

LANGUAGE

AND SOCIETY



Commissioner's Editorial

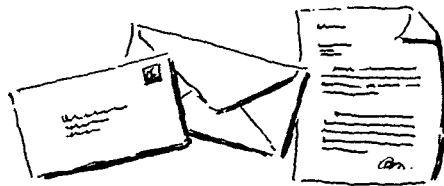
Number 33, Winter 1990

*LANGUAGE POLICY WILL REMAIN ONE OF THE CORNERSTONES
OF ANY FUTURE CONSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENT*

THE ACT: TWO AND A HALF YEARS OLD, FIRST TEETH

WESTMOUNT AND OUTREMONT

Letters



Against the Official Languages Act

When Canada's bilingual myth meets Canada's language reality the myth goes poof and disappears, except when our politicians lavish billions of tax dollars, increasing our crippling deficit and concocting mammoth bureaucracies to prop up the myth. Canada's language reality according to the current media directory is that, excluding Quebec, 98% of our daily newspapers are printed in English. Last year it was 97%. The illusion is being propagated with taxpayers' money spent on language police and forced bilingualism ("bilingualism"...?) as dictated by an untenable federal Bilingual Bill C-72 (the Official Languages Act of 1988).

To date, after more than 16 months and 12 requests, our federal elected representatives have failed to list any advantages that would benefit all Canadians if C-72 is imposed. They seem bent on a crusade of enforcing a mean-spirited Language Act that is based on an indefensible Bill C-72, founded on a bilingual myth that would make a leprechaun blush. Sounds like the fairy-tale where the politicians praise the clothes of the naked king. Canadians are all supposed to pretend too, applaud and pay dearly for the bilingual fiction. Snickers are forbidden and critics of forced bilingualism are called vile names.

Jim Grant
St. Catharines, Ontario

Disappointment

Re: Your editorial, *Language and Society*, Number 32, Fall 1990.

The above-mentioned issue of *Language and Society* has just come across my desk.

I started to read your editorial and feel compelled to write to you immediately to express my strong disappointment with your opening comment, which reads in part "...some were revelling in the prospect of finally seeing the French disappear from their cereal boxes...".

Are we to assume that the "some" to which you refer in this statement are the Anglophone people of Canada?

The day after Meech Lake "died", on the front page of our local newspaper was a photograph

which depicted some residents of Quebec driving a car and waving the Quebec provincial flag proudly and laughing — while the Canadian flag dragged along the ground from the car door, torn and dirty. This incident seems a trifle more serious to me than whether or not our cereal boxes are in two languages, Sir.

This photograph was a turning point for me, as far as this whole "Meech" mess is concerned. It was evident to me that if this is the general feeling of all the Francophones living in Quebec they do not deserve to live in this fine country — let them go and become a distinct society.

As a lot of Francophones from Quebec "revelled" that they no longer "belonged to Canada" after Meech died, then it should not matter whether cereal boxes have both of the official languages on them or not outside of Quebec, should it?

Marie Marriner
Moncton, New Brunswick

A Reader's Approval

I appreciated the editorial's very positive and encouraging tone. Canada deserves a future worthy of its past. Canadians must therefore continue to demonstrate a spirit of confidence and leadership, as you have done in your editorial.

Reno. A. Bosetti
Deputy Minister
Department of Education
Edmonton

The Acadian Flag Still Flies

One of our readers reminds us of the motion of the New Brunswick Legislative Assembly which authorized the flying of the Acadian flag for the year 1984 in honour of the centenary of its selection.

"Therefore be it resolved that the Legislature mark the 100th anniversary of the choosing of the Acadian flag by asking the government to fly that flag from the Legislative Assembly throughout the year."

He says, cogently, "That the flag is still flying is a great show of tolerance by the New Brunswick English. I guess flags and symbols are not important enough to squabble about."

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.

Opinions expressed by contributors from outside the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages do not necessarily reflect the views of the Commissioner. Unsigned articles, as well as titles and sub-titles, are by editorial staff.

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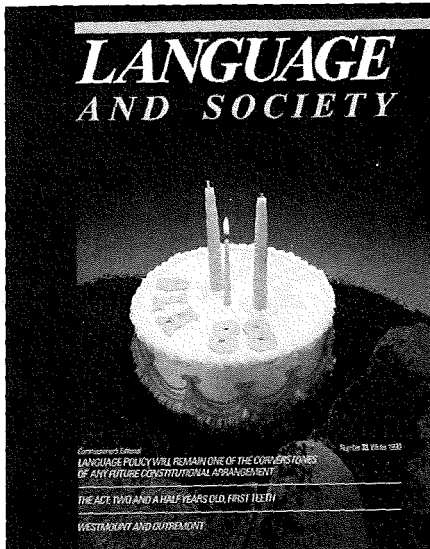
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Symbol of an anniversary — two and a half years have passed; now there is the prospect of progress.

