were revelling in the prospect of finally seeing the French disappear from their cereal boxes, if not from a Canada from which Quebec would be excluded. Others were fervently calling for independence. While rejecting these extremes, many Canadians are understandably worried and uncertain. Would 20 years of substantial but imperfect progress towards the recognition of our linguistic duality in its many forms be undermined? Are our minorities, who thought that finally there was light at the end of the tunnel, once again threatened? We must have the courage to ask these questions bluntly and answer them clear-headedly. Will Canadians go so far as to repudiate their linguistic and cultural heritage? Such a waste would be so foolish as to be almost unthinkable. We should remember that our hard-won language rights are, in the words of the Supreme Court, "a well-known species of human rights." To attack these rights would be to assail our fundamental values, our freedom and our tolerance.

The current crisis, however, may yield new options for the country, new and productive arrangements. We believed and have stated repeatedly since June 6, 1987, that the Meech Lake Accord, in confirming the distinct character of Quebec, in guaranteeing the future of the only province with a Francophone majority, consolidated and made permanent its membership in the Canadian family. Despite shortcomings that could have been rectified later, we held that it marked real progress in terms of language duality and the status of the minorities. It is still too early to measure the consequences

of its failure. As for the reasons for it, as we indicated in an item in our last issue, they seem to us to be attributable to the constitutional amending formula applicable to the Accord rather than to a supposed rejection of Quebec "by English Canada". We firmly hope that Canada will hold together. The full recognition of language duality in all its aspects is one of the main elements of our cohesion.

In the months and years to come, we will have to devote all our will, imagination and perseverance to safeguarding these achievements and to building the future. The preservation of basic language guarantees at the federal and provincial level, as well as their effective reinforcement, will be a sign of our confidence in Canada. Is it not in the interest of all our communities to hold these safeguards as inviolable? Demography, linguistic needs and expectations have not changed. It would be shameful and unfair to consider the Francophones outside Quebec and the Anglophones in Quebec (who are numerically almost equal) mere pawns in a larger game, have them become the helpless hostages of our constitutional impasse. Surely we must look to our capacity for mutual respect as the basis for any agreement between our communities.

Is the climate as bad as many believe? Fortunately, as these lines are being written in early July, only Saskatchewan seems to be mulling over decisions about implementing constitutional minority educational rights

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## 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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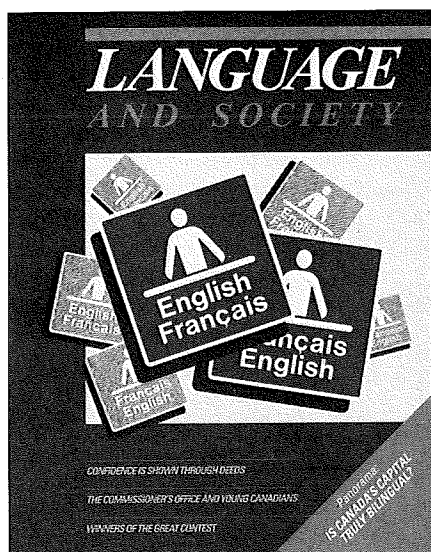
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**Cover:**  
*Language and Society* urges governments and all interested parties to continue with progress in the process of linguistic reform in order to rebuild confidence in Canada's future. The official languages symbol, developed by the Treasury Board, reflects this message.

**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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confirmed by the Supreme Court only a few months ago. The premier of Quebec set the right tone in his speech of June 23, dealing with plans for the future of his province: "We must take into account... the vitality of our cultural communities, the historic and

*The crisis may yield new options.*

unique role in Quebec of the Anglophone community, as well as the help that we can give to the Francophone communities outside Quebec." On June 15 Franco-Columbians, the federal government, the British Columbia government, the city of Vancouver and the Quebec government inaugurated the much-needed Maison de la Francophonie in Vancouver.

Shortly before, the British Columbia government had announced its intention to set up a committee to ensure the implementation of minority educational rights. Manitoba was taking similar steps.

Early in July Ontario's Minister of Education announced that a committee would be set up to facilitate full governance of French-language schools. Quebec is pursuing initiatives to deliver the social and health services in English guaranteed by its Bill 142. The Acadians of New Brunswick still hope that efforts to give constitutional recognition to the equality of their province's linguistic communities will bear fruit. Moreover, the demographic and social foundations of the Francophone communities in New Brunswick and in Ontario seem too solid to ever be undermined. Other provinces, such as Prince Edward Island, also have policies and achievements worthy of note. It would be all

to their advantage to do more, and more quickly. The reform of our linguistic arrangements has caused a "revolution in our attitudes", according to historian Blair Neatby. Why not take it to the limit? What is to be gained by reverting to old attitudes and old behaviours?

In his speech on the failure of the Meech Lake Accord, Mr. Mulroney stated that his government was going to develop programs designed to bring Canadians together and "bridge the solitudes in which so many English- and French-speaking Canadians still live." Well and good! But six years have passed since a Speech from the Throne promised language renewal, three years have slipped by since the tabling of the draft of a new Official Languages Act, and two years since its proclamation. The Department of the Secretary of State has done its share, shown new vigour in coming to the aid of minorities. However, although there have been numerous statements since 1988 about the imminent tabling of the regulations needed to give the Act full effect, nothing has happened. Moreover, nothing or next to nothing seems to have been done to write the policies that would provide guidance to senior public servants and get the administrative machinery rolling. We are still waiting. Our minorities grow impatient with promises about federal services in their language, so much so that Parliament's instrument — the Standing Joint Committee on Official Languages — after vainly seeking to have the two ministers chiefly responsible appear before it, tabled a report, none too soon. On June 14 the Committee "strongly urged the government to table the draft regulations before Parliament, as soon as possible...."

It is high time that the federal government stated loud and clear its confidence in and

commitment to the future of the country, in practical terms, by developing a comprehensive plan, by adopting the necessary regulations, by issuing directives and by taking all the steps required to make the Official Languages Act the instrument of justice and

*Confidence is shown through deeds.*

conciliation that it should be. Far from being a Procrustean bed, federal language legislation has sought above all to give our official languages communities their due (beginning with the millions of Quebecers) and to correct real inequalities in the status of English and French. The federal government has a legitimate and crucial role to play in this area; it must do so actively, courageously, as soon as possible.

This issue contains warm accounts by Canadians of their attachment to their land. They and many others have faith in its future and in the value of its linguistic duality. They believe in our will to live together. Although the gap between the two language communities seems to have widened on some points, a survey conducted early in July by Canadian Facts for the *Globe and Mail* and the CBC reveals that two-thirds of Canadians indicated that they still support the recognition of English and French as official languages everywhere in Canada. It is easy to imagine what results might be achieved if Canadians were better informed.

We ask the federal government and the provinces to show the same confidence. And confidence is shown through deeds. ■

# Can We Get It Together?

John Halstead\*

*The author is convinced that Canadians will solve their problems and set the world an example of tolerance and democracy.*

**I**t is a paradox of this second half of the twentieth century that, while the world is becoming more and more of a "global village", more and more emphasis is being placed on individual and group rights. In one direction, there is a centralizing trend, as states co-operate more and more closely together in order to create international mechanisms and institutions which are necessary to meet the demands of interdependence. In the other direction, there is a decentralizing trend, as states try to meet the demands of citizens, individually and collectively, who feel ignored or disadvantaged by the homogenizing effect of a faceless and faraway bureaucracy.

## Practical limitations

These trends have had a particular impact on Canada. In the interests of international co-operation Canada has accepted practical limitations on its freedom of national action. At the same time there has been substantial progress in Canada towards enshrining in law the inalienable human rights which every individual should enjoy, and towards recognizing that

the rule of the majority must be tempered by respect for the values and interests of the minority. In the process, however, the definition of Canadian interests has been de-emphasized in deference to broader international interests, and de-emphasized again in deference to narrower individual and group interests.

## Rights and collectivities

What has received much less attention is the other side of the coin: first, that a member of the international community can contribute most effectively to international co-operation from a solid base of its own identity and well-being; second, that with minority rights go responsibilities to the larger collectivity; and third, that with human rights go social responsibilities. It is a matter of balance. The freedom of individuals to do as they please must be balanced against the freedom of others to do the same, thus necessitating the acceptance of limitations by all. The same goes for minorities. In the last analysis the aggregation of individual and minority rights would be self-defeating if it rendered impossible the maintenance of the collective solidarity necessary

to safeguard those rights, in one direction, and to promote international co-operation, in the other.

The crucial question in practice is of course how the collectivity is to be defined. What elements should it comprise? What criteria should it meet? Language and ethnicity should evidently enter into the calculation, and their importance should not be underestimated. But there are other elements which must also be taken into account, such as geography and history, political and social values and economic interests. If these are not present, neither language nor ethnicity can suffice to guarantee the cohesion of the collectivity. The decisive factor in defining a collectivity and in maintaining its cohesion, I submit, is the feeling of its members that the things they have in common are more important than the things which divide them, and that their collectivity is the best available means of protecting their shared values and satisfying their common needs at acceptable cost and risk.

## The space called Canada

How then are the diverse people who occupy the space we call Canada to define their collectivity or collectivities in North America? Is it to be in terms of the many ethnic groups, or the two main language groups, or the provinces, or a Canadian commonwealth, or a North American economic zone? There are things to be said in favour of all these formulas. The native peoples,

for example, have legitimate claims to some form of self-government, although economic factors put limits on the degree of independence which is practical. The Francophones of Canada, who perceive themselves as a minority not just in Canada but in a North American English-speaking majority, evidently feel most at home in Quebec, where they constitute a distinct society and command a political majority. For the Anglophones of Canada the situation is more complicated, both because their identity is divided between the provinces, the regions and the country as a whole, and because recent immigration has made them even more diverse. And, for Canadians in general, North America is becoming an increasingly integrated area, not only economically but also culturally and to some extent socially, because of the close, comprehensive and complex nature of the Canada-United States relationship and the impact of cross-border flows of people, goods and ideas.

## A country of minorities

Canada is thus a country, not of a majority and a minority, but of many minorities, none of which can be decisive politically except in coalition with others. But Canada is in turn a minority in North America, sharing with the American majority a strong superficial impression of similarity but distinguished by important differences — differences which arise not only from our linguistic duality but also from our geography and history, political and social values, cultural make-up and economic interests. And it is these distinguishing marks which have so far provided the glue to keep our far-flung confederation together.

## Evolution vs. revolution

Canada was created in defiance not only of the American



\*John Halstead's last two diplomatic posts before retirement were as Ambassador to the Federal Republic of Germany, 1975-80, and to NATO in Brussels, 1980-82. He teaches at the School of Foreign Service, Georgetown University, Washington, and at the Norman Paterson School of International Affairs, Carleton University, Ottawa.

"manifest destiny" but also of geography, and Canadians have so far been prepared to pay an economic price for their identity. Canadian historical experience is evolutionary rather than revolutionary — Canadians achieved their independence by negotiation rather than by fighting and their national unity by the coming together of two peoples who for centuries had been enemies and who have had to renew their compact repeatedly by mutual readjustment. Thus Canadians have "lived with" their problems, while Americans have "solved" theirs, sometimes by force. Canadian

*Today  
Canadians  
stand at a  
crossroad.*

political concepts are not the same as the American — while the U.S. Constitution speaks of "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness", the Canadian speaks of "peace, order and good government." The "French fact" and the multicultural mosaic also distinguish Canada from the American melting pot. And, finally, Canada's international interests are characterized primarily by considerations of trade and aid rather than by those of strategy and ideology.

**Integration and asymmetry**

At the same time the integration process in which Canada is involved in North America is hard to manage because of the openness of our society and the asymmetry of the bilateral relationship, reinforced by the combined effect of the disparity of power and the disparity of

information and knowledge about each other. Not only is Canada a minority in North America, but it lacks the political levers available to the minorities within Canada to bring their views to bear. There is no "Canada constituency" in Washington, as there is a "Quebec constituency" in Ottawa.

Canada has in the past tried to deal with this problem by means of a two-track policy of cooperating with the United States on matters where mutual benefits could be expected for both countries and of limiting or controlling American influence where that could be detrimental to Canadian identity or independence. In recent years, however, this balance has been upset in favour of ever closer cooperation and against trying to control American influence. At the same time the centrifugal (divisive) forces within Canada have been getting stronger at the expense of the centripetal (unifying) forces.

**The crossroads**

Today we stand at a crossroad. We will no doubt have in any case to reinvent our confederation. But the crucial question is whether we are to do it in terms of a collectivity capable of safeguarding all our individual and minority rights, and of playing a role in the world commensurate with the values and interests we share as Canadians, or whether we are to divide into smaller collectivities, none of which, regardless of the language they speak, can hope to deal effectively with the dominant American majority on this continent. For my part, I remain deeply convinced that Canadians will meet this historic challenge successfully, and that in the process they will not only be doing something for themselves but will also be giving the wider world a hopeful example of tolerance and democracy. ■

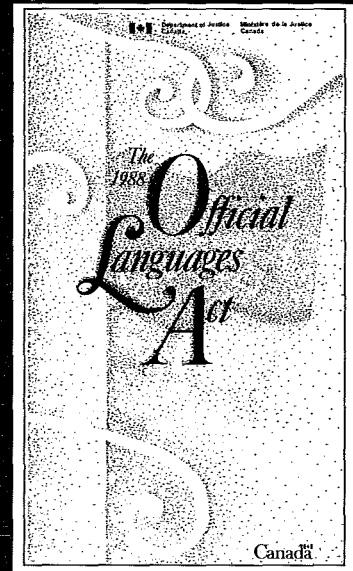
# A New Brochure

This spring the Department of Justice published a brochure called "The 1988 Official Languages Act" that explains the purposes of the Act and gives a summary of its principal provisions.

The brochure summarizes the parts of the Act dealing with legislative and other instruments, the administration of justice, amendments and additions to the Criminal Code, service to the public and language of work, the participation of English- and French-speaking Canadians, the advancement of the official languages and court remedy.

Curiously, however, the brochure makes no mention of several other important aspects of the Act regarding service to the public and language of work. For example, no reference is made to Section 26 (regulatory activities relating to public health, safety and security), Section 28 (active offer), Section 30 (manner of communicating) and Subsection 35(2) (regions of Canada prescribed).

While the brochure states that "the concepts of 'significant demand' and 'nature of the office' will be dealt with in regulations," there is no indication that most of the Act's provisions concerning language of service are now in force and must be applied, even in the absence of regulations. Moreover, the brochure does not mention that the provisions on language of work are already in force in "the regions of Canada set out in Annex B of the part of the Treasury Board and Public Service Commission Circular No. 1977-46 of September 30, 1977," as specified in Subsection 35(2) of the Act.



# Are Canadians Proud of Their Country?

Michael O'Keefe

**A**s if the Delphic command "Know thy self" had been mistaken for the national motto, Canadians always seem to be in search of their identity. At the elite level there is a felt need for a cultural Maginot line to counterbalance the impact of American influence, yet the attitude of the average citizen to Canadian culture and identity often appears to be more akin to that reserved for cod-liver oil: it's good for you, but not very tasty. The latest study attempting to probe the Canadian psyche poses the less than self-evident question "Are Canadians proud of their country?"

*Canadians  
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of their identity.*

The study, commissioned by the Council for Canadian Unity, uses a focus group methodology; therefore, while the results provide valuable insights we cannot use them to generalize about the population as a whole. The Council for Canadian Unity is a non-partisan organization founded in 1964 by English- and French-speaking business people to promote national unity and to foster greater pride in Canada. The research included 12 focus group meetings which took place in five cities, Montreal, Ottawa, Toronto, Winnipeg and Vancouver. The Ottawa meet-

## ***A study with this title concludes that Canada has a serious problem with unity, identity and even national pride.***

ings brought together young people from across the country. Of the 115 people involved in the focus groups only 18 (16%) were Francophone, 38 (33%) were born in other countries and 47 (41%) were women.

### **Contradictions**

There are a number of intriguing contradictions in the opinions held by those surveyed. The study reports that bilingualism is not regarded as a source of pride because Canadians are not truly bilingual, yet people complain about feeling obliged to learn French when they won't get a chance to use it. They seem to see a truly bilingual Canada as a desirable goal. Diversity, including cultural diversity and the fact that Canada is not a melting-pot society, is viewed positively; however, multiculturalism was viewed as a barrier to a greater sense of national identity and unity. Moreover, although respondents were critical of the looseness of Canada's immigration policy the small size of the population relative to the size of the country was frequently mentioned. Foreign-born Canadians are uncomfortable with the word "proud" when describing their attitude towards Canada and prefer "glad", "happy" and "thankful". While respondents are proud of their social programs they complain

about high taxes, as if the two were not related.

### **Leadership**

A number of observations concerned the nature and quality of leadership in Canada today. A desire for stronger leadership and a clearer national vision was expressed by many and a strong dissatisfaction with the perceived weakness of current national leadership was evident. Canadians are worried about excessive decentralization and feared the Meech Lake Accord would contribute to it, thus weakening national unity. The Quebec sign law was identified by many as weakening national unity. A recurrent theme in the report is nostalgia regarding Pierre Trudeau, who was identified as a Canadian who made respondents proud.

### **Francophone views**

Although the study surveyed the views of few Francophones, what it reports is depressing reading for anyone concerned about the future and unity of Canada. Francophone pride in being Canadian was found to be either guarded or non-existent. French-speaking respondents reported no pride in or emotional attachment to the national anthem. People who made the Francophone respondents feel proud were mainly Quebecers. Franco-

phones were found to be afraid of being "invaded by others" and to harbour feelings of resentment and alienation with regard to English Canadians. Several of the younger Francophones did not feel they belong in Canada; as one said, "Canada is another world." All the Francophone respondents said they were Quebecers first.

### **Three solutions**

The study concludes that Canada has a serious problem as far as unity, identity and even pride are concerned. Respondents suggested three solutions. First, more exchanges between the two founding cultures to promote a greater attitude of acceptance. Second, the encouragement of more travel within Canada to increase knowledge of Canada and promote a sense of country. Third, improved teaching of Canadian history — young people were found to be particularly ignorant of our history. Given that the people

*There are  
a number of  
contradictions  
in opinions  
expressed.*

who wrote this study describe Vimy Ridge as a Second World War battle, perhaps all Canadians could benefit from a better grasp of Canadian history. Undoubtedly that history will show that soul searching comes naturally to Canadians. ■

# Dialogue Canada

Michel Beauparlant\*

*Members of a new organization believe in compromise, in a Canada in which all will be comfortable.*

**J**ohn Trent believes in a united Canada. But he does not think he sees a politician able to guide the country through the crisis now rocking it.

In his opinion, all the politicians now on the scene, including the new leader of the Liberal Party, Jean Chrétien, pay more attention, in setting their priorities, to partisanship than to the new social reality of Canada.

But Trent is not a quitter: he has decided to do his part to ensure that Canada remains a federation of provinces and territories that includes Quebec.

Trent, head of the Political Science Department at the University of Ottawa, sees only one way for Canada to go forward — through dialogue. He therefore encouraged the founding of a non-partisan organization intended to be a forum in which everyone can exchange views and indeed “open their hearts” so that Canadians may achieve mutual understanding. The organization is called Dialogue Canada.

It might at first be thought that the name was inspired by the “Dialogue New Brunswick” conference that the McKenna government sponsored last year, the aim of which was to initiate dialogue among young people in that province of all cultures and political beliefs. But such is not the case.

\*Michel Beauparlant is a journalist with Ottawa's *Le Droit*.

Trent says that a core group of people as convinced as he was of the need for dialogue decided on this name after a brainstorming session during which some 100 names were proposed, including “Tolerance Canada”.



John Trent

The name chosen was in fact inspired by the title of the federal Public Service language course and permission to use it was granted.

## The wave of intolerance

Dialogue Canada arose from what Trent calls the “wave of intolerance” that swept the country last year and early this year. We have only to think of APEC, the Ontario-based Alliance for the Preservation of English in Canada, whose membership suddenly mushroomed from 5,000 to 35,000, or of the Confederation

of Regions (CoR) Party or of the burning of the Quebec flag in Brockville. Trent also sees intolerance in political attitudes towards aboriginal peoples and in the Quebec laws restricting Anglophones educationally or in the expression of their culture. More recently, the desecration of Jewish cemeteries, in his view, illustrated another, more virulent form of intolerance.

For Trent, however, the straw that broke the camel's back was the wave of proclamations of English unilingualism in Ontario municipalities that started in the north, in Sault Ste. Marie and Thunder Bay, and grew to include 27 municipalities. He responded by writing letters to the editors of various newspapers. This brought him a flood of correspondence that he filed in two folders. One of them, more than an inch thick, contains letters of support; the other is just as thick and contains abusive, and in some cases vulgar, letters all of which are further evidence, in his opinion, of a new strain of intolerance permeating Canada's social fabric.

One of his letters, published in February, was unequivocal in its sentiments: “Enough! I cannot accept decisions like those of the municipal council of Sault Ste. Marie and other Ontario municipalities, decisions whose narrowmindedness and bigotry threaten the very foundations of our country. The time has come to counterattack.”

He said he had in mind, even when writing this letter, the emergence of a non-partisan organization to fight intolerance by information to foster understanding and dialogue. His supporters in the Ottawa-Hull area became members of the organization.

## A non-partisan organization

In June, Trent, as chairman, and other distinguished Canadians announced the formation of Dialogue Canada. A few days later the Meech Lake Accord suffered its nasty defeat. There followed an unprecedented demonstration of nationalism in Quebec on St. Jean Baptiste Day: a sign of a hardening of positions that once again betrayed intolerance.

Dialogue Canada passed its initial test with some success on July 4 when it held its first general meeting. Most of the approximately 100 participants came from the National Capital Region, but there were some as well from Montreal, Toronto and Kingston. There were even some representatives of APEC. This “multi-ethnic” meeting, Trent reports, was even stormy, with everybody clinging to their own visions of Canada. But in the end people talked together and “the discussion was cordial.” That, he added, is what is he seeking, and went on to say that he himself was sometimes tempted to gag some of the speakers. Then, in the next breath, he acknowledged that people “do not have many opportunities to vent their frustrations.”

During this meeting, the organization adopted a mailing address: P.O. Box 595, Aylmer, Quebec, J9H 6L1. It also decided to launch a national membership campaign, probably by mail and telephone (a 900 line). The organization will encourage the founding of local chapters across Canada. In addition, it will direct a program of activities to give visibility to



Dialogue Canada. Among other events, a one-day conference on the issue of national unity is scheduled for the fall.

### Being realistic

John Trent says he is very aware of the fact that Dialogue Canada has a major challenge to face and he refuses to let himself be carried away by undue optimism. He prefers to be a realist and wants to continue to be involved because, he says, "I know the country needs this organization."

Meanwhile, he does not wish to impose his vision of Canada on everyone. But, in his opinion, everyone will have to compromise. Quebec will have to show an openness to multiculturalism and take another look at its restrictive language laws. The other provinces will have to recognize Quebec's unique role as the geographic home of Francophones in North America. And, in this regard, English Canada will have to grant Quebec special constitutional status to enable it to fulfil its cultural mission.

The great challenge, Trent said, is to make Canadians accept the fact that Canadian linguistic duality goes hand in hand with multiculturalism, a social phenomenon that it is now impossible to ignore.

John Trent, 54, is a native of Toronto who adopted the Outaouais as his place of residence in 1970 when he came to teach at the University of Ottawa. This committed New Democrat (he was the NDP candidate in the riding of Pontiac-Papineau-Labelle in 1988) has long been a defender of federalism. He has previously worked in such organizations as the Council of Canadians and the Pro-Canada Network. With the benefit of some hindsight, he now thinks that the members of these organizations truly wanted to believe in Canada, but "each in his own Canada." ■

(Our translation)

# The Position of French Improves: The Proportion Declines

Réjean Lachapelle\*

*Can French language and culture remain stable if the proportion of the population with French as a mother tongue continues to fall?*

**T**he past 40 years have seen a decline in the proportion of Francophones in the country as a whole. The trend affects most provinces, but not those which have the largest concentration of Francophones. In Quebec the fraction of the population with French as a mother tongue began to rise in 1971 and in 1986 was at 83%, its highest point in a century and a half; in New Brunswick the proportion of Francophones has remained at a steady 34% since 1971.

Nearly everywhere the proportion of French speakers has risen since 1971 as the result of non-Francophones learning the language. As well, the net transmission of French as mother tongue from mother to child has risen since the end of the 1960s in Canada as a whole, in Quebec and in the other provinces, especially New Brunswick. The attraction of French schools has increased and French is taught more

\*Réjean Lachapelle works for Statistics Canada. The opinions expressed in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the views of Statistics Canada.

effectively in English schools, notably in French immersion programs.

It is thus possible for the position of French to improve, even if the proportion of individuals with French as a mother tongue drops. The situation of the French population group and the situation of the French language do not depend on the same factors. Language policy has a direct impact on the position of French by raising its status, by facilitating the learning of French by non-Francophones and promoting its transmission to children of a Francophone mother or father. Only the last of these factors has an impact on the proportion of individuals with French as a mother tongue in the population as a whole.

### Assimilation a minor factor

In the hundred years from 1850 to 1950 the high fertility of French Canadian women enabled the French group to maintain its relative size at approximately 30% in spite of low Francophone immigration and language transfers towards English. Following the Second World War the fertility differences between the language groups decreased rapidly, then

became reversed towards the mid-60s, since which time the fertility of Francophone women has been lower than that of other Canadian women. The relative size of the population with French as a mother tongue has decreased as a result, dropping from 29% in 1951 to 25% in 1986. Transfers from French to English had almost no effect on this drop relative to the effects of international migration and fertility.

### Strengthening majorities, declining minorities

This evolution is the result of diverging regional trends since, for at least a quarter century, official languages groups have preserved or strengthened their relative positions in regions where they form a majority. This is the case for Francophones in all regions of Quebec, but especially in the linguistically heterogeneous regions — the Eastern Townships, Montreal and the Outaouais. It is also the case for Anglophones outside Quebec, including those in the parts of Ontario bordering on Quebec. Strictly speaking, there is only one exception: in northern and eastern New Brunswick' the relative size of the population with



French as a mother tongue has stayed at 58% since 1971.

In Quebec language transfers may favour English more than French, but this phenomenon has a much weaker effect than inter-provincial migration, which disadvantages the English group. Persons who maintain or adopt English as their home language are 10 to 20 times more likely to leave Quebec for the other provinces than are persons whose home language is French. Moreover, symmetrical differences have been noted in the tendency to leave the other provinces for Quebec, with that of Francophones greatly exceeding that of Anglophones. All these differences were smaller but already very clear before 1960; they have increased since the francization of Quebec society.

Elsewhere in Canada language transfers have contributed significantly to the decline in the proportion of the population made up by the French group and, in some cases, in the number of persons in that group. International migration recently, which involves a very small proportion of Francophones and, more recently, the low fertility of Francophones, are also pushing this group's proportion steadily downward. However, as in Quebec, interregional migration often favours the French group in relative terms, although this does not compensate for the impact of the other factors.

### Non-Francophone bilingualism

By its very nature evolution of the population's composition by mother tongue is somewhat constrained. Not all groups can be winners, nor can they all be losers. If there is a winner there must

be at least one loser: that is the zero-sum principle. If, instead, we consider the distribution of the population by knowledge of the official languages, this constraint disappears, since some individuals can speak both English and French. These can be counted both as English-speakers and French-speakers.

In all the country's major linguistic regions the proportion of French-speakers has

These trends are the result of the rise in the proportion of bilingual persons among non-Francophones. The proportion of French-speakers among non-Francophones — low in 1961 — has doubled, indeed tripled, outside Quebec in the last 25 years. In northern and eastern New Brunswick and in the areas of Ontario bordering Quebec it rose from 8% in 1961 to slightly more than 20% in 1986. Of course, there has

These trends are found in Quebec as well as in the rest of the country. In Quebec the net rate of anglicization was very low in 1956-61 (0.2%) and was nil in 1966-71. The rate subsequently reversed: net francization was approximately 1% in 1976-81 and 1981-86. In the rest of the country the net rate of anglicization dropped from 30% in 1961-66 to 27% in 1981-86. Between the two periods it went from 5% to under 2% in northern and eastern New Brunswick and remained steady at 12%-13% in the areas of Ontario bordering on Quebec. In the other areas outside Quebec where Francophones account for less than 5% of the population it has varied only slightly around the 50% mark in the past 15 to 20 years.

In the past 25 years gains in transmission of French as a mother tongue from mothers to their children have been greater when English or a third language is the mother tongue of the father. Transmission is nearly universal when French is also the mother tongue of the father. In the country as a whole, among children born in 1956-61 who had an English-speaking father, 22% received the language of the mother (i.e., French), while 78% received that of the father, a difference of 56 points in favour of English. By 1981-86 French was the sole mother tongue of 27% of children, English of 55%, a difference of 28 points. Over the last several five-year periods transmission of two mother tongues (English and French) has also increased. Although it is possible that the parents' egalitarian orientation does not always withstand outside influences, the increase in "English and French"



*Until 1950, the birth rate sufficed*

*Photo: Fausto Studio/Collection de l'Office de télécommunication éducative de l'Ontario/Original dans la collection Marie-Anna St-Jules/*

*Centre for Research on French Canadian Culture, University of Ottawa*

risen since 1971 and even since 1961. In the predominantly Francophone regions of Quebec nearly everyone can speak the common language. In 1951 97% could do so; by 1986 the figure had risen to nearly 99%. In the more heterogeneous regions of the province (the Eastern Townships, the Outaouais and Montreal) French-speakers accounted for 80% of the population in 1961 and the proportion rose to 90% in 1986. Similar increases were recorded in the various regions outside Quebec: from 62% to 67% in northern and eastern New Brunswick; from 39% to 43% in the areas of Ontario bordering on Quebec<sup>2</sup> and from 5% to 7% in mainly Anglophone areas of the country.<sup>3</sup>

also been an increase in the more heterogeneous regions of Quebec (32% in 1961, 62% in 1986).

### Mother to child

To better measure changes in language mobility a new estimation method was developed based on comparison of the mother tongue of mothers with that of their children. Using data from recent censuses one can establish the trends in intergenerational language mobility by the period of birth of children.

In Canada as a whole the net rate of anglicization of the French group varied only slightly around the 6% mark from 1956-61 to 1966-71,<sup>4</sup> then fell to 3% for children born in 1976-81, a level that was maintained in 1981-86.

responses narrows the gap between the two official languages since it occurs at the expense of the transmission of English as the sole mother tongue. In short, in the country as a whole the dominance of English over French in mixed language couples, although still very significant, has been cut in half over some 30 years.

**The attraction of French schools**

The proportion of children attending French schools is decreasing in the country as a whole. This decline, which is not occurring in Quebec, is attributable only to the reduced proportion of the school-age population with French as its mother tongue, since French schools are attracting their target clientele more than they have in the past, in Quebec as in the rest of the country. Moreover, the overall proportion of French-speakers in the school-age population is increasing, both in Quebec and outside that province.

Outside Quebec the proportion of Francophones in the school age population fell from 6% in 1971 to 4% in 1986. However, this decline is mitigated by the evolution of the proportion of pupils attending French schools (or, more precisely, schools intended for the Francophone minority). This has produced a rise in the net attraction index of French schools. Another indication of the improvement in the situation is the fact that, since 1971, the proportion of school-age children who speak French at home has been getting increasingly closer to that of children whose mother tongue is French. The ratio of the first to the second was 0.90 in 1986 compared to 0.84 in 1971, an increase probably

attributable to the rise in enrolment in French schools.

Compared to 5% in 1971, pupils in French immersion programs and those attending French schools (or classes) accounted for 9% of children attending school outside Quebec in 1986. This increase parallels the rise in the proportion of French-speakers. French immersion has undoubtedly been a major factor in the increase of bilingualism among young people whose mother tongue is not French.

In Quebec the position of French is improving among young people and the proportion with French as its mother tongue has been re-established since 1976. The proportion of pupils attending French schools rose from 83% in 1976 to 89% in 1986 and the index of attraction of French schools increased rapidly in that period. There has also been a significant rise in the proportion of French-speakers among young people (from 89% in 1971 to 95% in 1986).

**French immersion**

French immersion programs have produced an unexpected reversal. In fact, according to the 1986 census, outside Quebec, among children in the 5-14 age group whose parents both have English as their mother tongue, the knowledge of French is more widespread (7%) than, in Quebec, the knowledge of English (5%) among French children in the same age group whose parents both have French as their mother tongue. This situation merits further study.

**Conclusion**

Contrary to some opinion, language policy has had a significant impact on the situation of French in

Quebec and the other provinces, especially New Brunswick. The positive change is very clear if we consider the proportion of French-speakers among non-Francophones, the index of attraction of French schools and the proportion of non-Francophone pupils in French immersion programs. Moreover, in couples where the wife has French as a mother tongue and the husband does not, the language transmitted to the children is more likely than in the past to be French. However, mainly because of the increase in intermarriage, this trend does not always translate into an increase in net rate of transmission of French as a mother tongue from mothers to their children.

Language policy is not the only answer: it affects numerous social factors but has little impact on demographic factors.<sup>5</sup> This explains why it is possible, in the country as a whole, for the position of French to improve and the proportion of the group with French as a mother tongue to drop over the same period. The latter trend is the result of two factors that have little relation to language policy: low fertility of Francophones and their weak representation among immigrants. Reduction in anglicization has not compensated for the negative impact of these two factors.

The rise in bilingualism among non-Francophones has kept the proportion of French-speakers in the country as a whole constant. In this situation French-speakers are more likely than in the past to be people whose mother tongue is not French. Statistics on home language show that French is rarely the main language of these people and thus there

is little likelihood of them becoming Francophones or transmitting French as a mother tongue to their children. Speakers of French as a second language are no substitute for speakers of French as a first language.

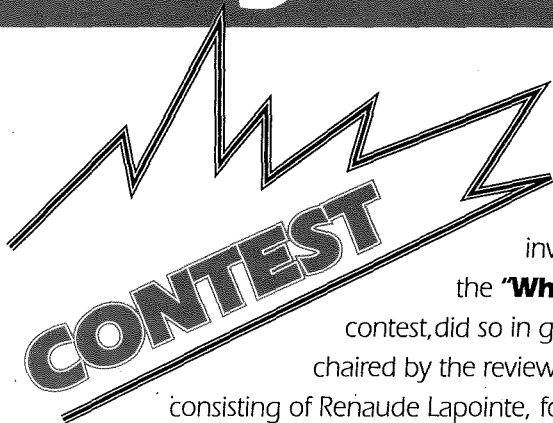
Can French language and culture maintain a stable position in the coming decades if the proportion of the population with French as a mother tongue continues to fall? If the proportion of French-speakers with French as a mother tongue is falling, will bilingualism among non-Francophones continue to rise? These two questions point up the close links between language situation and demographic situation and between the position of French and the changes in fertility and migration. ■

*(Our translation)*

**Notes**

- <sup>1</sup> That region is located to the north of a line joining Moncton and Edmundston. It contains nine Francophones out of 10 and more than half the province's population.
- <sup>2</sup> Located to the southeast and to the northeast of Ontario, these areas contain nearly two-thirds of the Francophones and little less than 15% of the province's population.
- <sup>3</sup> Two-thirds of Canadians live in these areas (90% of Anglophones, 7% of Francophones and more than 80% of Allophones).
- <sup>4</sup> In other words, for every 94 children born during these years and having French as mother tongue, 100 had a mother with French as mother tongue.
- <sup>5</sup> Though the importance and the linguistic composition of international and inter-provincial migratory exchanges are obviously not independent, especially in Quebec, of language policy.

# Why I Love Canada!



The readers of  
**Language  
and Society,**

invited to participate in  
the **"Why I Love Canada"**

contest, did so in great numbers. A jury  
chaired by the review's Editor-in-Chief and  
consisting of Renaude Lapointe, former Speaker of the  
Senate, John Trent, a professor at the University of Ottawa,  
Charles Strong, a consultant, and Pierre April, a journalist with  
Canadian Press, chose 10 finalists.

**We present here the five winning entries and the  
names of the five honourable mentions. Our thanks  
and congratulations go as well to all the participants  
for their faith in Canada and love of their country.**

## First prize : two winners



**Denise  
Marie-Paule  
Messier**

Dr. Messier, a clinical psychologist, is a native of Kirkland Lake, a small town in Northern Ontario. She has worked in Cornwall, Ontario, for the past five years.

For me, Canada means openness to many cultures. On the street where I was brought up, there was a rich tapestry of races, the common thread in it being red, the colour of the heart.

On this one street lived our family, a large French-Canadian household. Next door there was a Ukrainian family that showed my mother the best way to make cabbage rolls. Across the street lived a Yugoslavian brother and sister who, in the winter, side by side, shovelled huge snowbanks — a most impressive sight to the eight-year-old girl that I then was. There was also an elderly Belgian lady whom I adopted as a grandmother and would often go to visit in her little European-style home. I listened without tiring to her extended accounts of long bicycle trips. I made waffles with her and learned new expressions like "sapristi" and "fichtre alors".

Today I am a gourmand, I love bicycling, I shovel my yard with gusto when it snows and I make waffles for my nieces and nephews with grandmother Lulu's waffle iron.

In my opinion, there could hardly be more touching proof of the richness of this childhood, marked as it was by such daily evidence of our common humanity.

(Our translation)



**Susan  
Felsberg**

Originally from England, she emigrated to Goose Bay, Labrador, 30 years ago and worked as a "nurse-midwife". She is now married and has two children, both in their early 20s. Her husband runs his own business.

Though for very particular reasons I am constantly aware that I love Canada, nevertheless recent events and the title above have prompted me to think them over once again. For me, this amazing but difficult land is a country of choice, and not of birth. I sometimes think that we first-generation Canadians have the vigorous convictions and devotion of the converted, and see the country through positive, unjaundiced eyes which the native-born — confused by mixed legacies — do not always share.

I came here, not from an impoverished, desperate immigrant situation, but from a rich, sophisticated, highly cultured and historic society, which nevertheless had long since become elitist, crowded and stilted by long-standing convention. I brought with me a liberal upbringing, multifaceted skills and interests, and a strong desire to serve my neighbour and society wherever the need was greatest; in a phrase: to contribute in an immediate daily sense to a nation's evolution, and specifically that of a remote, under-developed region.

Canada gave me that opportunity for satisfying effort, and with that challenge also came her gifts of geography, immensity, beauty and extraordinary diversities. She also offered her own marked needs for human energy, innovation and dedication. Herein lie the dual components of rights and responsibilities which chosen citizenship must consciously accept.

I married another 'new' Canadian: one who had rejected a totalitarian homeland, and loves his country of choice for her immeasurable freedoms and liberties. As one already happily raised in a stable democracy, I appreciate this country anew through his ever-fresh perspective.

Together we share a very precise love of this country, and have raised our own family in a boundless, rewarding environment of physical and intellectual space, challenge and opportunity which is utterly unique in the world. For both of us, Canada's vastness for dreams, endeavours and fulfilment is incomparable to that of any other land.

Le Canada : c'est vraiment le pays toujours magnifique !

## Second prize

**Françoise Rousseau**

Longueuil, Quebec

### I LOVE CANADA

- because it is **MY COUNTRY**, the one where I was born and to which I belong.
- because it is so beautiful. I know because I have travelled from one end of the country to the other.
- because it is bilingual and doubles the opportunities for access to culture. I read French newspapers and my husband reads English ones. We exchange the clippings of articles in which we are interested.

### I APPRECIATE CANADA

- for the tolerance and peacefulness shown by most Canadians.
- for its system of social services that provide security to all Canadians.
- when we travel abroad. People everywhere envy us for being Canadians.