NOTICE

Letters to the Editor, with the writer's name, address and telephone number, are most welcome. The Editor reserves the right to publish letters, which may be condensed. Send to:

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COMMISSIONER OF OFFICIAL
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LANGUAGE AND SOCIETY

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Two Languages Define Our Past, Our Present and Our Future Together

Language Policy Will Remain One of the Cornerstones of Any Future Constitutional Arrangement

DIsraeli once said: "The secret of success is constancy to purpose." Our constancy to purpose in the area of official languages has paid handsome dividends. Unfortunately, as Canadians, we have been too modest about our success. More often than not, the national mood is self-doubt rather than confidence and pride. Perhaps language policy is an intractable subject to boast about, more like a skeleton in our closet than the best china we bring out for guests. We fail to see it for what it is, a major achievement. This may seem a somewhat perverse point of view to put forward in the middle of a constitutional crisis not a little related to language. Let me explain.

To my mind, the most noble endeavour of a modern state is to foster a society which ensures equality of opportunity for all and which seeks to promote rather than oppress its minorities. The list of nations that have failed in this task is very long. Up to now, Canada has generally succeeded. We are the children of a mixed marriage. Fairness, accommodation and tolerance

are the cornerstones of our freedom. These virtues, fundamental to our way of life, inspired Canada's language policy as expressed in the Charter of Rights, the Official Languages Act and a variety of provincial legislation. Although they have deep roots in Canadian history, nearly all of the guarantees provided in these laws break new ground. They were and are still inspired by the search for linguistic equality in federal institutions and for fair treatment of our official languages in Canadian society. Remarkably, most of these reforms have been accomplished not over centuries, but over *the last 20 years*.

What are these achievements? The list by now is very familiar, but like most good litanies, it bears repeating:

- the right to use English or French in the debates and proceedings of Parliament and of several provincial (or territorial) legislatures
- the use of English and French in the statutes, records and journals of Parliament and of several provincial (or territorial) legislatures

- the right to use English or French in criminal proceedings throughout Canada
- the right to receive federal government services in English or French where there is significant demand
- the right to work for the federal government in English or French in designated areas
- near equitable participation of English- and French-speaking Canadians in the federal Public Service
- a National Capital Region that better if still imperfectly reflects the presence of two linguistic communities
- the right to minority language education
- a developing system of federal-provincial support for our official language minorities
- the availability of health and social services in English or French in some provinces and territories

- the availability of English and French radio and television programming across Canada
- far greater efforts by most national media to present the other side of the linguistic coin
- packaging and labelling in English and French (at long last considered normal)
- a growing range of private sector and voluntary sector services in English and French
- substantial encouragement for learning English and French as second languages
- efforts to attract immigrants to both linguistic communities
- concerted efforts to protect and develop in several areas the weaker of our two official languages, French, and to enhance its status in Canada and abroad.

So much for counting our blessings. While this enumeration is not exhaustive, I believe it amply justifies the claim that

Canada affords fairer treatment in law and in deed to its linguistic minorities than most other countries in the world while respecting the rights of its two "majorities". What is surprising is that we take it very much for granted. It seems to most of us just a part of what being a Canadian is all about. Yet none of it could have been achieved without a very fundamental transformation of attitudes towards language and communities, a change noted and defined by our Supreme Court when it declared that language rights were "a well-known species of human rights". This transformation of attitudes also provided much of the underpinning of our multiculturalism policy. (Does anyone seriously believe we could have had a multiculturalism policy without a language policy?)

I hasten to add before I am drowned out by rising cries of protest that I do not think that all is perfect, that we should rest upon our laurels. But we

should at least refrain from the morbid self-flagellation and despondency that characterizes so much of the recent debate on language. Let us openly recognize that much still remains to be done to transform new and sometimes theoretical rights into the day-to-day exercise of unfettered linguistic freedom. But let us not say that we have failed. Not by a long shot. To those who say language reform is dead or dying, I say:

- **Without accommodation on language issues, Canada as we know it would already have ceased to exist.** Giving official recognition to the English and French languages was and is a demographic, political, social and economic necessity. It is the right thing to do for all the right reasons.

- **If language reform has faltered, it is because we have done too little, not too much.** At the time of writing, the federal government had not yet adopted necessary

policy guidelines under the Official Languages Act. At this rate, we might be into the next century before they are fully implemented. In the provincial sphere, more than eight years after minority language education rights were enshrined in the Charter, some provinces still do not provide appropriate access to French-language schools. Almost 25% of Francophones outside Quebec have eight years or less of schooling (11% of Anglophones have eight years or less).

- **Language policy will remain one of the cornerstones of any future constitutional arrangements.** Under most scenarios, the federal government will continue to operate bilingually because of the demand for services in English and French. Provincial governments have stated repeatedly that they provide a range of services to their official language minorities because they believe it to be the right thing

to do, regardless of any new constitutional arrangements.

Whether we like it or not (and the polls taken over the last 20 years tell us that, led by the young, most Canadians like it), two languages define our past, our present and our future together. The children of Canada have understood this. With their idealism and their openness to other languages and other cultures, they are teaching us to see Canada through their eyes. Thanks to a wide range of second-language programs and exchanges, they have shown that they believe in the multicultural future of English and French in Canada. They are developing a new sense of place and history, a new social contract. Can we do less? In confronting other aspects of our national crisis, are we too set in our ways to compromise, too stubborn to change, too old to dream of a new consensus? I hope not, for all our sakes. There is still so much we can do together. ■

Our thanks to the 283 readers who returned the survey card included in *Language and Society* 31.

Language and Society drew many positive comments. Our request that you identify "likes and/or dislikes" elicited "likes" from 63%, "dislikes" from 26% and both from 11%. The most common like centred on the depth of articles, their variety or their "balanced points of view". Coverage of minorities and of language issues from across Canada also elicited substantial favourable comment.

On the negative side, *Language and Society* was criticized most frequently for lacking exactly the characteristic for which it was most commonly praised. Our critics were few in number, but drawn disproportionately from Anglophone respondents. They complained that we provide a one-sided view of bilingualism, take a "pro-government" line, or promote French at the expense of English.

What You Think of Your Magazine

The grades you gave us were generally positive. On "coverage of language issues" 52% of the replies rated *Language and Society* excellent and a further 33% good, with only 12% assigning a rating of fair or poor. The magazine's "usefulness to you" drew excellent ratings from 47%, good ratings from 41% and fair or poor ratings from 11%.

Helpful guidance on future content was offered in suggestions for articles. The most commonly mentioned area was official language minority issues. There were also requests for articles on languages in Canada other than English and French, with aboriginal languages receiving particular attention. Other topics of interest were education and language issues in other countries. We will take your suggestions to heart as we put together future issues.

The Publisher

THE ACT: TWO AND A HALF YEARS OLD, FIRST TEETH

1. A Mini-Anniversary

Lyne Ducharme

In a press release the Commissioner of Official Languages, D'Iberville Fortier, has assessed federal performance on the second anniversary of the proclamation of the 1988 Official Languages Act. The Act was proclaimed on September 15, 1988, with the support of all three parties and with nearly unanimous approval. While not revolutionary, it represented substantial progress.

"According to the most recent surveys, a large majority of Canadians still believe that our official languages are of enduring value, inseparable from our national identity," the Commissioner stated. He noted the uncertainties over the country's future but, precisely because of them, it was his belief that if the government wanted to show determination it would table its draft regulations on communications and service to the public in Parliament without delay, followed quickly by all the necessary regulations, and would thereby ensure compliance with the Act.

Marking time

In Mr. Fortier's words, "the federal government had delayed too long in taking concrete action with regard to the availability and quality of services in the two official languages." Nothing had happened to make him revise the severe assessment he made of the government's accomplishments in this area in his 1989 Annual Report.



In official languages matters federal institutions had for the most part marked time.

Moreover, there is no evidence that the systematic preparation of the other regulations provided for in the Act has begun and there are still no definite policies or clear guidelines. One of our regional offices has reported that many federal employees seemed to believe they were not obliged to offer services in both official languages since the demise of the Meech Lake Accord....

In small minority communities, bilingual services, if available at all, are all too often not actively offered. Specialized regulatory agencies are slow to assume the new responsibilities with respect to the health, safety and security of the public that the Act assigns to them.

In addition, there is an urgent need to inform federal employees in bilingual regions of their rights and obligations. How can they exercise their rights if they

are not aware of them? Finally, imbalances in the participation of English- and French-speaking Canadians in federal institutions, to which attention has frequently been drawn, are still not being properly addressed.

Court remedy

Complaints have increased by 30% since proclamation of the Act. For example, the Office of the Commissioner has received more than 600 complaints about the fact that institutions subject to the Act do not publicize their programs and services in official language minority community newspapers. For the first time since he has had the right to do so under the 1988 Official Languages Act, the Commissioner has decided to use the court remedy provision by bringing the issue of Air Canada's use of the minority press before the courts.

Many complaints indicate that federal public servants in

Quebec still too often find themselves obliged to communicate with Ottawa in English.