### I HOPE THAT

- our country can avoid racial divisions and petty political wrangling.
- peace and tolerance once again become the traits characteristic of Canadians.
- Canada is divided into five large regions instead of the current ten provinces.

This might save a lot of problems.

(Our translation)

## Third prize

**Tonya Lambert**

Kelvington, Saskatchewan

The Canadian album! Looking across Canada I see boundless sea-coasts, turbulent rivers, majestic snow-clad mountains, rolling foot-hills, vast wind-swept prairies, verdant forests, crystal blue lakes, the great white north, rugged Shield, the Great Lakes, mighty St. Lawrence and sandy shoreline.

The whole countryside is teeming with beaver, grizzly bears, whales, mountain sheep, buffalo, Canada geese, polar bears and loons.

Looking back, one pictures totem poles, canoes and wigwams; Hudson Bay, coureurs de bois and trappers; the creaking Red River ox-carts and settlers' sod houses; the redcoats, Charlottetown, Batoche, the Klondike.

Today, I see fishing trawlers, oil rigs, grain elevators, potash mines, hockey rinks, skyscrapers, and cabanes à sucre.

I love watching Ukrainian dancers, Métis jiggers, the Indian powwow, the RCMP musical ride. I love hearing Scottish bagpipes, and French fiddlers. I love tasting Polish perogies, Chinese chow mein, Italian lasagna, French pea soup, German Wiener schnitzel, and Indian bannock cooked over an open fire.

I speak English but I understand the warmth of a French smile; I speak French but I understand the warmth of an English handshake; I speak German but I understand the warmth of an Indian welcome embrace. I am Polish, Scottish, English and German; I am a Canadian — I love my country!

standing on your mountain peaks looking down at the mosaic of colours rippling across your magnanimity.

The years passed in my South American continent of perpetual sunshine interspersed with sudden, rapid-moving rainclouds disgorging bullet-like drops of water that beat a rhythm on rusty, zinc roofs...water running off on verdant green of incredible, disturbing beauty reflecting, perhaps, the state of Guyana's political divisions, upheavals and poverty.

I saw you, Ca-na-da, on a June day of clear skies which elated me with something once lost...hope. You are a world child birthed by the universe. Within you are held representatives of all the nations of the world...clothed, fed, sheltered by you...representative of the ancient Athens of Pericles.

In the stream of your seasons I have evolved into a human being with strength within and around me wrought by you. Your other provinces call to me to see them. I cannot conceive of visiting them through the medium of a passport, symbol flaunting the dichotomy in the symbiosis of what I perceive as one nation.

## Fourth prize

**Indra Sharma**

Eimvale, Ontario

Your name first intrigued me; Ca-na-da... foreign, beckoning...I envisioned myself

## Honourable mentions...

Jacques Flamand  
Ottawa, Ontario

Mieko-Holy Amano  
Burnaby, British Columbia

L. Grace Henderson  
Orinstown, Quebec

Cheri Arthurs  
Etobicoke, Ontario

Aleksandra Jaworczykowska  
Montreal, Quebec

# Implementation of the Official Languages Act

*Lyne Ducharme and Jacques Robichaud*

*As far as service to the public goes, progress by the federal government proceeds at a snail's pace.*

**A**n Act without regulations and administrative directives is a little like a car without an engine. After waiting for two years, the Commissioner of Official Languages is showing signs of growing impatience with the federal government's slowness in getting the 1988 Official Languages Act up to full speed. If you think, however, that the situation concerns only D'Iberville Fortier, you could be in for a real surprise.

For example, as a French-speaking contractor you might have difficulty in dealing in your own language with the office of a federal institution located in Toronto despite the fact that it is an office recognized as having "significant demand". The same will apply if you are English-speaking and want to deal with a federal office in Rouyn-Noranda. Some institutions pay more attention to the concept of bilingual regions than to that of significant demand for bilingual services when it comes to providing service in English and in French to their clients. In the absence of regulations and directives, they can only continue to comply with the former policies arising from the 1969 Official Languages Act, under which some locations are not considered to have significant demand.

Numerous other examples can be given of departments and agencies that use the absence of

regulations and directives as an excuse not to comply with the requirements of the 1988 Official Languages Act. This Act, in its "improved version", was supposed to give new impetus to linguistic rights, but the reality is something quite different. While the Act, for example, prescribes additional institutional obligations regarding service to the public (Section 22), the departments and agencies have been advised by the Treasury Board, pending the issuance of regulations, to follow the directives (which are in many cases incomplete) adopted under the 1969 Act.

Since tabling his 1989 Annual Report in April 1990, the Commissioner has emphasized his disappointment with the federal government and has reiterated his request that it step up the pace.

Language of service, language of work, participation of English-speaking and French-speaking Canadians in federal institutions, service to the travelling public, nature of the office and significant demand are all topics waiting for elucidation and clarification by the Governor in Council. Under the Act, the Governor in Council is authorized to adopt regulations specifying in what circumstances there is significant demand for bilingual service. The regulations will also define the services required in both languages, as well as various other concepts related to

communications and services, such as national or international mandate or the nature of an office of a federal institution.

So long as regulations have not been approved and are not in force, uncertainty will remain as to the definition of significant demand for minority language services and the weight to be given to the concept of nature of the office. The Act should nevertheless be applied, for it can then be given effect by the courts, which will interpret it based on the usual meaning of the words employed.

Moreover, the Act makes the Treasury Board responsible for the overall development and co-ordination of principles and programs and for recommending most of the regulatory measures to the Governor in Council. The Act specifically directs the Treasury Board to consult the official language minorities and, where appropriate, members of the general public concerning proposed regulations. It prescribes specific time periods for the tabling of draft regulations in the House of Commons and their publication in the *Canada Gazette*. The Act provides for permanent review of its implementation and that of the regulations and directives made under it by a Parliamentary committee. The Commissioner of Official Languages may initiate a review of any regulations or directives made under the Act and any other regulations that may affect

the status or use of the official languages, and he may make recommendations to Parliament thereon.

The fact that federal departments and agencies are continuing to adhere to the in many cases obsolete directives made under the 1969 Act cannot continue without jeopardizing the renewal of language reform called for in the new Official Languages Act.

Any Act has more than a legal impact. The regulations that will accompany the Act will never solve every problem. There are other means of persuasion than playing policeman. The government must give impetus to the Act, not only through audits but also by showing its willingness to change attitudes. For example, the government must demonstrate the economic benefits of promoting linguistic duality.

In this era of free trade and trade agreements under the General Agreement on Tariff and Trade, it is in the interest of Canadians to come to the defence of the Official Languages Act and make common cause in order to penetrate international markets. It is time to be concerned about economic survival, not about quarrels. The wealth of our cultures is definitely an asset to Canada. That is why the government should do all in its power to show Canadians the value and necessity of exploiting our invaluable linguistic potential in our business dealings with the rest of the world. The European Economic Community has not only already accepted plurilingualism but applies it in its working relations. Its linguistic arrangements favour a country like ours whose two official languages are among the nine official languages in use within the EEC. The reasons for preserving national languages are far from being only political and human. ■

*(Our translation)*

## Is It Worth It?

In an address given by Kenneth Dye on June 8, 1990, at a convocation ceremony at Simon Fraser University on the need for greater tolerance in Canada, he said, "surely [the Auditor General] of Canada especially, must realize the sheer cost of bilingualism, not to mention the cost of the federal government's multicultural programs.

"Certainly there's a cost. It is a cost that is not segregated in the accounts, so no one knows what it is, but it is a cost that the majority of Canadians have said is vital if we are to be a decent, compassionate and united society....

"If fact, the question we should ask is not primarily how much it costs, but what is it worth and what is its value. What's it worth to us to live in a genuinely pluralist country?"

"The shared vision that can only come about through mutual respect and increased tolerance is, in my view, not merely a desirable option, it's an economic necessity."

## At the Canada Council

# Talent First, in Either Official Language

Benoît Legault\*

**I**n Volume 3 of his memoirs, Jean-Louis Gagnon comments: "Despite the abundance of its natural resources and its well-developed social infrastructure, Canada remains a very fragile country, for, while it has been a nation since 1867, it is still without a national culture. Hence, each of its components...is, naturally, easy prey to American social and cultural encroachments."

Because of this Louis St-Laurent created the Canada Council to ensure the development of an emerging bilingual, pluralistic culture.

The linguistic controversies that Canada is experiencing have not affected the policies of the Canada Council. "We do not have to take a stand on language issues," explains Robert Spickler, Associate Director of the Council since 1988. "We are concerned only with the artistic quality of works of art."

In 1988-89 the Canada Council approved grants, services and purchases worth a total of \$93,337,000. Its 130 programs are intended to support and encourage artistic activities.

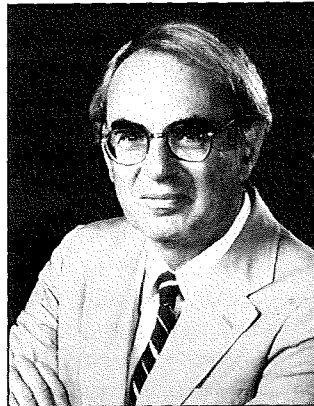
The grants, 90% of which come from the federal government, are awarded on the basis of very specific artistic criteria. "Our statistics show that grants are distributed almost equally among the various regions of the country," says Spickler. "This is accidental, since we

\*Benoît Legault is a freelance journalist in the Ottawa-Hull region.

subsidize talent without concern for regional parity."

Created by Parliament in 1957, the Canada Council is an independent agency that provides services to artists and professional artistic organizations in Canada in the areas of dance, media arts, music, opera, theatre, literary creation, publishing and the visual arts.

The Council tries to strike a balance between Canada's English- and French-speaking



Allan Gotlieb, Chairman of the Canada Council.

cultures. This balance is maintained by the vitality of these cultures and not by a numerical formula, according to Spickler.

### Cultural dissemination

Through such Canada Council programs as those for the translation of literary works and plays from one official language to the other, the creations of Anglophone artists are introduced to Francophones, and vice versa. "We also assist French-language publishers outside Quebec, and this enables them to circulate their works in Quebec," Spickler notes. "For

the past two years we have also had an agreement with the Secretary of State Department concerning assistance to minority language theatres, such as the English theatre in Quebec. The Secretary of State Department contributes mainly to the promotion of cultural activities, while the Council for the most part finances production."

Since 1974 the Touring Office has funded stage companies. This enables the Montreal group Carbone 14, for example, to present its shows throughout the country. The Council also assists festivals in which arts organizations of the other language community are invited to participate.

The organization and administration of the Council's programs also take Canada's linguistic duality into account. Juries and advisory committees of artists are invited to advise the Council on grants to be awarded and on the taking of certain decisions. In every artistic area, except literature and theatre, the Council has joint juries and advisory committees composed of both Anglophone and Francophone members. This ensures that the views of both cultures will be heard in the decision-making process.

This procedure causes certain problems, however, since the members of one linguistic community often have little or an imperfect knowledge of the other community's work, according to Spickler. There is a further problem in that exclusively Anglophone juries and committees with members from the Atlantic provinces some-

times have very little knowledge of the work of their Anglophone colleagues from the West, and vice versa.

As Spickler explains, "When the work of art depends on language, as in theatre or literature, the transference from one culture to the other is more complex and difficult. In the visual arts, however, in film and in music, the process of dissemination does not depend on the spoken language and thus opens up more possibilities of making connections."

As for productions done in English or in French, Spickler does not see bilingualization as a concern. "If a theatre company were to make a show bilingual, it would destroy the work. On the other hand, it is quite legitimate to incorporate a linguistic element that describes a reality." He cited as an example Robert Lepage's *Dragon Trilogy*, a play in three languages (English, French and Chinese) whose

action takes place in the Chinatowns of Quebec City, Toronto and Vancouver.

**Abroad**

The propagation of works is not restricted to Canada. The Canada Council also administers a program to assist in translation into foreign languages. Canadian works in English and French are rendered into other languages in order to make Canadian culture known throughout the world.

International dissemination also takes place through the awarding of literary prizes alternately to writers from Canada and from other countries such as Scotland, Australia, Belgium and Switzerland. In addition, the Canada-Japan fund promotes exchanges between Japanese writers and those of the two great Canadian cultural communities.

The Canada Council also promotes Canadian culture abroad. "More than 25% of the Coun-

cil's grants are awarded for the work of Canadian artists, both Anglophones and Francophones, done abroad," Spickler noted.

The circulation of Canadian culture abroad is also promoted because the Centre d'essai des auteurs dramatiques, one of whose activities is the promotion of Francophone theatre among Americans, is funded by the Council.

**Official languages**

Like federal departments and Crown corporations, the Canada Council is subject to the Official Languages Act. "All the services we have to provide to our clients, as well as our internal activities, must comply with the Act," said the Associate Director. "All the Council's documents are published in both official languages. We have a simultaneous interpretation service when our board, consisting of 21 members from

all across Canada, meets in Ottawa. Canada Council staff members may work and write documents in their own official language. The Council's clients are served in the language of their choice and all correspondence from the Council is written in the official language of the addressee."

**Duality and balance**

Robert Spickler does not believe that "balance" means 75% Anglophones and 25% Francophones, to reflect Canadian demography. "There are two cultures. It makes no sense to me to say that a culture expresses itself as 25% of a whole. A culture has nothing to do with a percentage. It concerns the deepest expression of a society. We have recognized two official languages; we have not recognized that there is 25% of one official language and 75% of the other. Until further notice, that is how I see it, without being at all naive. In my view, bilingualism cannot be divorced from biculturalism. I have nothing against multiculturalism, but [in Canada] it must first be mediated by biculturalism. Balance, for us, therefore, is a reflection of the strengths and energies of the principal cultures that make up the country, Anglophone and Francophone. We do not fund Anglophones and Francophones; we fund artists and artistic organizations."

According to Spickler, linguistic balance at the top of the Canada Council is not simply a matter of numbers. "At present," he noted, "three of the 10 heads of the Council are Francophone. There have at times been as many as six. This is not really important. What is important is to ensure that there is equitable representation and a balance that allows the views of the two linguistic and cultural communities to be heard in the Council." ■

(Our translation)

**ACROSS CANADA**

**Linguistic solidarity**

The trial of 21 Innu charged with trespassing on National Defence property at Canadian Forces Base Goose Bay had to be postponed for a second time, because no translator could be found. The Crown conducted a Canada-wide search to find a willing Innu-English interpreter but failed.... (The Montreal Gazette, March 29, 1990)

**7Up**

About 30 Anglophones in Western Canada did not appreciate the fact that some characters in a commercial for 7Up speak a few words of

French, with English subtitles. In the Quebec version of the advertisement a live actress and a cartoon character, Fido Dido, speak Italian while the subtitles are in French.

The advertiser therefore decided to use Italian for both commercials, with subtitles in the respective official language. Mamma mia! (La Presse, Montreal, May 3, 1990)

**Help, Au secours!**

Moir Hill's first-hand experience as a public health nurse prompted her to prepare a 233-page bilingual medical guide covering everything

from admission to a hospital to a dental appointment. Illustrated diagrams enable patients to tell where it hurts and the medical staff to bridge the language barrier in a medical emergency. (The Ottawa Citizen, June 17, 1990)

**English-only, you say?**

The Sault Ste. Marie General Hospital published an advertisement in the Toronto *Globe and Mail* requesting applications from individuals interested in co-ordinating French language services within the hospital and other health care agencies in the district of Algoma.



## Press Review

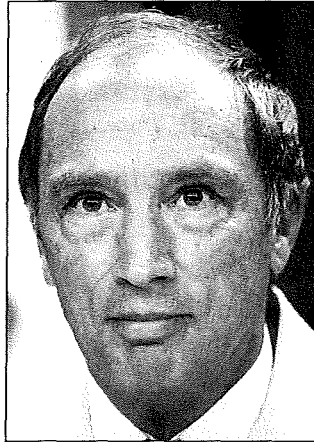
# After the Demise of Meech Lake

Tom Sloan

*Quebec newspapers generally downplayed the question of blame, but it was an issue that preoccupied much of the Anglophone press.*

While the death of the Meech Lake Accord last June 23 was greeted with appropriate solemnity by Canadian editorial writers, it was generally not treated as the end of the world — even the Canadian world. Instead, the most common response was more of the “back to the old drawing board” variety, involving queries as to just what the failed process had taught the country and how whatever lessons had emerged could be applied to the future. As for that future, there was little doubt — especially in Quebec — that, in political and constitutional terms, it will be very different. And, as for blame, there was more than enough to go around.

“Post Meech Blues”, the title of an editorial in the *Hamilton Spectator*, in three words captured the mood of most English-language newspapers. “We enter the post Meech Lake Accord period with no joy and much unease,” wrote the *Spectator*. Now a whole new approach is needed. “We must recapture the willingness to negotiate a deal that satisfies the legitimate concerns of Quebec within the boundaries of Canadian federalism.... The death of Meech resulted from the failure of our political leadership and a flawed process. Never again should political elites monopolize the process. The constitution belongs to all Canadians and all Canadians have to be involved in changing it.”



Pierre Elliott Trudeau:  
*Was the failure of Meech Lake primarily his responsibility?*

## Quebec

From Montreal's *Le Devoir*, a paper that has been described as Quebec's intellectual house organ, came a series of editorials constituting a clarion call to a new constitutional future. The old Canada is dead, wrote Benoît Lauzière: “this country's formula has become impracticable, since it depended too much on the good will of blackmailers and frustrated or irresponsible people, whose numbers are perhaps small, but who give no indication of going away.” The major consequence of the June events must be a new understanding that “an 11-part Canada is no longer acceptable to Quebec.... When the time comes, negotiations between two partners will undoubtedly be the most effective method for all concerned.”

For Paul-André Comeau, while the major architect of the

Meech failure was former Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau and his collaborators, it no longer matters. “It was with dignity that Quebec lived the last hours of the scuttling of the Meech Lake Accord. Dignity in the statements of the leader of the Parti Québécois, firmness and solemnity in the declarations of the premier, and calmness of the general population. Quebec has shown itself to the eyes of the world as a society that is calm, serene and sure of itself.” What Quebec needs, Comeau wrote in another editorial, is a little breathing space. “During the next 12 or 15 months, Quebec needs a commodity rare in politics: Time! Time to reflect in complete serenity, away from electoral battles and other similar brawls.... Time? Certainly. But not an eternity!”

Lise Bissonnette, *Le Devoir's* new publisher, certainly agreed with the last sentiment. “A Superb Moment to Move” was the title of one of her first editorials. “In these months, when the old continent has renewed itself, in America Quebec and Canada have been exhausting themselves trying to preserve their old illusions, which were also lies. It would be regrettable, even hypocritical, to continue any longer to cry over a constitutional failure that, secretly or publicly, most people wanted to happen.... We have just had a narrow escape. If Quebecers never had any intention of being satisfied with

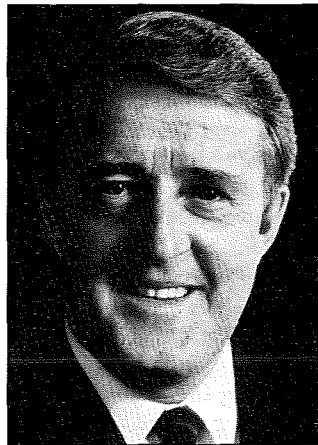
the minimum conditions of participation in the federal — and why should they! — they have no reason to complain about the rejection they have just been handed.” Now, for Bissonnette, is the time for Quebec to lay down its own constitutional conditions. We have lost the minimum — now let us demand the maximum.”

Other French-language papers concurred. “A new pact on new foundations” may be the direction in which we are heading according to Roch Bilodeau in Sherbrooke's *La Tribune*. The chaos of Meech's final days was especially intolerable. “We must certainly get out of this ridiculous situation, one way or another. Such instability serves no one, either in Quebec nor in English Canada; and such a demonstration of our political incapacity undermines our credibility on the international stage.”