The Commissioner's press release referred to three reports submitted to the President of the Treasury Board pointing out some of the most blatant shortcomings revealed by complaints filed with his Office. He is awaiting replies and action plans.

Some achievements

While much remains to be done to implement the Act, some achievements are nevertheless worthy of note. Though the system is not perfect, some 40 letters of understanding have been signed between the Treasury Board Secretariat and federal institutions clarifying their official language responsibilities, and bilingual services provided to travellers at border crossings in Ontario and Quebec have improved.

In addition, the Department of the Secretary of State has taken various initiatives to promote the development of minority communities. It is continuing to co-operate with the provinces in funding official language instruction and with the government of Quebec regarding implementation of Bill 142 on guaranteed access to social and health services in English. It has also published a directory of all federal programs of interest to official language minority communities and has distributed an information kit. ■

(Our translation)

THE ACT: TWO AND A HALF YEARS OLD, FIRST TEETH

2. *A Race against Time* Special Report to Parliament

A little more than a month after the second anniversary of the proclamation of the Official Languages Act the Commissioner took a formal initiative. He issued a special report on October 25 calling on the government to finally put teeth into the Act. The report to Parliament by D'Iberville Fortier denounced the "unexplained and unjustified delays" and formally urged the government to table the long-awaited regulations immediately. These are necessary to complete the implementation of the Official Languages Act. The report described the situation as "unacceptable" and noted that it was "contrary to the commitments the government has repeatedly made."

In submitting the report Mr. Fortier stated, "It is time the federal government reassured Canadians and proclaimed its confidence and its commitment to the future of Canada by ensuring full implementation of the Act." By tabling the first special report to Parliament under the Official Languages Act since 1971, the Commissioner underscored the gravity with which he viewed the continued government foot-dragging on this issue. That Act specifies that the Commissioner

may submit a special report to Parliament on any matter within the scope of his mandate, where, in his opinion, the matter is of such urgency or importance that a report thereon should not be deferred until his next annual report.

The report included a chronology of the Mr. Fortier's repeated reminders and the various government assurances received in response. The Standing Joint Committee on Official Languages had also urged the government to proceed. On June 14 it adopted a unanimous resolution calling on the government to table the draft regulations as soon as possible. However, as Mr. Fortier noted, "neither Parliament nor the the Commissioner have received clear assurances about a planned tabling date, in spite of intense consultations conducted recently, nor even the assurance that the draft regulations would be tabled during the current session."

The report noted that the absence of regulations fostered a wait-and-see climate in federal institutions, which use this as an excuse for foot-dragging. And it enumerated some of the harmful consequences of government inaction in this area. These include

a sharp increase in the number of complaints and areas where the health and safety of the public are at risk. The report specifically mentioned safety announcements aboard trains, airplanes and ferries, which are often not made in both languages. Members of the travelling public must also frequently put up with long delays if they wish to be served in their own language. Other problems include the absence of adequate service in French in such cities as Charlottetown, Winnipeg and Halifax, as well as the lack of health and professional services in English for Anglophone inmates in a Quebec detention centre. Moreover, French still has a long way to go as a language of work within federal institutions.

The special report went on to say: "The absence of regulations has raised concerns among the official language minority

communities. These delays may well endanger the linguistic progress made in the federal institutions over the years and even cause a general setback." Fortier stressed that national unity could well be imperiled by a failure to give full recognition to Canada's language duality, stating: "Any sign that confidence is waning, especially on the part of government, would have dramatic effect."

Political reactions

Parliamentary reaction to the special report was swift. Treasury Board President Gilles Loisel, after pointing out that he had assumed his new duties only a few weeks earlier, denied that the delays were associated with the post-Meech Lake political climate, repeating the now familiar assertion that the delays were due to consultations with the minority language communities. Both of the minority groups



The Commissioner tabled the first special report to Parliament under the Official Languages Act since 1971.



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Mr. Loiselle specifically mentioned he wanted to meet, the Fédération des francophones hors Québec and Alliance Quebec, echoed the Commissioner's call. FFHQ president Guy Matte summed up his message to Mr. Loiselle, "Déposez, déposez et déposez, c'est tout ce que j'avais à lui dire."

*"It is time
the federal government
reassured Canadians."*

According to the *Globe and Mail*, Mr. Mulroney, questioned on a trip to Pointe-au-Pic, Quebec, promised that the implementation of the official languages regulations would be speeded up, but did not set a specific date. In addition, he told *Montreal Gazette* reporter Terrance Wills that the regulations had been delayed by the Oka, Senate and Persian Gulf crises. He added, however, that his minister was busy completing ongoing negotiations so that the directives would be ready soon.