In Montreal's *La Presse*, however, editorialist Alain Dubuc warned that the preoccupation with constitutional structures might be a matter of putting the cart before the horse. “The real question, the one that should be at the heart of the debate, has nothing to do with structures or constitutional texts. The question is: What exactly are the powers that Quebec should possess?” The current consensus, Dubuc wrote, is “that Quebec is a state and that this state must have the tools it needs.” Quebecers in general agree that a certain number of

federal powers must be transferred. "Which ones?... Will they include sectors that determine our security and our cultural future (culture, language, communications, immigration, education)? Will we want Quebec to have sole control over economic development and the management of social programs? Should Quebec also have jurisdiction over those fields that characterize a sovereign state (defence and foreign relations)?"

Editor Jean Paré of the monthly magazine *L'Actualité* was ecstatic about at least one aspect of the whole affair: "Francophone Quebecers have just experienced through the constitutional melodrama, a blessed moment, that of an extremely rare and unexpected unity."



Brian Mulroney:  
Creator of an artificial crisis?

Writing in the *Sherbrooke Record*, editorialist Sharon McCully agreed with her Francophone colleagues that the old order has indeed passed: "There is no mileage in trying to squeeze Quebec back into a federalist mould it has outgrown. The old version of Quebec as one of 10 equal provinces of Canada is history. Remember it fondly but don't try to recapture it."

While Quebec papers generally downplayed the question as to where blame should be laid,

it was an issue that preoccupied many of the Anglophone press. A favourite target was Prime Minister Brian Mulroney, accused, among other things, of bad timing, premature gloating and having ignored the legitimate demands of the aboriginal peoples.

### Ontario

To the *Sarnia Observer*, his main fault was in creating a crisis where none existed: "the truth is that Prime Minister Brian Mulroney is to blame for the whole sorry mess.... His irresponsible tactics became a self-fulfilling prophecy."

Echoed the *Ottawa Sun*: "Few of our political leaders are without blame, but none stands so guilty as Brian Mulroney."

Other editorialists targeted the premiers of the recalcitrant provinces, Manitoba and Newfoundland. But Premier Robert Bourassa did not escape either. The *Ottawa Citizen*, for one, noted the negative reaction in English-speaking Canada to Quebec's decision to use the notwithstanding clause in the Constitution to override a Supreme Court decision that would have allowed some English outside commercial signage in the province. "Newfoundland and Manitoba share some blame in the demise of the Accord but Quebec is not pristine."

For its part, however, the *Windsor Star* had no doubt that the villains of the piece were the opponents of the Accord. The debate "has brought out the worst in our country. We have discovered that bigotry is alive and well and that many people would like nothing better than to see the ties that bind French- and English-speaking Canada stretched beyond repair. We have seen inflexible politicians railing against a moderate and sensible constitutional amendment.... We have seen displays of political weakness this week in two provinces — Manitoba

and Newfoundland — that defy logic and reason.... No, Quebec will not go back to the constitutional table any time soon, nor should it. Faith has been broken. Wounds will not heal easily, if they heal at all."

### Coast to coast

The Vancouver *Province* drew similar conclusions. English-speaking Canadian objections to the Accord were essentially technical and could easily have been met: "but throughout this Meech Lake crisis we have seen the real enemy and it is us.... What emerged from the public debate was deep misunderstanding, even distrust, between the two Canadas.... Who can blame Quebec if she refuses to take part in any future constitutional negotiations? How can she trust first ministers who, as Premier Bourassa said, put their signatures on the deal two weeks ago and then don't honour them."

An enthusiastic echo came from New Brunswick's French-language daily, *L'Acadie Nouvelle*: "It is English Canada that must take the blame.... English Canada... has already prepared the post-Meech scenario. 'Blame it on Quebec' and, by extension, on la Francophonie. It's no more complicated, no more intelligent, than that." And, while editorialist Michel Doucet absolved the pro-Meech provincial premiers, he had no patience with their opponents. "The blame must be assumed by the enemies of the Francophones, whether they are themselves Francophones or Anglophones. English Canada has a serious examination of conscience to undertake, after having missed this rendezvous with history."

### Healing to be done

Beyond blame, there was also healing to be done. The *Calgary Herald* took up that theme: "A marvelous opportunity heal the linguistic and

cultural wounds of the past has been missed.... But while we are burying Meech Lake, we should draw strength from the fact that it revealed that Canadians care deeply about their country.... The challenge is to harness the negative energy that has come out of this failure and funnel it into a constructive process. With leadership from above and resolve from below, it can be done. Not only can it be done, it must be done."

The *Montreal Gazette* put its faith in the season: "Canada is not dead, nor will it die unless its people kill it. But it has been seriously hurt; we are fortunate that summer is upon us, a season when the country can pause to heal." However, if healing is to occur, some misapprehensions must be addressed. "There is misunderstanding in Quebec, too. Already the mythology is taking hold that English Canada said No to Quebec. It is important never to forget that most of English Canada said Yes to Quebec.... What failed last week was not Canada, it was a particular legal and political process."

To the *Toronto Star*, however, the whole process was essentially irrelevant. "At best the Meech Lake Accord would have bought some time for the country. But in doing so, it would, in all likelihood, have set in train an evolutionary process that would have reshaped the country." Nevertheless, "it is also becoming clear that the traditional centralist vision may be an unworkable model for Canada so long as it is unacceptable to Quebec.... Only when Quebec and the rest of Canada define their respective visions can a new search begin for common ground."

Federal moves, following the Meech failure, to set in motion a process of bilateral negotiations with Quebec concerning immigration and other matters were warily noted by the *Toronto Globe and Mail*, a staunch supporter of the Meech agreement to the end. "With predictable

haste, Ottawa has responded to the collapse of the Meech Lake Accord by turning its full attention to Quebec, where the failure of the constitutional deal has caused the most damage." The paper warned the government not to go too far. "The failure of Quebec to secure the minimum demands it sought is a setback that must be addressed. Yet, in striving to repair the damage, policy makers in both Ottawa and Quebec City must take into account the good will toward Quebec that has been expressed by the seven other provinces that ratified the Accord. This good will, an essential commodity in enabling Ottawa to address the legitimate concerns of Quebec, is a fragile thing. It will suffer irreparable damage if the federal government is perceived, however wrongly, to be 'giving away the store' in order to appease a restless Quebec." The *Globe* also warned the Tory caucus against trying to take revenge on Meech opponents by, for example, working to withdraw federal support from the Hibernia oil project in Newfoundland, as some Quebec Conservatives had suggested.

Clearly on the same wavelength, *Le Devoir's* Jean-Claude Leclerc warned both Quebec and Ottawa against pettiness. "The 'reprisals' that some have been talking about since June 23 have no place in a free and democratic society....Hardly more intelligent is the tactic of the federal government which, to quickly repair in Quebec the political disaster of Meech Lake, is preparing to rain a manna of 'favours' and to negotiate with Quebec authorities the transfer of more powers than they are prepared to handle at the present time."

### Francophones outside Quebec

In post-Meech Quebec there was also evidence of a new concern for the fate of Franco-

phones living outside the province. "Once again we in Quebec have yielded to the tiresome habit of 'forgetting' the Francophone diaspora," wrote Paul-André Comeau in *Le Devoir*. "At a moment when quiet reflection must prevail over all other considerations, it is urgent and primordial to turn our attention to the relations between Quebec and the whole Francophone family dispersed across the Canadian federation and even the whole

continent.... At the moment when Quebec is plunging into an examination of its future, we must urgently redefine our rather sickly relations with this diaspora....It is in Quebec's interest to ensure close, privileged and the warmest possible relations with these commodities of the Francophone diaspora."

On the same subject, writing in *Le Droit* of Ottawa-Hull, André Préfontaine specifically urged the Quebec government to encourage the participation

of Francophones outside Quebec in the work of the special constitutional commission of the National Assembly, the formation of which had been announced by Premier Bourassa. Also writing in *Le Droit*, Adrien Cantin took up the issue: "It is certainly more important than ever, at the level of the whole Canadian Francophone community, to strengthen ties which, due to the political context of the two last decades, have been weakened." ■

## A Pen-Pal Program

Asbestos, Quebec, is the scene of an innovation in English language teaching. Mel Shantz, a teacher in the intensive English program at Asbestos' École Saint-Jean, is the creator of the pen-pal program, in which his grade 6 students correspond in English with Anglophone residents of the community. The virtues of the program have turned out to go far beyond its pedagogical benefits.

Pen-pals sign up for an exchange of four letters within a month. At the end of the session the students and pen-pals meet for the first time at a party. Norma Day, who also teaches English to adults, has been a pen-pal twice. For some of the children "it was the first time they'd ever met an Anglophone," she says. "I think it was an excellent idea

Mel had — involving the community that way."

Shantz has run the program three times. "It takes a little doing," he says, to recruit the Anglophone participants in the mainly Francophone community. "I was doing pen-pal exchanges between peers," Shantz explains, "but there was a certain amount of peer pressure. I thought if they wrote to adults there would be a new level of seriousness." Many of the pen-pals were over 50; a few were in their 80s.

Only a few of the pen-pals live in Asbestos itself; most have come from the neighbouring town of Dunville. The Anglophone minority population of both communities is an aging one and, Day says frankly, "We jumped at the chance because a lot of us are lonely." But the chil-

dren were also thrilled to participate. "The kids really get into receiving their letters," says Shantz. "It's like mail call at camp."

"The way I feel is that a lot of the problem we have in this country is that we don't understand each other. These children were able to understand what Anglophones are," Day points out. In fact the relationship between the students and their pen-pals becomes much closer than might be expected; often pairs who meet at the party greet each other like long-lost friends.

"For me, teaching adults, communication is the important thing," says Norma Day. She praises the pen-pal program for uniting "two cultures and two extreme age groups. We're communicating," she says. "The country needs more of that." *S.H.*

# D'Iberville Fortier in Europe

Jean Fahmy

**I**n the spring the Commissioner of Official Languages of Canada, D'Iberville Fortier, visited Ontario, Quebec, Manitoba, the Yukon and British Columbia, where he took part in the inauguration of the Maison de la francophonie in Vancouver and in the general meetings of the FFHQ and the Fédération franco-colombienne. He also made a 10-day trip to Europe that took him to Switzerland and France. There he met with politicians, university professors, jurists and specialists with whom he had fruitful exchanges on linguistic duality in Canada and on the linguistic problems that are becoming more and more common in many countries around the globe.

In Switzerland Mr. Fortier met with the two Vice-Chancellors of the Swiss Confederation, François Couchepin and Achille Casanova, and other senior government officials, as well as with Yvette Jaggi, the Syndic (mayor) of Lausanne. Mrs. Jaggi, who is also a senator, is one of the most prominent figures in Swiss political life, and the Commissioner discussed with her the status of minority groups in Switzerland, the status and use of the official languages in the federal Parliament, the future of the linguistic minorities and the role of the central government.

The high point of Mr. Fortier's visit to Switzerland was a lecture and meeting attended by more than 150 persons — senior public servants, members of the various linguistic communities, specialists and jurists — who came to hear the First Swiss Vice-Chancellor, François Couchepin, and the Commis-

sioner each describe the linguistic situation in their respective countries. The similarity of the problems was apparent from this discussion, despite the enormous differences between Canada, where linguistic duality is one of the fundamental facts of public and political life, and Switzerland, where linguistic matters are almost exclusively under the control of the cantons. There was time for questions from the attentive audience after the two men spoke. A more extended discussion of the current linguistic situation in Switzerland will be found further on in this number.

Before leaving Lausanne, the Commissioner also visited the Federal Institute of Comparative Law and met with its President, Joseph Voyame, an internationally renowned jurist.

The Commissioner's visit to France was divided into two parts. In Paris he had meetings with various figures, including senior officials of the Office of the Mediator of the Republic (the ombudsman), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Co-operation and the Canadian Embassy. He also held discussions with Mr. Stélio Farandijs, Secretary-General of the Haut conseil de la francophonie (attached to the office of the President of the Republic) and with Bernard Quémada, Secretary General of the Conseil supérieur de la langue française. Finally, the Commissioner gave a long talk on the linguistic situation in Canada, along the lines of his editorial in *Language and Society* Number 31, to the Institut France-Amérique.

The Commissioner discussed numerous issues with these officials in Paris, including the

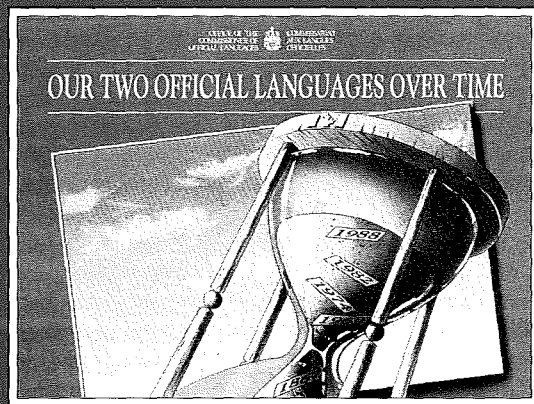
spread of the office of ombudsman to various parts of the world, particularly Africa, Latin America and Eastern Europe, the status of French and the condition of la Francophonie. Everywhere he found keen

interest in the current discussions in Canada and great curiosity about the form that linguistic duality takes here.

In Bordeaux Mr. Fortier took part in a round table on the theme "Language and Culture" organized in connection with the annual meeting of the Association d'amitié France-Canada. One of the French participants in this discussion was the Minister of la Francophonie, Alain Decaux. ■

(Our translation)

## SOON TO BE RELEASED...



The Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages will soon be issuing a chronicle of the major events which mark the history of the development of official languages in Canada since Confederation, including the major judicial decisions.

Copies of **Our Two Official Languages Over Time** may be obtained from:

Communications Branch  
Office of the Commissioner  
of Official Languages  
110 O'Connor Street  
Ottawa, Canada  
K1A 0T8.  
Telephone: (613) 995-0826

# Do Our Young People Believe in Canada?

**W**hat do our young people think of all the media attention to linguistic issues? Recent months have seen a hardening of positions, yet polls last winter showed that 80% of Canadians are in favour of treating the two official languages equally and that three of four parents want their children to learn the other language. Moreover, all surveys show that it is young people who are most in favour of equal status for English and French, that they are generally more open and tolerant than their elders and more interested in exchanges of a linguistic or other nature.

The Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the 1988 Official Languages Act guarantee the language rights of Canadians. However, while the laws are in place to assist, they must reflect the outlook and convictions of Canadians.

The Commissioner of Official Languages, D'Iberville Fortier, like his predecessors, places a great deal of hope in young people because they are the future of the country and because, having the power to transform society, they can promote the emergence of common values. The wealth of a country is not measured solely by its quality of life or its Gross National Product; it is tied to spiritual and cultural values, one of which is linguistic duality.

It is all a question of harmony, as many young people fortunately understand. They do not yet have preconceived ideas and they challenge the prejudices of their elders, whom they persuade to follow their example.

Accustomed to tolerance and coexistence, they want to build bridges instead of erecting barriers. The following are two cases in point.

An example is a student at Fredericton High School enrolled in the French immersion course and chair of the New Brunswick Youth Council. She and a classmate were invited to a conference for adults sponsored by the provincial government and presented a resolution, which was adopted unanimously, calling for funds to be allocated to initiate a dialogue between the two linguistic groups. The project got under way in March when a meeting of delegates from 35 English and French schools, in a mock parliamentary session, committed themselves to putting an end to conflicts arising from language issues.

Another example is a forest ranger in a unilingual English town who, subsequently to a student exchange in which his children participated, followed their example by asking for an immersion visit to a majority French-speaking city in the province. This pioneering father is certainly not the only one who has followed in his children's footsteps. He has counterparts among the silent majority almost everywhere in Canada, for there are lots of young people who say they want to talk "not about what separates us but about what unites us", which is an apt way of putting it.

The Commissioner, aware that young people will shape tomorrow's society, makes a point of

meeting with various youth groups. In a speech to the Canadian Federation of Students last spring, he spoke about linguistic duality and the need to keep a sense of proportion and find solutions at a time of linguistic controversy. Young people also take the initiative: in April, the members of the Key Club International, Eastern District, invited Mr. Fortier to their 43rd annual congress, held this year in Toronto. These future Anglophone and Francophone leaders, ranging in age from 13 to 19, are committed to finding better ways of serving their communities and living in accordance with the values they preach.

The close links that the Office of the Commissioner maintains with Canadian Parents for French also testify to the interest the Commissioner takes in young people and the hope he places in them.

This interest can also be gauged by the pride of place given to the Office's Youth Program, which began in 1975 with the introduction of the "Oh

Canada 1" kit for 7- to 14-year-olds. This program quickly became very popular, and the adventures of the mischievous turtle Geneviève, which continued in "Oh Canada 2", have brought home to more than two million young people the fact that Canada has two official languages. The momentum is there. The Youth Program, building on the success of this experiment, is developing more specific structures. The materials will be designed and produced for specific age groups to ensure that they are effectively targeted and properly interpreted. And, since it has been found that the school environment is the best place to reach most young people, the materials will be distributed in the schools, which play a formative role in terms of attitudes and provide an ideal setting for the effective integration of the program's messages.

In this connection, the Office of the Commissioner from the start has secured the co-operation of the provincial departments of education in providing products adapted to the needs of young people. Accordingly, an initial meeting was held with representatives of the departments of education of five provinces and a delegate from the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada, in January 1984 to define the philosophy and objectives of a program adapted to each age group.

This advisory committee eventually became the cornerstone of the program. For nearly seven years its increasingly numerous members have been meeting in Ottawa to contribute their judicious advice at the various stages of planning, developing, producing and evaluating the Office's "youth products". The committee's 13th meeting is scheduled for November 1990, and for the first time it will include representatives of all the provinces and the two Territories.

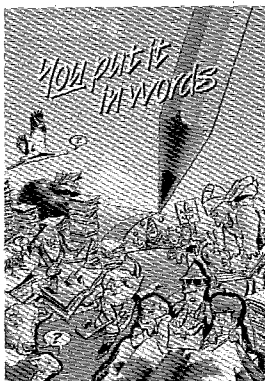


The popularity of these products and the results of the evaluations conducted among young people and teachers testify to the soundness of the procedures in place.

The Office's primary aim is to make young people aware of the equality of status of English and French as official languages, relying on their open-mindedness and tolerance for diversity.

Since its inception, the Youth Program has distributed a wide range of products adapted to every age group. Videotapes, discovery games, stories and posters are all designed to entertain and inform. All these products are offered free of charge on request not only to schools, but also to associations, youth groups and individuals who request them from the Office of the Commissioner.

In 1986, to mark its participation in International Youth Year, the Office launched a writing competition and invited young people to share with it their vision of a bilingual Canada. *You Put It in Words* is a compilation of the prize-winning works in both English and French. Together with the videotape "Fiction in Action", it is now



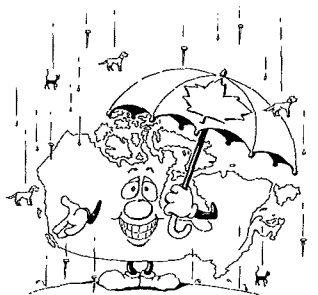
part of a kit offered to teachers and organizations who wish to acquaint themselves with the feelings and ideas of young Canadians living in our country.

## THE MAGIC MURAL



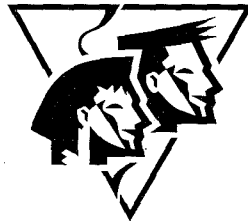
The Office's recent products include two videotapes, both of which are accompanied by an information kit for the user. Younger children will enjoy following the adventures of Daniel and Julie, the two puppets of "The Magic Mural", who quickly become good friends although they do not speak the same language. For older children, "Two Languages, One Country" takes a humorous look at the development of our two official languages over the past 200 years.

## TWO LANGUAGES, ONE COUNTRY

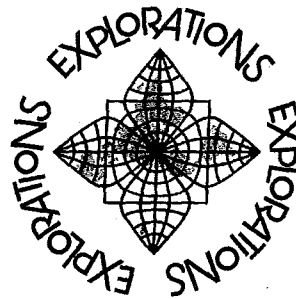


Few grade 11 (or Secondary V) teachers are unfamiliar with the popular *Agenda*, which the Office of the Commissioner has offered students for the past three years. Both practical and informative, this product helps students organize their work and tells them about the historical

## AGENDA



reasons for Canada's linguistic duality and bilingualism, as well as the rights they enjoy under the Official Languages Act and the obligations that go along with them.



"Explorations", a game distributed since 1984 has enabled nearly a million 12- to 14-year-olds to explore the world of languages and discover that various other countries have more than one official language.

Not to be overlooked is the series of posters designed to reinforce the message that the presence of English and of French in Canada is a source of personal enrichment.

It can be said without false modesty that the Office's products are recognized not only for their informative value, but also for their

artistic quality and practicality. As proof, the audio-visual kit "The Magic Mural" and *Agenda 89/90* have each just won two prizes awarded respectively by the Information Services Institute and the International Association of Business Communicators-Capital.

The art of living in a bilingual country? A young Canadian summed it up for us in these words: "To live in a bilingual Canada means some day to achieve understanding and gain a liking for each another as human beings who have something to offer one another and, finally, to achieve unity without making distinctions among us."

The Canada of the future? It is our young people who tell us what it will be like.

Public opinion surveys have repeatedly confirmed that younger Canadians are more open to the concept of linguistic duality. For instance, a Canadian Parents For French/Enviro-nics poll published in February 1990 indicated that younger Anglophones between the ages of 18 to 29 are more likely (39%) than older respondents (27%) to report that their attitudes towards French second-language instruction had become more positive in the last year. Similarly a Telepoll Research survey (October 1989) showed that those between 18 and 24 were significantly more likely than older age groups to view English-French bilingualism on the federal level as a positive feature. Only 17% felt it was a negative feature in the country. This positive attitude suggests that younger Canadians are ready to take full advantage of the opportunities provided by our nation's linguistic duality. ■

(Our translation)

# The Linguistic Ombudsman in Action

Colette Duhaime\*

*The Armed Forces try to avoid shooting themselves, Customs and Excise sets a good example of service to the public, and a job applicant encounters an interviewer exercising unwarranted authority.*

**T**he Complaints and Audits Branch of the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages receives thousands of complaints each year. In this article we will look at four complaints involving the Canadian Armed Forces and one concerning language testing. We will also indicate the measures taken by the Office and the institutions concerned to find solutions to the problems raised.

## War is war

God was surely on the army's side that day!

A gunnery exercise was in progress at CFB Valcartier. Everything seemed to be fine until a unilingual French truck driver, who had not understood orders given in English only, started heading directly towards the target at which a shell was about to be fired.

The situation could have been tragic. An employee, aware of the grave danger involved, decided to make a complaint to the Office of the Commissioner.

The complainant pointed out that the presence of unilingual English and French members on gunnery ranges poses a risk to the safety of personnel.

An investigation showed that, prior to July 1989, two unilingual English master gunners and

one bilingual Francophone had been responsible for giving instructions; this led to situations that could have had tragic consequences.

The Commissioner recommended that the Canadian Armed Forces ensure that all safety officers working with members of both linguistic groups be bilingual. The Department of National Defence and the Armed Forces took the required action. No subsequent incident of this kind has been reported to us.

## Language of instruction in the Armed Forces

In an interview published in *Language and Society* No. 30, the Chief of the Defence Staff, General John de Chastelain, frankly acknowledged the problems and challenges to be overcome before true linguistic equality in the Armed Forces is achieved.

A special study on the language of instruction in the Armed Forces, conducted by the Commissioner's Office as a result of complaints from Francophone military personnel who could not receive instruction in their own language, confirmed that the measures taken had not helped to solve the problem.

The Francotrain program, intended to improve opportunities for instruction in French, did far more to assist Francophone military personnel in receiving instruction in English than it did to provide courses in both official languages.

While some of the documentation was available in French, there were no courses given entirely in French in Air Command or Maritime Command, and the reliability of the data concerning bilingual courses given by Mobile Command and Training Command was questionable.

Most of the Francophone trainees interviewed by the Office of the Commissioner questioned the relevance of providing documentation in French when the courses themselves are given in English only.

Since the audit, the Department of Defence has changed the orientation of its program, which is now called a program of instruction in the two official languages. The number of courses given entirely in French in the classroom has been increased and priority has been given to offering these courses to recruits first and then to all ranks.

The problem of translation remains largely unsolved since the Department does not at present have the required human resources.

The Department will have to make some difficult choices if it wishes to progress and truly increase opportunities to work in French in the Canadian Armed Forces.

## A controversial flight

Prime Minister Mulroney's trip to the Francophone Summit in

Dakar caused much ink to flow and remains a classic case of its kind.

The Office of the Commissioner learned in June 1989, through the Montreal press, that service aboard the Canadian Forces flight taking the Prime Minister and his party to Dakar was not bilingual.

The journalists were going to raise the issue publicly and the Commissioner, even before receiving official complaints, in his capacity as linguistic ombudsman, contacted the Department directly to prevent such a situation from arising again.

An investigation showed that 43% of the crew members were bilingual, but that they were not properly assigned so as to be able to serve the passengers seated forward. As well, the flight attendant on duty on the day in question knew both official languages but did not feel comfortable speaking French.

The Canadian Forces promised to improve service in French, but delayed indicating the specific measures they intended to take. Nine months passed before an answer was forthcoming, and it was still not satisfactory.

The Commissioner therefore recommended that crew members and flight attendants serving the Prime Minister, his close associates and journalists henceforth be functionally bilingual. He is monitoring the situation and anticipating action.

\* Colette Duhaime is a freelance journalist.

**French-language instruction**

Although measures have already been taken to increase the number of bilingual instructors able to give the basic aerospace engineering officer course in French, much remains to be done in the area of French-language instruction in the Canadian Forces.

That is what investigators from the Office of the Commissioner found when they went to CFB Borden to look into a complaint. The aerospace engineering officer course was not offered in French and the documentation in that language was rather limited. The only assistance Francophones could receive took the form of consultations in French to help them better understand the material taught in English.

It seems that the Canadian Forces were unable to offer this

course in French because of a shortage of bilingual training staff. The Commissioner recommended that this situation be rectified and that in future all bilingual instructor positions be filled by persons with the required linguistic abilities. This recommendation was accepted by the Department, which is preparing to implement it.

**Good service from Customs and Excise**

One of our correspondents who had experienced problems in recent years in obtaining service in French at the customs post on Route 81 from the United States to Canada was pleased to tell us that our intervention had been effective.

This traveller had had to pass through border posts on

Route 81 from New York State to Ontario four of five times during the summer. He told us how useful the blue symbol indicating the availability of bilingual services in Lane 2 was and how pleasantly surprised he was to obtain courteous and efficient service from employees of Customs and Excise in the official language of his choice without having to ask for it.

Kudos to Customs and Excise. Let us hope this commendable effort prompts other organizations that deal with the travelling public to follow its good example.

**Language tests on the job?**

Early in 1990 an Anglophone correspondent from the Ottawa-Hull area told us that he had applied for an inde-

terminate bilingual position with a department in the region. He said that the interview took place exclusively in French — which greatly surprised us — and that his candidacy was rejected because, in the interviewer's opinion, his French was not adequate.

We lost no time in contacting the department in question to verify these allegations. When they were confirmed, we reminded departmental officials that it was not their job to measure candidates' linguistic abilities, but that of the Public Service Commission, which uses objective tests for this purpose.

The department acknowledged the error of its ways and the applicant was reinstated in the selection process, as was only proper. ■

*(Our translation)*

# Reader Survey Update

Thank you, readers! The last issue featured a postage-paid reader survey card asking for your opinions on **Language and Society**. Since then, we have been actively assessing your comments and suggestions.

Most of you said that **Language and Society** does an excellent job of providing interesting and timely articles on the language scene in Canada. On the other hand, some useful suggestions have provided "food for thought" to

assist us in making future improvements.

In response to our question about the topics you would like to see covered in future issues, many of you expressed interest in knowing more about the situation in other multilingual countries such as Switzerland or Belgium; educational matters such as second-language retention and French immersion updates and articles on "ordinary" people trying to improve greater understanding between the cultures in Canada.

Your responses are still coming in and we are most encouraged by what you are saying; your views will help us to produce a better magazine.

Your reactions are important to us and we thank those of you who completed the reader survey card and sent it in. For those who did not respond, it is not too late! Please fill out the postage-paid reader survey card from the Summer 1990 issue of **Language and Society** and let us know your suggestions.



# A Very Special Mandate

Tom Sloan

**T**he annual Franco-Ontarian Festival is in full swing in downtown Ottawa on a warm June weekend. The language is French, but not exclusively. English-speaking residents of the city are also enjoying the ambience — the music, the dancing and the general cheerfulness generated by their French-speaking neighbours. Francophones from across the Ottawa River from Hull and the Outaouais region of western Quebec have also joined the festivities. It is a time of joy, of friendship, of mutual understanding and appreciation. And it represents the way many people believe life should always be in this city and the surrounding area.

And why not? This is not only the fulcrum of Canadian political life. It is also geographically the place where Canada's two official language communities meet and mingle in a way they can nowhere else. This is the junction of Ontario and Quebec and more than that, of English- and French-speaking Canada. English-speaking Quebecers join their Francophone neighbours in crossing the river to work in federal government offices in Ontario, and French-speaking Ontarians join their Anglophone neighbours working on the Quebec side, also in federal offices where both official languages are fully recognized. If this region cannot consider it as perfectly normal for its residents to live, work and enjoy themselves in both of Canada's two official languages, where else in this country could they?

This is the dream, the expectation of a great many people. What is the reality? As often happens in Canadian life, the reality is somewhat complex.

## The NCC and the NCR

For both political and geographical reasons the area around Ottawa has always contained strong elements of bilingualism. It was with the passage of the National Capital Act of 1958, which created The National Capital Commission (NCC), followed by the Official Languages Act of 1969, that the issue of the status of the two official languages came explicitly to the fore; since then it has, naturally, been a focal point of attention in the area.

In 1979 the NCC explicitly set out in print its objectives for the area over which it

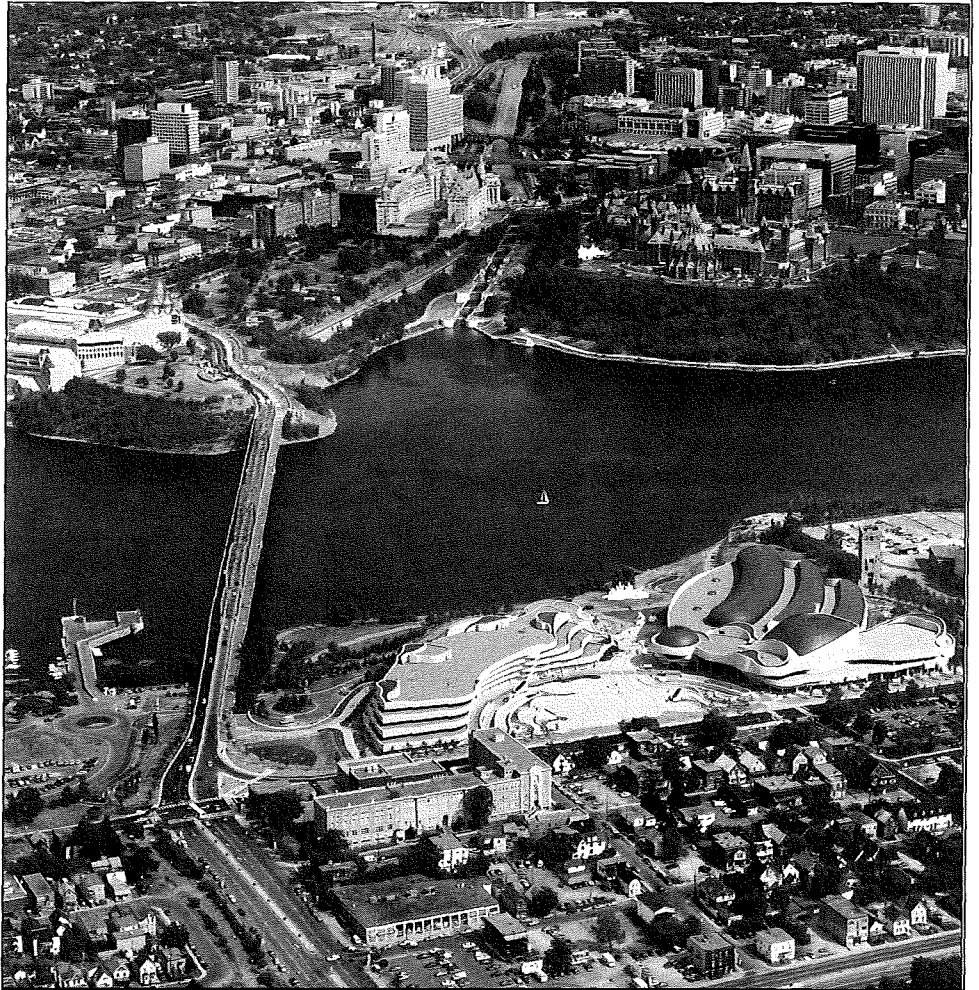


Photo: Adrien Searle - Ottawa

*Is the National Capital Region truly bilingual?  
The dream and the reality.*

shares authority with two provincial governments and a number of local administrations. This is the National Capital Region (NCR), a total of 4,662 square kilometres on both sides of the Ottawa River that divides Ontario and Quebec. The population is slightly more than 800,000, living in 27 separate local municipalities, themselves grouped into two large regional conglomerates: Ottawa-Carleton in Ontario and the Outaouais Regional Community in Quebec.

The NCC's task, as described in the 1979 document, was to create "a capital which stands as a symbol of identity, a model of unity and a source of pride for all Canadians."

The challenge was and is a noble one. It is also complex, because of the very nature of the region. Another NCC document, "A Very Special Mandate", succinctly described the NCR: "Both the country's official languages are in common use in the region and several cultures exist side by side,

making it a living example of Canada's linguistic and socio-cultural character."

The very fact that, despite its uniqueness in several respects, the NCR is a reasonably accurate reflection of the country means that it also reflects at least some of the problems that beset the whole nation. And, like the nation, there is no single authority responsible for what happens within its boundaries. Under the 1958 Act the Commission does indeed have a specific federal mandate within the region. But its authority is severely limited by the provincial and municipal governments that are also involved. In fulfilling its own mandate, the NCC must always take account of the policies and self-proclaimed interests of its governmental partners. Without their co-operation little, if anything, could be accomplished.

**Ottawa**

At the centre of all the activity lies Ottawa. Although its population of just over 300,000 represents less than half of the regional total, it is, both symbolically and in reality, the centrepiece. It is here that, in terms both of physical development and human relations, everything comes together — or is supposed to do so.

In fact, to a significant extent, it does, at least in terms of the relations between Canada's two official languages. Ottawa is no longer the practically unilingual English-speaking city of just a few decades ago.

The Sparks Street Mall, running four blocks east and west, just one block south of Parliament Hill, is the downtown hub of Ottawa. It is also a symbol of both the achievements and the difficulties associated

with the campaign to make Ottawa not only reflect but also offer a model for Canadian linguistic duality.

On the surface, although bilingual signs are increasingly making their appearance in store windows, the atmosphere is overwhelmingly English. The panhandlers panhandle in English and the street musicians sing in it. A unilingual Anglophone will feel right at home. A unilingual Francophone will not.

Nevertheless, behind the scenes things are changing, especially in the area of service to customers. McIntosh & Watts is the quintessential "British" china shop. Today, however, six of the nine sales people are bilingual; and, says the store manager, a capacity to speak both official languages is now a requirement for new employees.

Down the road at Fisher's Men's Wear, the policy is not rigid. But, says co-owner Peter Fisher, the third generation of his family in the business, the rule in all five Fisher's stores is that bilingual capacity is always present. "And we are using it more and more."

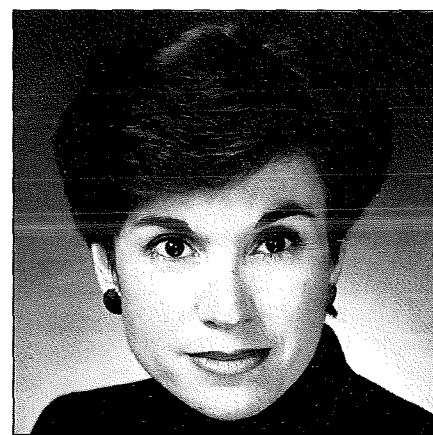
Fisher's and McIntosh & Watts are among the 100 retailer members of the Sparks Street Mall Business Improvement Area, one of several thus-named merchants' associations in Ottawa. The association now prints and distributes elaborate brochures describing the mall and its surroundings. Along with other publications, the brochures are printed in both English and French.

Not surprisingly, bilingualism has been actively encouraged by the federal government. The Department of Public Works and the NCC, which are the principal landlords in the area, both have clauses in

their leases setting minimum standards for the provision of services in both languages with only the smallest operations being exempted. With both governmental and business co-operation, bilingualism is slowly but surely becoming a fact of life on the Sparks Street Mall, itself developing into a model for other shopping areas in the city.

**The business community**

The business community extends far beyond retailing and on the broader front the situation has been changing as well. Le Regroupement des gens d'affaires is now five years old and has some 400 Francophone members throughout the



*Lisa Hopkins, President, Ottawa-Carleton Board of Trade*

capital region, about three-quarters of them on the Ontario side, mostly in Ottawa itself. The group was founded in 1985, not due to any hostility to predominantly Anglophone associations such as the Ottawa-Carleton Board of Trade, but for more positive reasons, according to the Regroupement general manager Denise St-Jean. "We simply decided it was time for us to get together in French." As far as the general situation of French and relations between the two official language communities in the region, "things have improved enormously over the past 20 years," says St-Jean, herself a long-time resident of the NCR.

In fact, she stresses, many of the members of her association are also members of the Board of Trade, which itself is no longer the exclusively Anglophone bastion it once was. English is still the predominant language of operations, but Francophone business people have taken their place on the board of directors, a bilingual publication is in the works, media relations are now carried out in both languages and the bilingual capacity



*Sparks Street Mall, Ottawa*



Monique Cyr, President  
La Chambre de commerce de l'Outaouais

of the office is improving. "We're not yet where we should be," says Lisa Hopkins, board president, who has two of her children in French immersion. "But we're getting there." Bilingual service is now accepted as the norm by board members, she says.

In Hull Hopkins' counterpart is Monique Cyr who, as well as being general manager of the Catholic school board, is also president of La Chambre de commerce de l'Outaouais. The relations between the two business groups for the present consist of one joint meeting a year; but Cyr, along with Hopkins, is looking forward to closer ties. "We should get to know each other better," Cyr says. There are, after all, interests in common, such as the adoption of common positions in relations with the federal government and its departments.

On the Quebec side, not surprisingly, French is the common language of business, with many Anglophones, according to Cyr, fluent in their second language. There is also a strong bilingual capacity among Francophones. "There's a real spirit of tolerance on both sides," Cyr notes, echoing a similar judgement on the part of Ottawa's Hopkins.

While the two organizations remain separate, each tied to its own community, talks are under way to consider areas of common activities, and both Cyr and Hopkins say they look forward to closer contact and co-operation.

If the voices of the private sector are reasonably clear in preaching language accommodation, so too, although with differing emphases, are the voices of government at different levels.

As might be expected, the most unambiguous is the National Capital Commission itself. Jean Pigott, head of the NCC, is somewhat of a paradox. Although

she herself speaks only English, she enthusiastically runs what is perhaps the most thoroughly bilingual institution in the area. "Our mandate," she explains, "is to make this a meeting place for Canadians — a truly functioning bilingual capital." The NCC's role, she says, is one of helping the whole region "to communicate Canada to Canadians — to demonstrate to Canada and the world who and what we are." It is taken for granted that all important conferences that take place in Ottawa will be bilingual. But "we must be bilingual not just in conferences but also on the street," Pigott insists.