Liberal language critic Warren Allmand stated, "I think the government is showing a great lack of courage", and New Democrat Phil Edmonston said, "This kind of political paralysis is impossible to understand."

Media reactions

The Commissioner's report and press conference did not pass unnoticed. They were reported in all the national media, both print and electronic, which saw the Commissioner's action as above all a severe warning to the government. "The Progressive Conservative government is dealing a blow to

bilingualism and risking more damage to national unity by delaying implementation of the Official Languages Act," according to Canadian Press.

In Ottawa, the *Citizen* stated that the Commissioner was threatening the government with legal action if it did not table the official languages regulations, while the editorialist of its

French-language sister paper, *Le Droit*, commented: "It would be pathetic to see the Commissioner drag the government before the courts to force it to apply an Act that it itself had adopted. But if he must do so, so be it."

The *Montreal Gazette* also carried a stinging editorial under the title "Languages law languishes". "The government's failure to produce the regulations which would permit full and fair implementation of the Act is more than disgraceful," the daily wrote, "it borders on contempt of Parliament, and contempt for the linguistic rights Prime Minister Mulroney has always extolled in principle." The paper was not impressed by Mr. Loiselle's excuses and explanations for the delay in tabling the regulations: "That sounds like more of the casual, callous stonewalling Ottawa has been offering for the past 18 months.... The Official Languages Act is the foundation of the basic idea of Canada — linguistic equity — and the Mulroney government is letting it rot," the editorial says. "The country cannot take much more of that." ■

3. First Draft Regulations Tabled

André Creusot

On November 8 the President of the Treasury Board, Gilles Loiselle, tabled draft regulations, which specify conditions for implementation, on communications with and services to the public for the 1988 Official Languages Act.

In accordance with the Act, the regulations are based on demography or local population and on special circumstances (travel, health and safety). Apart from a few uncertain cases in which it will have to be measured, significant demand is most often determined from the numeric weight of language minorities (Anglophones in Quebec, Francophones outside Quebec). The size of these communities is measured in terms of a formula developed by Statistics Canada, which takes into account both the maternal language and the language spoken at home, and gives each the appropriate weight.

A number of terms and conditions of service in both official languages are presented according to the various types of demographic application and the relative and/or absolute size of the minority. (For majorities, service is always guaranteed — in English outside Quebec and in French in Quebec.) In cities of more than 100,000 residents with a minority of at least 5,000 people, each organization provides its services in both lan-



Named President of the Treasury Board September 20, 1990, Gilles Loiselle tabled draft regulations on November 8

guages in a number of offices proportional to the minority population. When the minority numbers under 5,000, key services are offered according to the same principle: income security (pensions, family allowances, old age security), postal services, employment centres, taxation and the Secretary of State's Department.

In small towns and rural areas where the minority exceeds 500 persons and represents more than 5% of the population, services are provided on a proportional basis. When the absolute and relative size of the minority decreases, key services are still available. In uncertain cases, demand will be measured and any demand exceeding 5% will be deemed significant.

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These general rules are supplemented by more specific ones that provide for bilingual services to travellers under any circumstances in which the demand in both languages exceeds 5%, as well as when the number of travellers permits the assumption of significant demand: airports handling more than a million passengers, maritime crossings and stations handling more than 100,000 passengers, air and ferry crossings that begin and end in Ontario, Quebec and New Brunswick, highway border stations in Ontario, Quebec and New Brunswick where more than 500,000 persons cross, the largest border station in each of the other provinces (except at an airport).

The regulations also provide for circumstances in which the nature of the service justifies that it be provided in both languages: foreign missions; health and safety matters; services in national parks and in the territories; computerized or remote services.

This preliminary draft is the first, and one of the most important, of a series of regulations to be made under the Act to cover language of work, equitable participation, and rules of procedure in federal courts.

The Act stipulates that the regulations are to be tabled in the House of Commons at least 30 sitting days before they are published in the *Canada Gazette*. The regulations will not come into effect until a year later.

The minister said that the draft regulations would not have a dramatic effect on existing services. However, they would make it clear where bilingual services are needed and on what scale, and thus be easier for the public to understand. ■

(Our translation)

For further information on regulations, readers are referred to the Information Centre, Official Languages Branch, Treasury Board Secretariat at: (613) 952-2923.

William Caxton

One of the earliest English voices to complain about the problems of linguistic change was William Caxton (1422?-91). He was writing at a time when English had undergone its greatest period of change, which had resulted in a major shift in pronunciation, the almost total loss of Anglo-Saxon inflections, and an enormous influx of new vocabulary, mainly from French.

Cambridge Encyclopedia of Language.