Easier said than done, perhaps, since even the NCC cannot dictate the language of the streets. But it can set its own policies

population of the NCC, an exact reflection of the population of the region.

Bonenfant is not alone among Francophone administrators to note a certain psychological resistance among French-speakers to taking advantage of the opportunities to work in French. Bilingualism within institutions "is as much a matter of attitudes as of knowledge," he concludes.

Despite the problems, the NCC remains a model of bilingualism. And its direct influence extends far beyond its own administration. All businesses with which it has contracts to serve the public, for example, must provide service in both official languages. One notable success of its efforts in Ottawa has been increased



Aubry Street, Hull

concerning its own employees, of whom there are about 1,000 in downtown Ottawa. Here, in theory, and to a very large degree in practice, bilingualism is king. All supervisory positions are bilingual, and both English- and French-language training are available to employees at three different skill levels. All NCC services are automatically provided in both English and French and employees are encouraged to use the language of their choice in their work.

Nevertheless, says the Commission's director of official languages, Marcel Bonenfant, there are still problems. One of them is to persuade Francophone staff members to work in their own language. The reluctance, he says, is not because of the absence of French among English-speaking employees, many of whom are proficient and willing to work in both languages. Neither is the problem one of lack of numbers. Francophones make up 35% of the

bilingual services, including menus, in the capital's restaurants. In this respect, as, for that matter, in the quality of the cuisine, it would be impossible to compare the Ottawa of 1990 with the city of three, or even two, decades ago.

In more general terms the Commission sees its role as one of encouraging bilingualism wherever it can in the capital region. Jean Pigott would most emphatically not be averse to the creation of an autonomous region, including both sides of the river, where the use of both languages would be actively encouraged, and provincial language laws would not apply. The fact that, even before the failure of the Meech Lake Accord, this was an unlikely development, did not cause her to waver in her support for the idea.

Second only to the NCC itself as a major participant in the fight for bilingualism is the City of Ottawa and its administration.





Sparks Street Mall, Ottawa

Appropriately enough, the first major steps in the recognition of French in the city came at the same time as did the modern development of official language policies at the federal level. It was in 1970, a year following the first Official Languages Act, that the city adopted a by-law expanding services to its Francophone population. Before that, laconically comments the city's director of official languages, Georges Rochon, "it was a matter of good will."

As services gradually expanded during the following decade, pressures built for Ottawa to move ahead. In 1980 a report recommended that the city become officially bilingual. That action was taken in 1982. Five years later a progress report on language policies gave the city reasonable marks for its accomplishments.

Not surprisingly, in a city where 80% of the population is English-speaking, bilingualism has not meant strict language equality. English remains the basic language of operations within the administration.

There is, however, some opportunity for Francophones, who account for 20% of the city's employees, to work in their own language. This is made possible by the usage in some areas of the work unit system which ensures that services are delivered in the language of choice of the citizen while allowing many staff members to work in their own language.

Language director Rochon estimates that 40% of municipal employees are bilingual. Proud of the achievements of his city, Rochon notes that "part of what we have achieved reflects the efforts of successive administrations and part reflects the general evolution of Canadian society."

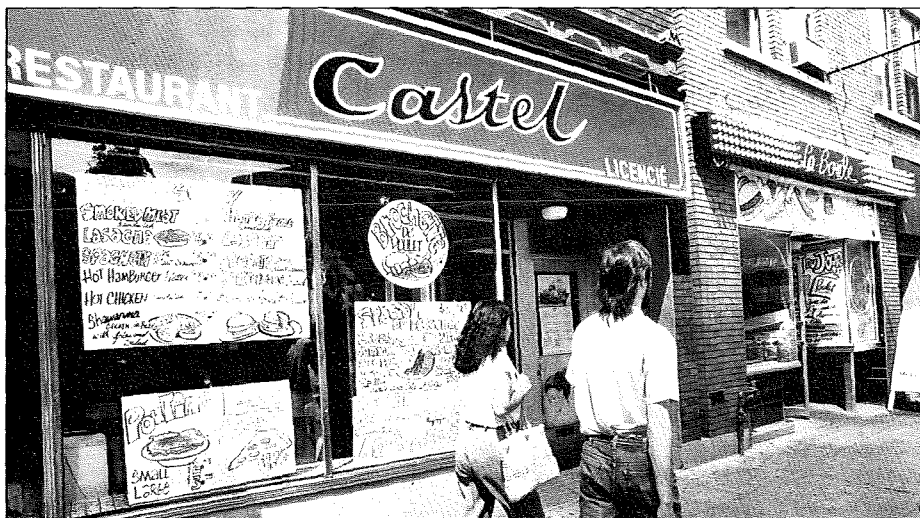
Shortcomings, however, persist. Gaps in French-language services remain, particularly in the field of leisure and recreation. Mireille Landry-Kennedy, head of the French-language advisory committee, sees things as far from perfect. "The Francophone community should become more militant if it doesn't receive the services it should. If people don't complain, no one worries." One problem, she says, is the lack of a central co-ordinator for French-language services, along with inadequate information on what services are available. "No one really knows just what's being offered."

Nevertheless, even a watchful critic such as Landry-Kennedy is pleased with what has been achieved. "Ottawa is a leader in offering services in both languages. We didn't have to wait for Bill 8 [the Ontario French Language Services Act]."

In City Hall, Jeff Polowin, director of communications for Mayor Jim Durrell, is also proud of his city. "We have worked hard to change our image." Like Jean Pigott, he sees Ottawa as a natural meeting place for Canadians, both as individual visitors and as members of organizations. Where the Ottawa administration does not see eye to eye with the NCC is in what it sees as a tendency to downplay that fact that it is Ottawa, and not "Ottawa-Hull", that is the national capital. Some NCC publications, Polowin complains, don't even refer to "Ottawa" at all. The disagreement may be essentially symbolic, but it is real.

**Hull**

Across the river, Mayor Michel Légère of Hull has some quite different bones to pick with the NCC — one of them being the idea that consideration be given to declaring the whole region a special bilingual area. "Impossible," replies Légère. Hull has its own unique character as the entrance to Quebec and its distinct society. Any attempt to homogenize the region linguistically will be resisted. "Hull and Ottawa are like two lungs, each with its own character. Quebec begins here." In Hull, city officials insist, the French language and culture must be predominant. And Quebec's language laws, with their restrictions on English, are an essential part of the landscape. "I can't imagine the day when Quebec would accept this region being treated differently from any other part of the province," says Roch Lapointe, head of the regional tourist office. When it comes to tourism, however, one language gives way to two. All employees speak both languages and an English edition



Promenade du Portage, Hull

of the impressive Outaouais tourist guide is available. In this context, English is welcome.

While, unlike Ottawa, Hull is officially unilingual, city officials emphasize that its Anglophone population — 6% of the total of 60,000 — can receive municipal services in English, as does the 30,000 strong English-speaking population of most municipalities in the area.

When it comes to symbols, however, tempers sometimes flare. During the 1989 opening of the Canadian Museum of Civilization in Hull, when the city put up banners on the NCC-operated road leading to it that said simply, and unilingually, “Bonjour”, the result was a testy exchange of letters between Léglise and NCC head Pigott, followed by an uneasy compromise. Another dispute occurred last winter when, in the major’s absence, Hull officials refused to allow signs that announced the coming of “Winterlude”, as well as “Bal de Neige”, the region’s winter fair. On his return, Léglise reversed the decision and a measure of bilingual communication was allowed on the Quebec side.

Whatever else they may mean, such disputes underline the tensions that continue to simmer between policies emphasizing the ideal of bilingualism and those based on a defence of French, seen as a language under siege everywhere in North America, not excluding Quebec.

**Chelsea**

A few kilometres away, the view is different. This is what used to be the municipality of West Hull, which last spring changed its name to Chelsea with the blessing of the Quebec government. The former name, explains Mayor Judy Grant, was nothing but a partly inaccurate geographical description. Chelsea, also the name of one of the dozen hamlets that make up the municipality of 4,000, is accepted by both English- and French-speaking residents as a historically significant designation. In fact, it was two Francophone councillors who formally proposed the new name.

Chelsea is one of the two most completely bilingual municipalities in the whole region, the other being Vanier, a Francophone enclave surrounded by Ottawa, in Ontario.

Due to the fact that Anglophones remain in a slight majority, Chelsea is one of 96 of 1,490 municipalities in Quebec recognized as officially bilingual under provincial law. Its outside municipal signs, its publications and its municipal council employ both



*Judy Grant, Mayor of Chelsea and Jean Pigott, head of the NCC*

official languages. “We have no language problems here at all,” says Mayor Grant, who describes herself as basically unilingual. This must, however, be understood in the context of Quebec, where many Anglophones, such as Grant, while they may not be fluent in French, are fully capable of working within a bilingual environment, including participating in meetings that take place in both languages.

Chelsea is just one of a dozen municipalities that make up the Outaouais Regional Community. The sole official language of the ORC is French, but in areas with sizeable Anglophone populations there is generally little trouble gaining access to English-language municipal services. Ironically, in some cases, including at least a few golf clubs catering to Anglophone business from the Ontario side, it is Francophones who complain about the absence of French. In general, however, the picture is one of reasonable language harmony.

**Ottawa-Carleton**

In Ontario the equivalent is the Regional Municipality of Ottawa-Carleton. It is the fourth-largest metro area in Ontario and, due to its location, mostly within the NCR, it has its own peculiar linguistic challenges.

Like the Outaouais, Ottawa-Carleton is responsible for providing metropolitan services across a wide area. Like the Outaouais, it is involved in the provision of elementary and secondary education to children speaking both official languages. The regional government provides services

for some 600,000 people divided into 15 local municipalities. Most of them are overwhelmingly English; but a few are not, which puts the region squarely in the middle of the languages issue. “Ottawa-Carleton recognizes linguistic duality,” explains Diane Charron, metro director of official languages. But, due to the wide disparities in the percentage of the French-language population among the various constituent municipalities, in practice the recognition is somewhat spotty. The metro council meetings are in English, but simultaneous interpretation facilities are available for all regional activities. The 3,000 employees are mostly Anglophone but second-language training is available and some senior posts are designated bilingual. In eastern areas, such as Cumberland and Gloucester, local French-language services are reasonably developed because Francophones form a large portion of the population. In several others, services are still minimal and, in the overwhelmingly Anglophone township of Osgoode, the language issue briefly turned



*Rolande Soucie, President Association canadienne-française de l'Ontario.*

ugly several months ago with an attempt to pass a resolution that would have followed the lead of some other Ontario municipalities which declared themselves unilingually English. The motion was defeated.

In the midst of this varied and sometimes confusing reality, how do the official language minorities perceive their own situation?

**ACFO**

Rolande Soucie, for one, is reasonably optimistic. She is the president of the Association canadienne française de l'Ontario (ACFO). An Ottawa resident herself, Soucie can remember different and less auspicious times in the national capital.



Appropriately enough, the ACFO office is located in Vanier, the only majority French-speaking municipality in the Ontario portion of the NCR, a community surrounded by Ottawa. Today, Vanier is a vibrant, active town, with a majority Francophone council and much French-language activity. But Soucie remembers when, even in Vanier, French tended to be marginal, the language used at church parish and other rather restricted activities, but very inconsistently in daily life. In Ottawa, the only place French could be heard on the street, even occasionally, was in the area around the market called Lower Town. "Once you got to Rideau Street, if you spoke French people looked at you." This is no longer the case. "French is accepted everywhere, though of course there's still progress to be made." One thing is still missing, Soucie contends, is a certain reflex among Francophones — an instinctive unreadiness to use French on occasions where it should be perfectly acceptable to do so. Even in Vanier, she notes, Francophone businesses sometimes hesitate to post French signs.

Aline Chalifoux, ACFO regional president for Ottawa-Carleton, agrees the question of reflex is vital. "Anglophones are much more tolerant than they were, but the use of French is not as normal as it should be. There is apathy on both sides." Francophones, she laments, are still hesitant about demanding their rights, even where the administration, at any level, is ready, willing and able to recognize them.

There are still some areas, however, according to ACFO, where French-language services remain inadequate, especially in the provision of health care and social welfare services. In the field of education, the post-secondary gap is only now being filled by a new exclusively Francophone college of applied arts and sciences, which opens its doors this fall and will eventually replace the present bilingual Algonquin College.

**Minorities**

In the Outaouais the Anglophone minority is also looking to its future. Despite continuing resentment over the law banning English on outdoor signs and new concerns resulting

from the failure of Meech Lake, Anglophones here, like Francophones in Ottawa, are pleased with some developments, including the establishment of Heritage College as an independent English-language post-secondary institution in Hull. Other signs of progress, says Bob May, president of the Anglophone rights group, the Outaouais Alliance, include improvements in the delivery of health and social services as a result of Bill 142, the provincial law guaranteeing those services to the Anglophone community. "All things considered, we're not so badly off," May concludes. "But we're lucky to be living in west Quebec, and near Ottawa."

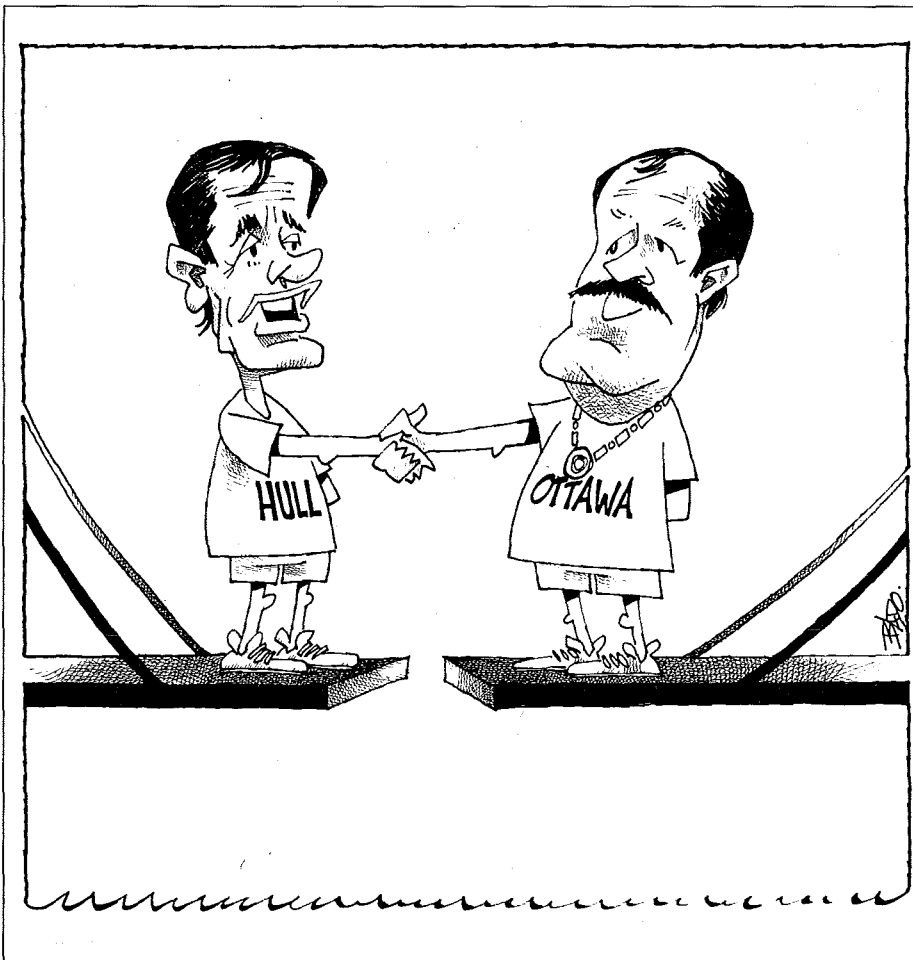
The same observations, ironically, could be made of the Francophones of eastern Ontario. In terms of language rights it pays to live near Ottawa — and especially within the National Capital Region.

**The Commissioner**

Keeping a close eye on the development of the whole situation, the Commissioner of Official Languages, D'Iberville Fortier, has not hesitated to intervene in discussions over the region's present and future. A 1988 survey confirmed the spottiness of the availability of services in both languages, especially in the private sector, but also noted "a remarkable increase in second language skills" on the part of individuals. Between 1971 and 1986 the percentage of NCR residents who claimed to speak both official languages rose from 32.4 to 42.2, with an especially dramatic rise in the number of bilingual Anglophones in Quebec.

In recent years the Commissioner has called for more bilingual signage in Ontario, a new federal-provincial agreement to encourage both languages in both Ontario and Quebec, and the creation of a new federal government mechanism to bring together people and institutions interested in official language promotion in the area.

Shortly after the lively Franco-Ontarian festival in Ottawa, another tradition is honoured as, on the morning of July 1, Canada Day, the mayors of Hull and Ottawa meet in the middle of the bridge connecting the two cities over the Ottawa River. As usual, it's a friendly encounter, symbolizing the unity in diversity that is supposed to characterize the region where both men have powerful posts as well as high profiles. Regardless of events in the constitutional field, many citizens of the region hope this particular tradition, along with the good will it is intended to symbolize, will continue. ■



*Progress, Delays and Status Quo*

# Minority Language Education after the Supreme Court Decision

Jean-Claude Le Blanc

***The Supreme Court of Canada ruled unanimously that minority language parents have a right to management and control of the schools in which their children are taught. Coast to coast, has the ruling made for change?***

**O**n March 15, 1990, eight years after Section 23 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms came into force, the Supreme Court of Canada handed down a unanimous decision written by Chief Justice Dickson in the case of *Mahé v. the Attorney General of Alberta*.<sup>1</sup> It was the first ruling by the highest court in the land on the broad issue of the educational rights granted by the Charter to official language minorities everywhere in Canada.

## School management

The central issue was the right of minorities to manage their

*The Court clarified the meaning and scope of the right to instruction.*

own schools. "Where numbers warrant," the Court ruled, "s. 23 confers upon minority language parents a right to management and control over the educational facilities in which their children are taught." The Court

considerably clarified the meaning and scope of the right to instruction, defined the content of the right of management and set out the principles that should govern its exercise.

The Supreme Court also condemned the "inaction of the public authorities", who have failed to discharge their obligation under Section 23. These authorities must therefore, where required, "delay no longer in putting in place the appropriate minority language education scheme."

What has since been done in this regard? Have appropriate measures been taken or are they, at least, in preparation? Now that the right is broadly defined, are the required reforms — the definition and implementation of the "appropriate scheme" — ensuing? Is this being done with dispatch? A survey from east to west will tell the story.<sup>2</sup>

## Less uncertainty

Broadly speaking, the *Mahé* decision markedly reduced the uncertainty surrounding the rights of one party and the obligations of the other. It brought the constitutional demands of parents and official language minority communities into relation with what provincial and territorial authorities now regard as their constitutional obligations.

Briefly, the decision gave the minorities a little less than they thought they were entitled to, while the authorities were asked to give considerably more than they generally seemed disposed to offer. One thing is certain — the *principles* that must govern the implementation of Section 23 were clearly set out. That in itself is a great deal.

## Prince Edward Island

While the decision of March 15 seems to have had the effect of at least delaying educational reform in Saskatchewan, it had no such impact in Prince Edward Island. In fact, in the wake of a decision (resulting from a reference to the province's Supreme Court) clearly favourable to the Island's Acadian population and of wide-ranging consultations over a two-year period, the Lieutenant-Governor in Council issued new regulations on February 8, 1990.

These regulations formally recognize the right of the minority to manage the provision of instruction in French and the facilities that provide it. Made under the 1988 school legislation, which recognized the right of those covered by Section 23 to participate in the development and delivery of programs of instruction in the French

language, these regulations came into force as scheduled, smoothly and without fanfare, on July 1.