4. Reactions: The Move Was Late and Incomplete, but Welcome

Tom Sloan

When the draft regulations on communications and service to the public for the 1988 Official Languages Act were finally tabled in the House of Commons last November 8 by Treasury Board President Gilles Loiselle, they were welcome news to a number of people, including the leaders of the official language minority communities and the official language spokespersons for the federal opposition parties.

Especially pleased, even with some reservations, were the presidents of Alliance Quebec, representing the Anglophone minority in that province, and the Fédération des Francophones hors Québec, representing the French-speaking community in nine provinces and two territories.

Minority communities

Alliance Quebec president Robert Keaton noted that the

regulations had been a long time in coming, but with their tabling "the government of Canada took a much needed step towards reinforcing Canada's commitment to its minicity language communities. We applaud the initiative." The tabling was not, however, the final step. "Today's announcement is a real start but there's still a lot of work to be done. The federal government must show the leadership to see the regulations through the House before the end of the session, and the dedication to direct the bureaucracy to put the required bilingual services in place — across the country. Canadians who believe in Canada's commitment to both official languages will be counting upon the government to follow through. I hope they will not be disappointed."

FFHQ president Guy Matte expressed satisfaction on the

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Robert Keaton

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Guy Matte

part of the members and supporters of his organization. "The wait has been long and painful but we now have at least a renewed commitment from the federal government regarding the country's linguistic duality," Matte commented. "The document is not perfect, but it will be useful to determine the extent to which the law can be applied. When it comes to our communities, it is too early to evaluate the impact the regulations will have. Several important steps remain before the final version is tabled."



Jean-Robert Gauthier

Parliamentary reactions

In the House of Commons, Liberal spokesman Jean-Robert Gauthier, MP for Ottawa-Vanier, also welcomed the move, belated though it was. "After two and a half years of waiting, I am pleased that the draft regulations concerning the language of service have finally been tabled." However, "after this long governmental paralysis, I would have preferred that the complete regulations had been tabled. Unfortunately, we may have to wait indefinitely for those regulations

dealing with the language of work and equitable participation."

While also welcoming the regulations, the official languages critic of the New Democratic Party, Phil Edmonston, blasted the government for its delay in tabling them and its failure to address the issue of privatization in the regulations.

As for the privatization issue, the government continues to ignore it, the MP for Chambly affirmed. "The Commissioner of Official Languages is already in court against Air Canada.... The same problem presents itself for Petro-Canada.... At the least the government should ensure these corporations continue to respect the Official Languages Act."

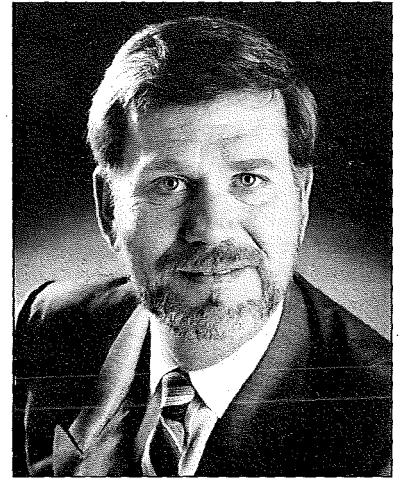
Commissioner's reaction

For his part, the Commissioner drew two major conclusions from earlier consultations and a rapid examination of this preliminary draft: Anglophones and Francophones will benefit from *equitable* treatment and the regulations are *reasonable*.

The regulations are *equitable*: above all, they

provide identical treatment for both majorities.

The two minority communities (which are roughly equal in number) will benefit from the same services under the same circumstances. Since the assessment of demand is largely based on demographic data, about 96% of Anglophones in Quebec and 92% of Francophones outside Quebec have access to federal offices in their language.¹ These communities benefit from a variable scale of services, depending on their absolute or relative demographic weight: all services, a number of services in proportion to their size, or certain key services. In addition, special rules have been designed



Phil Edmonston

demand in accordance with a variable scale of services. The criteria seem realistic to us: they are in proportion to the demographic weight of the minority and they take into consideration the real needs of the people, the nature of the service and the communications circumstances. Under these conditions, there is no reason to think that the number of bilingual positions or the overall cost of the program will increase to any considerable extent.

The new criteria stated in the regulations should thus allow a methodical application of the Act in a coherent, realistic framework. That is not to say that there is no room for improvement. The Commissioner, and, no doubt, others, will have some suggestions to offer, but he recognizes that the ultimate responsibility belongs to government and Parliament and that time is of the essence. ■

Note

¹ This slight difference is explained by the fact that minority Anglophones are concentrated in the urban areas of a single province, while minority Francophones are found almost everywhere else in Canada.

The draft regulations are both equitable and reasonable.

for particular circumstances (health and safety, remote services, computerized services, services for travellers in Canada and abroad and so on). Canadians of both language communities should therefore be assured of service in their own language in most of their contacts with federal agencies wherever the demand is large or the nature of the service justifies it.

The regulations are *reasonable*: they guarantee the language rights of Canadians by taking into account the different conditions of significant

Westmount and Outremont

The two Montreal Island cities represent an aspect of the reality of English- and French-speaking Canada.

This is a tale of two cities, of about the same size, located a few miles apart, with somewhat similar homes, albeit in different languages, relating to a mountain that defines the geography of each. They have quite different sociological, especially language, characteristics, but closely related policies and aspirations.

They are Westmount and Outremont, both on Montreal Island in the midst of the Montreal Urban Community (MUC) and immediate neighbours to the city of Montreal. Both have many stately homes, parks, and wide boulevards along with quiet, tree-shaded residential streets. They are, in short, not completely typical of the larger agglomeration of which they are a part. But neither are they completely atypical. Each in its own way represents an aspect of the reality of English- and French-speaking Canada. And both are a reflection of what has been and can be achieved in the area of civilized relations between Canada's two official language groups when they live side by side in the same municipality. That they are both on Montreal Island and in Quebec makes their example all the more interesting.

In fact, if there is an epicentre for all the complexities and the occasional turmoil that can be unleashed by Canadian language duality, it is surely in the relatively confined area of the MUC and, most particularly, Montreal Island, where more than 1.5 million people, almost

one-third of them English-speaking, live in an area of under 200 square miles.

A model and a warning

That there have been and continue to be sharp tensions is no secret. Large numbers of people of both official language groups must deal with each other individually and collectively on a daily basis. Montreal and the urban community of which it is the centre have the capacity to be both a model and a warning of what relations between the two language communities should or should not be. Despite the difficulties, despite the confrontations that are the stuff of media coverage, the story today is far from uniformly bleak, though some bleakness is inevitably a part of the landscape.

In the historical context the present situation is of very recent origin. For two centuries, to the growing frustration of Francophones, the economic and social, if not the political, life of the area was dominated by a relatively few Anglophones and hence by the English language. While this started to change 30 years ago with the advent of the Quiet Revolution, the most important single fillip was provided by the election of the Parti Québécois government in 1976, followed closely by the adoption of Bill 101, the Charter of the French Language, which made French the sole official language, thus ensuring its priority position throughout the province including, of course, Montreal.

This is the context within which have taken place the more recent developments within the urban community and specifically in cities such as Westmount and Outremont, which are an integral part of that community.

A language flashpoint

Montreal and its suburbs form, as Montreal

Gazette columnist Gretta Chambers pointed out in *Language and Society* 29, the centre *par excellence* of the "English Fact" in Quebec. There are, of course, several other areas of Anglophone influence, such as west Quebec, the Eastern Townships south of Montreal and parts of the Gaspé Peninsula. But there is no place where the English-

speaking population is so large, so concentrated, so powerful and so self-confident. About 62% (first official language spoken) of all Anglophone Quebecers live on this relatively small island; and the great majority of them live to the west of St. Lawrence Boulevard, which geographically divides both the city and the Island itself. Montreal Island, and particularly its western portion, is therefore a point where English- and French-speaking Quebecers have one of the most intensive and extensive

relationships on a daily basis, and a centre of attention for English-speakers concerned for their own collective survival in the province.

It is also the centre of attention for French-speaking Quebecers. Here is where they too must demand respect for their language. Here is where they too believe they must be able to live, work, play, communicate and prosper in their own language; above all they demand that it and they be respected.

Montreal is, indeed, the language flashpoint for the whole of Quebec. What happens here is vital for the present and future of both language communities.



May Cutler, mayor of Westmount

Westmount

Westmount and Outremont, each in its own way, starting from different legal and social realities, are providing answers and examples in the area of language accommodation.

Stretching from the valley of the St. Lawrence River on the south to and up the western slopes of Mount Royal ("the Mountain"), Westmount has both a history and a reputation — a history as an overwhelmingly Anglophone bastion a hop, skip and a jump



away from the centre of predominantly Francophone Montreal. Its reputation has, through the years, been one of indifference to political events occurring outside its boundaries, and specifically those involving the majority Francophone community. Its physical appearance is unique, with spacious and elegant homes on the slope of the Mountain looking down on a grey stone city hall that seems remarkably like a part of an English boarding school, surrounded by a large, carefully manicured park. Without the Mountain in the background it seems the very image of a prosperous southern English county town. It is not too difficult to understand the reputation that Westmount gained as an enclave of English wealth, privilege and power. Hence the jibe of René Lévesque at the "Westmount Rhodesians" as his Parti Québécois was fighting, in the 1970s, to enhance the place of the Francophone majority in Montreal as well as in Quebec as a whole. But in reality Westmount was always more complex than its reputation. It always had French-speaking residents, although in small numbers; and, away from the slopes of the Mountain, the great majority of Westmounters lived in far more modest circumstances, not all that different from their neighbours in other municipalities.