Did the decision of the Supreme Court of Canada fully

*The "inaction of the public authorities" was condemned.*

legitimize Prince Edward Islands's action? It certainly did not compromise it. The result: two school maps (Anglophone and Francophone) assured funding and a French-language school board — in Unit 5, which is Francophone — whose jurisdiction extends throughout the province.

## Nova Scotia and Newfoundland

While some thought may have begun to be given to the issue and to defining the outlines of an appropriate minority language educational system and the method of achieving this goal, no concrete proposal is yet apparent. It would seem that dispatch is not being shown.

In Nova Scotia the Halifax-Dartmouth school and community centre will open in September 1991. It is hard to imagine that the province can entrust the administration of this centre to anyone other than the region's Acadian community. Moreover, it will have to do this well before the opening of the centre. This will provide it with an opportunity to review the system for managing Acadian schools throughout the province. Will it do so?

At first sight, with a number of denominational systems protected by the Constitution, Newfoundland would seem well versed in dealing with small numbers of pupils, small schools and small school boards. The province, however, is far from having designed, much less made operational, an "appropriate minority language education scheme." The Schools Act and the formal policies arising from it are still silent on the subject. It is as if Section 23 did not exist.

The picture is not entirely black, however. September 1988 saw the opening of a school and community centre in Grand'Terre, and the Labrador and Port au Port school boards have accepted Francophone representatives. This, however, falls far short of exclusive management in areas that the Supreme Court has defined as being relevant to the French language and culture.

**New Brunswick**

The linguistic homogeneity of the educational system is complete and the principle of "equal partnership" enunciated by the Supreme Court is fully respected. An appropriate system was in place before the Charter was proclaimed; it marked the end of quarrels and conflicts about the language of education.

Both the English- and French-speaking communities are served by a system of schools

and school boards throughout the province, as well as by a division within the Department of Education headed by two deputy ministers. An Anglophone deputy minister is responsible for English-language education and a Francophone deputy minister for French-language education. The unity of the province's educational system is assured by the Department.

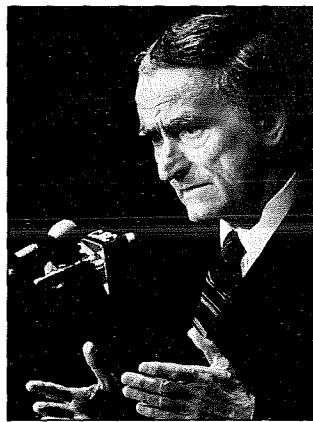
There is no doubt that an "appropriate minority language education scheme" is indeed in place. There is only one problem, to our knowledge: the criteria for admission to a French school, contrary to the provisions of Section 23 of the Charter, exclude eligible children who, for whatever reason, are unilingual Anglophones or do not have an adequate knowledge of French.

**Quebec**

In December 1984 Quebec adopted the Public Elementary and Secondary Education Act, the purpose of which was to replace the Protestant and Catholic school boards with English and French school boards. No sooner had it been passed by the Lévesque government than Bill 3 was challenged on the grounds that it infringed

been to check the gradual erosion of the traditional linguistic homogeneity of the Protestant (Anglophone) and Catholic (Francophone) sectors and to re-establish greater cohesion. This erosion has led to a situation where Anglophones and Francophones are becoming "minorities" and find themselves unable, in the other's sector, to exercise full educational control.

The current Minister of Education, Claude Ryan, therefore took up the issue and



Claude Ryan *The Ottawa Citizen*

tabled Bill 107 in December 1987. This Bill, the Education Act, along with Bill 106, an Act respecting school elections, was adopted a year later, on December 23, 1988. These Acts

among the various partners in education.

Since some of the Bill's provisions are liable to be found invalid under Section 93 of the Constitution Act, 1867, the Government decided to implement only some of them and immediately asked for the opinion of the Quebec Court of Appeal before introducing the new system of linguistic school boards, which, incidentally, preserves the right of members of a religious minority to exercise their dissenting rights within the new linguistic school boards.

The case was heard last winter and it is expected that whatever decision is handed down will be appealed to the Supreme Court of Canada. The resulting delays in promulgating these provisions of Bill 107 are a source of increasing disquiet among the Anglophone minority in Quebec, which more acutely feels the problems inherent in the current educational structures. That is why Alliance Quebec has continued to encourage the Government to negotiate an amendment to Section 93 that would provide a constitutional guarantee of educational management for the English-speaking community in Quebec.

Responding to the Supreme Court's decision in the Mahé case, Quebec's Minister of Education stated that recognition of the constitutional right to educational management did not cause his government any difficulty. Improvements in this regard, however, will have to await clarification of the constitutional issues raised by Bill 107.

The minister acknowledged, moreover, that the decision would force the government to be more attentive to the linguistic and cultural concerns of its official language minority when designing educational programs. This "might take the

*Claude Ryan said the right to educational management did not cause the Quebec government any difficulty.*

the rights and privileges guaranteed to Protestants and Catholics by Section 93 of the Constitution Act, 1867.

On June 25, 1985, the Quebec Superior Court enjoined the government from "taking any measure or action designed to implement the aforesaid Act." The government's intent had

make the formation of an orientation committee, consisting of representatives of parents and school staff, obligatory at each school, in addition to the school committees made up of parents. The orientation committees serve as a means of co-ordination and consultation



form of the addition of a separate cultural and linguistic component to provincial programs of instruction, or the introduction of special programs that, while meeting the specific needs of the minority, would not cancel out or conflict with provincial programs, or of active and direct participation in the preparation of the provincial programs themselves."

**Ontario**

The Government of Ontario, facing a challenge under Section 23 of the Charter, had agreed to a reference on the issue, and the Ontario Court of Appeal confirmed, in 1984, the right of Ontario Francophones to manage their own schools. Subsequent to April 17, 1982, when the Charter came into force, Ontario was the first jurisdiction which was clearly required to do so to revise its Education Act, thereby giving effect to the corrective character of Section 23.

Legislation was tabled late in November 1985, and Bill 75, promulgated the following year, provided for guaranteed proportional representation for the linguistic minority throughout the province and created a Francophone school board in the metropolitan Toronto region. One of the temporary measures that took effect in September 1986, Bill 75 came into full force in September 1988 when French-language school boards were created in Toronto and Ottawa-Carleton. These two models of school administration — guaranteed proportional representation and separate school boards — had been recommended since the 1982 report of the Joint Committee on French-language elementary and secondary school administration.

Despite the dissatisfaction frequently expressed by Franco-Ontarians in all regions of the province with the inadequacy

and operational problems of guaranteed proportional representation and the many requests to create French-language school boards in other regions, there was little movement in Ontario for some years. Legal action was contemplated or initiated.

At first sight, the Supreme Court decision did not seem to change much, although it made clear the need to establish separate school boards in certain regions where numbers clearly warranted. There was a pleasant surprise, however, on June 29. The Minister of Education, Sean Conway, stated that "this government...is committed to creating new French-language school boards in Ontario." Among other measures, the minister set up an advisory



Sean Conway *The Ottawa Citizen*

group consisting of five persons that, by December 31, 1990, will recommend criteria for the creation of French-language school boards and propose new ways of providing for the management of French schools in other places.

Early in 1991 the Government will also establish a standing commission to oversee the operation of independent French-language boards. However, unless a comprehensive plan is put in place and appropriate legislation adopted, French-language school boards will not be established until the next school

board elections, held every three years, take place. It may be possible, though, to establish a few new school boards before 1994, particularly where the ground is already well prepared, as for example in Prescott-Russell, Simcoe and Stormont-Dundas-Glengarry.



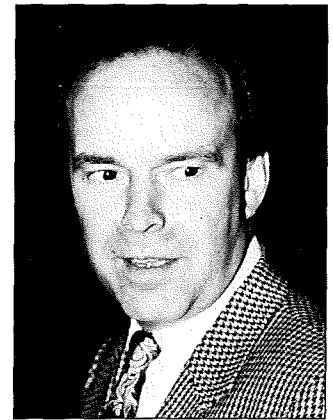
Gary Filmon *The Ottawa Citizen*

**Manitoba**

At the end of June Premier Filmon said that he intended, after consultation with those concerned, to define this summer the mandate and composition of a task force that could set to work in the fall. It will most likely be charged with proposing methods to the Minister of Education of ensuring that Franco-Manitobans can exercise the right to manage instruction in the language of the minority, as well as the facilities that provide it. The Minister of Education, Len Derkach, announced on August 2 that the task force would be chaired by Edgar Gallant and would submit its report on May 31, 1991. The considerable amount of thought that parents and the community have devoted to the subject in recent years will, as was the case elsewhere, make them partners whose contribution (which is essential) will very likely be as substantial as it is constructive.

**Saskatchewan**

The first *visible* impact of the Supreme Court decision was disappointment for those who



Grant Devine *The Ottawa Citizen*

thought that it would markedly accelerate the implementation of the provisions of Section 23 of the Charter. On Friday, April 20, 1990, the Association provinciale des parents francoskois unofficially learned that the Government had decided at least to delay the tabling of legislation required to put in place the Francophone "component" of the province's educational system.

On the same day various reactions — including that of the Commissioner of Official Languages — began to pour into Regina in an effort to persuade the province to reconsider its decision. On Monday, April 23, the Minister of Education, on the contrary, confirmed it.

On that date the Prime Minister, responding to an appeal from Francophone parents in Saskatchewan and the Commission nationale des parents francophones, interceded with Premier Devine and offered him "all the federal assistance required" to enable his government "to overcome the legal and constitutional problems responsible for delaying the tabling of the bill to grant Fransaskois the management of their schools." What had happened? In the view of some, the reform that Saskatchewan was about to launch went further than the Supreme Court decision required. According to others, it

threatened to set too generous, and indeed troublesome, a precedent for certain governments, in particular that of Alberta.

Still others feel that the problem arose mainly from the existence of differences of opinion within the Francophone community itself, especially in Gravelbourg. For lack of resources or other reasons, they say, the necessary community work was not far enough advanced, and this irritated the politicians.

In any event, whether or not the scope of the task was underestimated, the many discussions and consultations that have since taken place within the province give every reason to believe that this is essentially a delay and not a retreat and that the required legislative and other measures can be taken in time for the Francophone component of the educational system to be in place by September 1991.

**Alberta**

In the province where the case that gave rise to the Supreme Court decision originated it is still difficult to assess its impact accurately. Officials of the Alberta Department of Education issued "French Education in Alberta — Discussion Paper" on April 23. The principles set out in this document are a faithful reflection of the Supreme Court decision.

Although less generous, its proposals are not, in themselves, in conflict with the decision. In theory, they could lead to the establishment of an adequate system of school management by the minority, or something close to it. However, if a system of regional school boards covering most of the province is to be established, an enormous amount of good will will be required.

Alberta's approach is fundamentally different from the approaches taken in

Saskatchewan, Prince Edward Island and the Yukon. It provides for the gradual introduction of elements that could constitute an appropriate system. But the introduction of effective management methods would depend on the prior existence of schools, and the schools, in turn, in very large measure on the good will and

*Alberta's approach is different from that of Saskatchewan, Prince Edward Island and the Yukon.*

active offer of the existing school boards — which are controlled by the majority.

The foreseeable results: need-less tensions between Francophone parents and school officials, interminable and sterile conflicts, a waste of human energy and a painful decade ahead before, in the words of the Supreme Court, an "appropriate minority language education scheme" becomes operational, before justice is done and the objectives of Section 23 are achieved. The provincial authorities seem subsequently to have realized this.

The Association canadienne-française de l'Alberta and the Fédération des parents francophones had made a thorough study of the issue and in January began wide-ranging consultations to define the appropriate procedures for implementing Section 23 in the province. However, their work was not yet finished when the province laid its own proposals before them.

The Alberta Teachers' Association and the Alberta School Trustees' Association publicly took positions, in light of the Supreme Court decision, in favour of recognition by the Government of the right of the minority to manage its own schools and the corresponding need for Alberta to put in place a French-language educational system. Then, in a letter to the chairman of the St. Paul school board on June 1, the Minister of Education, Jim Dinning, formally approved the opening of a French school next September and confirmed the obligation of the neighbouring school boards to pay the costs of pupils within their jurisdictions who enrol in it. Movement in Legal and appropriate funding by the St. Isidore school board under a new provincial policy are other examples of progress, credit for which belong mainly to a Minister of Education who is taking his responsibilities more seriously. Both the style and the climate have changed.

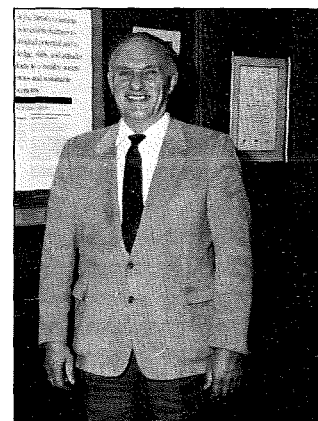
With the emergence of a clear consensus, at least on principles, between Franco-Albertans and the provincial teachers and school trustees associations, it seems increasingly likely that the government will consult further and establish a multipartite task force with the mandate of proposing to the Minister of Education methods of establishing a minority subsystem of education, along the lines of those in the two neighbouring provinces. Under such an arrangement, the federal Department of the Secretary of State might also participate in funding its operation, as it does in British Columbia. Action may be taken in the fall and a bill tabled in the spring of 1991.

**British Columbia**

The Supreme Court decision markedly accelerated the process of educational reform in British Columbia. Four days after the decision, the counsel

for the Association des parents du programme cadre de français proposed to the provincial Attorney General a series of conditions under which the legal action brought against the province could be deferred if not dropped. An agreement was reached three weeks later, on April 9.

The initial meetings to give effect to this agreement were held on April 23. On May 4 British Columbia's Minister of Education, Tony Brummet, announced the formation of a 17-member task force with representatives of all those involved in education in the province. It was asked to propose criteria, by January 1991, for the exercise of the educational rights guaranteed by Section 23, including management, "in a spirit of openness and generosity." The task force is headed by Edgar Gallant assisted by Del Lyngseth, the same team responsible in Saskatchewan for the submission to the



Tony Brummet

government of a unanimous report recommending the establishment of an "appropriate minority language education scheme."

**The Yukon**

Meanwhile the Yukon was setting the tone, taking the lead from the achievements of Prince Edward Island, the smallest province in Canada. Not only

was the definition of the minority educational system completed, it was enshrined in a forward-looking education act. Moreover, this Act was adopted by the smallest jurisdiction in the country — with barely 24,000 inhabitants in all — serving the smallest linguistic minority in Canada.

The Yukon gave optimists cause for renewed confidence and provided all of Canada with a model by passing a new Education Act on May 14, 1990. The Government thereby completed the first phase of a broad reform of education taking place over a number of years and marked by numerous consultations. The interests of the minority had not been the original concern of this reform, but they were well served by it.

The results: three months after the Act comes into force the advisory committees at each school will be replaced, after an election, by a school board. This applies as well to the only French school, L'École Emilie Tremblay in Whitehorse. These

*A minority language educational system must be separate.*

new legislative provisions will make the creation possible, within two years, of a French-language school board with jurisdiction over the whole vast territory of the Yukon. Like Prince Edward Island, the Yukon thereby recognizes the principle of "equal partnership" enunciated by the Supreme Court in the Mahé case. Similarly, central funding is also ensured.

**The Northwest Territories: A much less satisfactory situation**

The Minister of Education of the Northwest Territories told representatives of the territorial official language minority in the wake of the Supreme Court decision that he anticipated creating a legislative committee to look into the entire issue, including the question of instruction in aboriginal languages. Francophones in the Territories could not help wondering whether this was a delaying tactic. Only the future will tell whether action is being taken with dispatch.

**Conclusion**

What can we conclude from this survey of school management by official language minorities across Canada? Without minimizing the essential role played everywhere by court action, whether actually brought or whether the threat of it sufficed, we draw three conclusions.

First, important initiatives have been taken in the space of one season. In the four months since the Supreme Court decision, aside from Quebec and New Brunswick, which were hardly affected by it, a number of provinces and one territory have initiated or pursued reform in the prescribed direction, while two other provinces and the other territory have marked time.

Second, in order to be truly "appropriate", a minority language educational system must be separate; it must be linguistically homogeneous. If it is to blend in with the educational system unique to each province because of its history and geography, a separate system may take a great variety of forms and structures. But the objective remains the same: a system that fully reflects the principles set out by the Supreme Court in its decision of March 15, 1990,

and one that constitutes an *effective* means of achieving the aims of Section 23 of the Charter. Such a system in its various forms is found first of all in New Brunswick, where it is comprehensive, but also in Prince Edward Island; such a system will soon be in place in the Yukon and probably in Saskatchewan.

To a large extent it has existed for a very long time in Quebec, where the Anglophone minority has educational institutions of its own at all levels, and there is a good

*Important initiatives have taken place.*

chance that it will soon be in place in British Columbia, Manitoba and perhaps in Alberta as well. Ontario is beginning to improve its system. In every case, the system will be comprehensive to the extent that an administrative division, at the appropriate level, will be responsible for the Department's services related to minority language instruction. In short, we are speaking of a homogeneous system of minority language instruction put in place by the authorities concerned on a province-wide or territory-wide basis.

It must be acknowledged that *linguistic homogeneity* of the system of school management is a logical consequence of the homogeneity of the school — a vital necessity which, in 1990, is not seriously challenged anywhere in Canada. We have once and for all seen the end of the mixed school, whether bilingual or dual- or triple-tracked. If any

doubt remained after the thorough research conducted by Rodrigue Landry over the past 12 years or after Stacy Churchill's demonstration of the effects of the bilingual school on Franco-Ontarians, the Supreme Court has put it to rest.

The third conclusion has to do with the *process* of reaching a consensus among those principally responsible for education in a province or territory, a consensus that must enjoy the solid support of the minority official language community, both when designing the system and when implementing it at the local level.

While not perfect, the process followed in Saskatchewan stands as a model. However, the wide-ranging consultations held in Prince Edward Island and the Yukon also led to the same objectives being achieved. Such a process appears to be all the more necessary when the task is complicated by the existence of a large number of clients to be reached, consolidated and served or by the need to reconcile denominational educational rights with linguistic rights. The "appropriate scheme", as well as the process used to develop and then implement it, will continue to require flexibility, imagination and creativity. To take up such a challenge is extremely stimulating for all those privileged to participate in the process! ■

(Our translation)

**Notes**

<sup>1</sup> Our No. 31 (Summer 1990) published a summary of this historic decision.

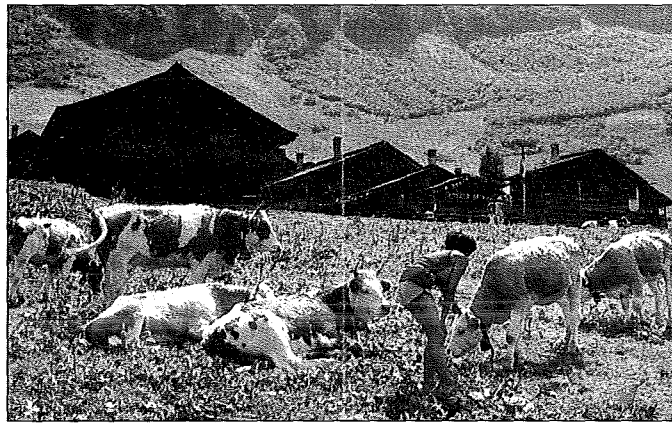
<sup>2</sup> For our purposes, we omit issues relating to access, properly speaking, to instruction in the language of the minority.

# Quadrilingualism in Switzerland — Present and Future

*Responding to long-standing invitations, D'Iberville Fortier travelled in June to Berne, Lausanne, Bordeaux and Paris for meetings with officials and to give talks on Canadian linguistic duality. Having dealt in Number 30 with the situation in France, we now turn our attention to linguistic pluralism in Switzerland.*

Switzerland has always represented a somewhat legendary situation in Canadian eyes in terms of the coexistence within a single country of different linguistic groups. The Swiss Confederation conjures up an ideal image of linguistic communities, each of which has learned to live within its own strictly defined territory without encroaching in the slightest on the linguistic rights of its neighbours — and without asking anything in return. It is only one step from this to imagining a similar arrangement in Canada and some have easily made the conceptual leap, stating that the Swiss model would soon put an end to our linguistic tensions.

This somewhat idyllic portrait of a Switzerland at peace, even with regard to linguistic issues, does indeed have a real historical basis, but the situation has changed in recent years. As Flavio Cotti, the Swiss Federal Councillor [minister] of the Federal Department of Home Affairs, recently pointed out in a speech, "harmonious coexistence between the various linguistic communities can no longer be taken for granted.... There appears to be a growing uneasiness." And, in a briefing to Canada's Commissioner of Official Languages, on May 21, François Couchepin, Vice-Chancellor of the Swiss Confederation, added: "Unfortunately, particularly in the past 20 years, the problem [of



language in Switzerland] has been complicated by various new elements."

In 1986, in order to dispel this uneasiness, Swiss federal authorities set up a special task force to "identify the legal, linguistic and historical issues involved in revising Article 116 of the Federal Constitution" and to formulate a new version of this article. Adopted in 1848 and amended in 1938, it is the only one in the Swiss Constitution to deal directly with linguistic questions and, in essence, stipulates that German, French, Italian and Romansh are the national languages of Switzerland, while its official languages are German, French and Italian.

The task force submitted its report, *Quadrilingualism in Switzerland — Present and Future*, in August 1989. After a detailed analysis of the situation, it makes numerous recommendations. For any Canadian accustomed to our language debates this report and

its recommendations make fascinating reading in more than one respect. It soon becomes apparent that, aside from the differences — which are sometimes fundamental, due to different historical, sociological and legal traditions — its analysis very often parallels the situation in Canada and the recommendations recall the paths we have taken in the past three decades.

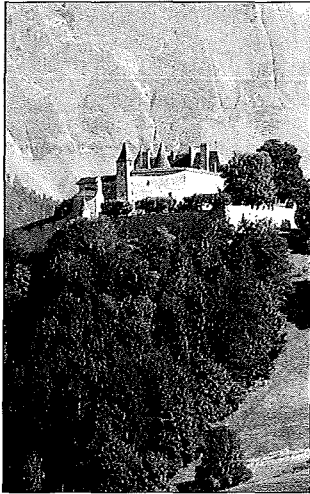
The two basic premises of the task force were the preservation of quadrilingualism in Switzerland and the improvement of understanding and harmony among linguistic groups. This already foreshadows a parallel with the situation in Canada and we will return to the point. First, it must be added that the task force neither challenged nor questioned the principle of territoriality, whereby each language is spoken almost exclusively within certain limited areas, even with respect to public instruction.

The task force's principal objectives for what must be called language reform can be summed up as follows;

- guarantee of the free choice of language;
- equality of the fundamental rights of the four Swiss national languages at the federal level;
- active understanding between the four linguistic communities through cultural exchanges and intercultural education;
- encouragement and defence of linguistic communities that are particularly threatened;
- encouragement of active bilingualism and of adequate reciprocal knowledge of the standard languages.

The list of these objectives alone is enough to indicate the extent to which the analysis of the task force seems roughly to parallel developments in Canada: protection of individual rights while taking into account the situation of communities, active protection of minorities and intervention by the federal government to facilitate the achievement, on a national scale, of some of these objectives. A few more specific examples will enable us to see the possible parallels still more clearly.

The task force proposed a new article of the Constitution to couch in legal terms the basic objectives that we have just cited. It goes further, however: "A new constitutional article on languages, as proposed by the



task force, should be supplemented by federal statutes and ordinances." After considering what tangible form this might take, the task force proposed "a federal languages act" that should include:

- encouragement for the preservation of languages and of understanding between linguistic communities;
- regulations concerning the use of languages by federal agencies;
- organization of services that perform the tasks for which the confederation is responsible under Article 116 of the Constitution.

These proposals to a large extent parallel, at least in spirit if not to the letter, some of the provisions of our Official Languages Act.

Next, the task force seems to have laid the foundations for

something that might resemble the Canadian multiculturalism policy. In its list of desirable objectives, it places prominently "the adoption of a understanding attitude... towards speakers who do not have any of the four national languages as their mother tongue, and an openness to their culture."

Finally, in its analysis of the current situation in Switzerland, the task force states that "there is another unwritten but generally acknowledged principle of the Swiss law of languages: freedom of language. The Federal Supreme Court acknowledges it as a fundamental unwritten right of the Federal Constitution, like the fundamental unwritten rights of freedom of opinion, of assembly and of individual freedom. This fundamental right, which is basic and is particularly closely associated with the individual, should be expressly guaranteed in a new article on languages." This forceful language recalls that of our Supreme Court in its February 1988 decision in the *Mercure* case. In the reasons for its decision, that Court declared: "It can hardly be gainsaid that language is profoundly anchored in the human condition. Not surprisingly, language rights are a well-known species of human rights and should be approached accordingly."

The comparison, to be sure, should not be forced. It must be borne in mind that conditions in



## Letters

### A Satisfied Reader

The purpose of this letter is to thank you for the privilege of being a subscriber to *Language and Society*.

I have been a French immersion teacher for two years and am also interested in the practical aspects of bilingualism.

In particular, the meaningful articles published in your review allow me to follow linguistic developments during the present context of change. They also make it possible to gain a better understanding of the many aspects of language issues.

Sylvie McGraw  
Saint John, New Brunswick

### How Do I Love Thee?

What do I like about your magazine? Many things — the graphics, the high quality of the articles, the truly professional journalism, which is evident on every page...I wish that many other Canadian magazines would follow your good example.

What do I dislike about this magazine that I devour, which is read and reread by every subscriber?...

*Language and Society* is, for better or for worse, the only magazine of the "official minority". Though a regular *tour de force* that leaves me flabbergasted, it succeeds in fulfilling this role for both official language minorities. Bravo! Only...your *political* and some of your *linguistic* reports, as well as most of your articles of *opinion* are not written by minority journalists.

Nigel Barbour  
Vancouver

Switzerland are very different from those in Canada. The principle of territoriality and the virtually complete freedom of the cantons and communes in implementing language policy within their territory would alone suffice to underline the difference between the Swiss and Canadian confederations. At a still deeper level, the consequences of the principle of the "freedom of language" so strongly emphasised by the task force may be interpreted in different ways. For example, Vice-Chancellor Couchepin, in the talk to which we referred earlier, pointed out that "in a

decision,...the European Court of Human Rights has denied the existence of an individual right to receive instruction in a particular language under the [European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms]."

It is impossible, however, in reading the task force report, to avoid thinking of another report — that of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism — which, more than 25 years ago, launched an irreversible movement toward the modernization of our linguistic practices. J.F.

(Our translation)

Laurendeau and Gagnon

# Architects of Linguistic Duality and Memoirists

**T**wo works that appeared in rapid succession in recent months have shed clear and fascinating light on the origin and early development of the concept of linguistic duality in contemporary Canada.



André Laurendeau

Canadapress Photo Service

The first is the *Journal* kept during the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism by André Laurendeau, the man responsible for the Commission's creation and, with Davidson Dunton, its first co-chair. As the title indicates, this is a personal journal kept by Laurendeau during the four years when the work of the Commission engaged all his mental, psychological and intellectual energies.

Everything, or nearly everything, there is to say about the B and B Commission, its importance to the development of modern Canada and the milestone it marked on the path to more active understanding and co-existence between Anglophones and Francophones in this country has already been said. And yet Laurendeau's *Journal* gives even the well-informed reader the impression that he is learning something new. These roughly 400 pages are one of the essential pieces of the puzzle that was to come together, more than 20 years ago, in our first Official Languages Act.

The first and almost irresistible impression derived from a reading of the *Journal* is that history does indeed repeat itself. The crisis that Canada experienced in the mid-1960s in many respects resembles our current constitutional crisis. Just by changing a few proper names, some dates and details, one can imagine oneself reading an account of the debates on the Meech Lake Accord — everything is there: the same vocabulary, the same sombre forecasts, the distress of a subtle and honest mind at the lack of

understanding and parochialism on both sides. And yet, according to the public opinion polls, what a change there has been in public attitudes!

The *Journal* is also of definite human interest. In it we see Laurendeau in his day-to-day life and perceive, through the piercing intelligence of this observer of the nation, the Canada of 25 years ago, with its contrasts and its inner ferment. Above all, we see Laurendeau — a multifaceted, complex figure with a keen wit and great insight, wielding a deadly accurate pen, often tired, sometimes discouraged, but always returning to the task that would slowly consume him.

As examples of his psychological insight, some of his portraits of the public figures of the time are masterpieces of their kind. Speaking of Dufferin Roblin, premier of Manitoba from 1958 to 1967, who hesitated and vacillated, Laurendeau writes succinctly, "He is a provincial politician who wants to have a federal career." Such incisive lapidary portraits are legion and are more reminiscent of the art of the memoirist than that of the journalist. Since we cannot quote all of them, two will have to suffice: of John Robarts, the former premier of Ontario, Laurendeau writes, "He is self-confident and robust, with an eminently practical intelligence, and does not seem to ask himself questions, except about the problems with which he must deal directly." As for Robert Stanfield, the lines Laurendeau wrote must have gone straight to the heart of the former premier of Nova Scotia and leader of the Progressive Conservative Party: "Premier Stanfield... speaks slowly and yet seems to me to have a keen mind. He grasps things quickly, but speaks with great prudence.... Stanfield is, with Lloyd, the most personable premier I have met, but he is the

latter's intellectual superior."

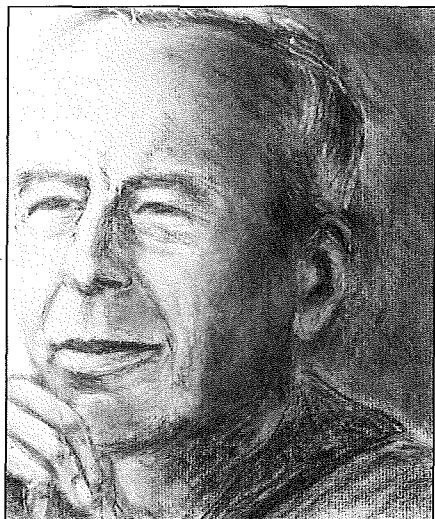
Keen, reserved and sometimes acid wit: in the midst of a long and serious disquisition, Laurendeau allows himself a few light-hearted remarks that seem to serve as a catharsis. He notes in passing the impact of the "rasping voice" of one of his interlocutors or, pointing out the ignorance shown by some speakers of the situation in Quebec, he writes with dry wit, "some, for example, confuse a Réal [Caouette] with a René [Lévesque]."

The volume contains a multitude of notes, some more interesting than others, on an infinite variety of subjects: on English Canada, which "is going through a crisis in which we are only the second factor: the major problem is the United States"; or this profound insight into one aspect of what we now call linguistic arrangements: Laurendeau stresses "the importance of research on a socio-linguistic theme: ... the massive pressure exerted by a majority language on a minority language. This is very different from the problem of bilingualism as it is usually understood, and while I have not yet succeeded in formulating it well, I feel it very keenly."

These pages where Laurendeau simply gives expression to his feelings bring to life before our interested, then fascinated, and finally deeply affected eyes, an epoch and a country but perhaps still more a man.

At almost the same time as Laurendeau's *Journal* appeared, Jean-Louis Gagnon published Volume 3 of his *Apostasies*, under the title *Les palais de glace*. This final volume of the memoirs of the man who succeeded Laurendeau as co-chair of the B and B Commission begins just at the time when the latter, as editorialist of *Le Devoir*, broached the idea of a broad investigation of the state of relations between Anglo-

phones and Francophones in Canada. Prime Minister Pearson, taking him at his word, established the Commission. Jean-Louis Gagnon would be associated with it as a Commissioner from the start. He would work closely with Laurendeau before succeeding him. The light he sheds on these important years can therefore serve as a useful complement to what the



Jean-Louis Gagnon

first Francophone co-chair of the Commission tells us in the intimate familiarity of his day-to-day reflections.

The two works differ in more than one respect, however. Did Laurendeau know that his journal would one day be read by eyes other than his own? The question is impossible to answer. Gagnon, however, is writing his memoirs. He therefore orders reality; he gives it meaning, coherence and a density that the disconnectness of the notes in the *Journal* does not allow. Further, Gagnon was and is committed to seeing action taken on the Commission's recommendations, as well as to the constitutional and linguistic development of Canada. He was unable to observe events with the cold detachment of the historian, he saw them through the eyes of the committed observer and sometimes of the partisan public figure. A man of

conviction and with convictions, he does not hesitate to share them all with us.

Gagnon's work has a quality rare nowadays and, to be honest, a very attractive one: it is clear from every page that he is a man of culture and learning. He is familiar with Péguy and Valéry, with Alfred Jarry as well as Cardinal Richelieu, Canada's English historians as well as

Quebec's political figures, and he does not hesitate to quote them at will as he writes. He is not a disembodied author, however, and he strews his text with choice expressions that he often attributes, with a wink, to an unimpeachable source: "as Jacques Cartier said," or "as Voltaire said," or even, "as my father-in-law used to say."

In terms of the fundamentals,

Gagnon describes how the Commission operated, the conflicts that arose between the various commissioners — often resolved around midnight over a glass or two — and the discovery he made during the provincial hearings of how vast a country Canada is and of its "provincial" outlook, which is what Laurendeau complained of in a more minor key. He paints a remarkable portrait of Laurendeau, who he feels was "always torn between the teaching of Henri Bourassa and the emotional nationalism of Lionel Groulx." He recounts a good many revealing or piquant anecdotes. Some of them take on special resonance today, as when he describes the meeting between Joey Smallwood, the premier of Newfoundland, and Laurendeau, "...during dessert, he [Smallwood] told him that there would be bilingualism in the House of Assembly, even if

he had to take drastic measures to force a member or two to memorize a few sentences in French."

Gagnon's book then takes a look at Canada's historical development in the past two decades. Whether or not one agrees with him, the reader will peruse with interest and curiosity the spirited pages the author devotes to Robert Bourassa or Jacques Parizeau, René Lévesque or Pierre Trudeau, John Diefenbaker or Lester Pearson. He will admire the elegance of the style and the vigorous irony

with which he impales some politicians still active today whose views he does not share.

Journals, whether intimate or not, and political memoirs often make for tiresome reading. Due to their mastery of style, Laurendeau and Gagnon have succeeded in avoiding this pitfall. Their reminiscences are, quite simply, fascinating to read. Two different but passionate men have succeeded in portraying, with different brushes but in complementary colours, a pivotal epoch in our recent history. *J.F.*

(Our translation)

## The Metro Toronto Police French Committee

The Commissioner of Official Languages, D'Iberville Fortier, has congratulated the Board of Commissioners of Police, the Metropolitan Toronto Police Force and Toronto's Francophone community for the establishment of the Metro Toronto Police French Committee.

"Police forces in urban centres are today confronted by an array of unique challenges. This joint community-police commitment to address issues of mutual concern represents a positive and reasoned initiative to advance community relations and respond to the needs of an ever-growing and diverse population," Mr. Fortier said in a letter to Ms. June Rowlands of the Metropolitan Toronto Board of Commissioners of Police.

## How about one language per ear?

All six major Japanese television networks broadcast in stereophonic sound and use it to present news, movies, documentaries and programs in such a way as to allow viewers to listen to them in Japanese on one track and to the program's original language on the other. (Canadian Press, May 31, 1990)

# Prose and Cons

Harry Bruce\*

*Giant corporations succeed in proving that, with enough effort, we can all be illiterate.*

**P**op grammarians, Orwell-worshippers, and all manner of self-appointed protectors of English are forever lambasting government gobbledegook or, as the British call it, pudder. Government, however, has no monopoly on mumbo jumbo. Private industry, which ceaselessly congratulates itself for being more efficient than government, often uses the most abominably inefficient prose.

## Corporate language

The language in many corporate annual reports is repetitive, pretentious, self-congratulatory and ungrammatical. The photography, design and paper quality of the reports keep improving, and many are so thick and hard you could use them as roof shingles. But the writing seems to be the work of whole committees of stuffed shirts. Printing this stuff on expensive paper is like delivering horse manure from the back seat of a Rolls-Royce, and I can't understand why billion-dollar corporations that reward competence in other disciplines can't produce annual reports that demonstrate competence in writing.

## Corporate heads

Corporate heads often talk in private like dockworkers, gangsters, and fight promoters, but

when they fashion statements for shareholders, they sound like a sociologist delivering a lecture while eating mashed potatoes mixed with peanut butter. They lard reports with *enhance*, ban big in favour of *significant*, and replace mere *factories, plants and mills* with *facilities*. In annual report prose, nothing ever *starts* or *begins*. Everything *commences*, don't you know? Things are *acquired*, never simply *bought*. *Strikes* are *costly work stoppages* and *tougher competition* is *increased competitive activities*.

## Loathsome prose

Nothing proves my point better than the 72-page report for 1989 of the Calgary-based Nova Corp. It's fat and square-bound, with a shiny blue cover and loathsome prose. Nova's business is mostly pipelines, petrochemicals, and oil and gas production. Its 1989 revenue nudged \$5 billion. The chairman and chief executive officer is Sidney Robert Blair, one smart fellow. *Canadian Business* says he "built Nova from a humble pipeline into a diversified multinational." Moreover, his victory in a takeover battle for Polysar Energy and Chemical put him in "the front ranks of world petrochemical producers." Blair works seven days a week for his beloved company.

But if he's so smart and dedicated, why did he sign a report to shareholders that suggests he's close to being illiterate? For instance, he says, "Nova's synthetic rubber global

division... continues to be a stable, good reputation business with opportunity to improve medium and long term profit contribution through further investment." Now, leaving aside the clumsiness of this statement and the fact that long-term needs a hyphen, "good reputation business" sounds like the work of a 13-year-old.

## The blob attack

Here's another blob of Blair prose: "Every main Nova operation, whether manufacturing of petrochemicals, plastics or rubber materials, gas pipelining, gas marketing, international pipeline engineering or other, is presently producing more and better goods and services in the first quarter of 1990 than one year ago when our profits were best or for that matter, better than at any other time before."

*Presently* is wrong. It means "soon". Blair was trying to say *now* or *currently*, but since he went on to say "in the first quarter of 1990", he really didn't need either of them. The ending of the sentence is ludicrous. *Before* is actually a redundancy inside another redundancy. It's unnecessary, but so is all of "better than at any other time before."

Now hear this: "These objectives will be described later in this letter, as will be described generally some steps which we intend to take toward realizing them." Report to the Awkward Squad, Blair. All you had to say was, "This letter will describe these objectives, and plans to achieve them."

## Progressive practices

Blair talks of Nova's "progressive donation practices". If that means giving money to charities, why doesn't he say so? He mentions the possibility of further declines in the sales prices of plastics and petrochemicals and then pompously reports, "That this is expected by the majority of industry analysts, is a pre-occupation which will be reflected in management decisions in 1990." But what's wrong with saying, "In 1990 our management decisions will reflect analysts' predictions of further declines in the sales prices of plastics and petrochemicals"?

Sometimes a Blair sentence stumbles along like a barefoot drunk in a dark hotel room, stubbing toes and then gratefully collapsing on an unseen bed: "It is partly the timely and cost-efficient provision of this capital, plus smaller amounts of new capital for profit improvement in some plastics or petrochemicals operations in Canada and internationally, which directs our management to deal with 1990 and 1991 aggressively by improving the balance sheet and current financial performance." Whew! Please do not disturb.

Blair's bad writing is not exceptional. Prose in the annual reports of dozens of huge corporations is just as lousy as his. Titans of private enterprise claim to admire lean, mean machines, but in annual reports they use chubby, mushy blubber. ■

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