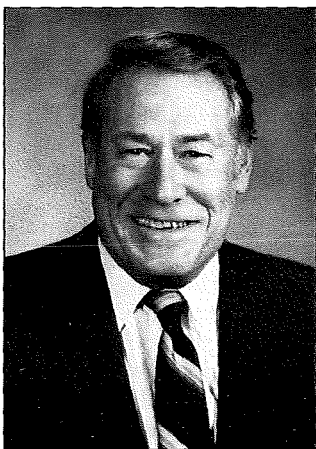
Evolution

Today, a visitor to Westmount would not note any major physical changes from two decades ago. But in other terms, and specifically in terms of language, the evolution has been considerable. This is now in almost every way a fully bilingual jurisdiction with French, in some areas, such as telephone greetings, now enjoying priority status. At one time it is fair to state that French had little relevance in the daily

life of Westmount. That has changed with a vengeance, and for at least two reasons.

One of course is the law. Bill 101 made French relevant, if not pervasive everywhere. French could no longer be ignored anywhere in Quebec, even in overwhelmingly Anglophone areas. It became the sole official language which fact, by itself, forced a multitude of changes in many spheres, and not least at the local level. French was present everywhere and adaptation was in some places difficult.

Nowhere, however, was it impossible; and Westmount helped show the way. In fact, says city clerk Robert Wilkins, it started to move before the passage of Bill 101 by deciding that henceforth all its by-laws would be in the two languages. The process has been a steady one ever since and although without the law the details might have been different the evolution would have been the same. "I am sure that even had there been no law we would have pursued the same path," Wilkins says. Psychology and attitudes have changed, apparently, involving the recognition of the place of French in the new Quebec. It is highly unlikely there will be any turning back.



Jerome Choquette, mayor of Outremont

Outremont City Hall

Today Westmount considers itself a model bilingual city. "We are certainly more bilingual than most Canadian municipalities, and we're proud of it," says Gordon Black, director of human resources. "No French-speaking person should have any difficulty in communicating with our administration," he says. All municipal services are routinely provided in their language to the more than 4,000 Francophones who make up about 20% of the population of 20,000. About 70% are English-speaking.

All public notices, the quarterly municipal bulletin, labour agreements with city employees, all job notices and information in general are in both languages. A working knowledge of both official languages is now a prerequisite for employment. Resolutions coming before city council are now bilingual as are the minutes of council meetings.

Legally bilingual

Unlike in the overwhelming majority of Quebec municipalities, however, English still has a prominent place. Because Anglophones still constitute a majority of the population, Westmount qualifies under Bill 101 as a legally bilingual municipality, of which

there are fewer than 60 in the province. This means it can use English as well as French on outdoor municipal signs and it can communicate internally and with other so-designated institutions in both languages. English remains the principal working language within city offices and the council, which holds its meetings mainly in English. Bilingual question periods follow public sittings.

Westmount is, in short, now a bilingual municipality both because it must be, under the law, and because, officials say, it wants to be.

Outremont

This is not the situation of another quiet, comfortable, suburban town a few miles to the north and east of Westmount. Outremont takes its name from its geographical location on the other side of Mount Royal.

In legal terms, the position of Outremont is virtually the reverse of Westmount's. With a population that is under 25% Anglophone, Outremont could not declare itself bilingual even if it wanted to. Under the law it is a strictly unilingual Francophone municipality with no obligation whatsoever to provide any services to its official language minority. Its



external signage, its administration and its language of work are French and French only, as are the city council meetings and all external communications with other governmental bodies at all levels. Outremont is nothing if not French.

Not tokenism

And yet, as sometimes happens in Quebec, all is not exactly as it appears. Sitting in his office in the city hall, a gracious 19th-century home converted for the purpose, Mayor Jerome Choquette explains why, in practice, Outremont too has a broad bilingual component when it comes to the provision of municipal services to its English-speaking population. "We give services in English to our Anglophone population not because of any legal obligation, but to show that we are not petty or narrow-minded. And this is not a matter of mere tokenism. It's a sign of respect for our country. We certainly can't deny rights to Anglophones if we want French-speakers to have rights in other places. If we can't achieve these things, this country might just as well not exist."

As a result of these policies, in this city of 23,000 people an Anglophone has only to make the request to receive essential municipal services in English. This is not, Choquette insists, in violation of Bill 101. The law does not prohibit municipal services in English; it simply does not require them.

While Outremont makes no effort to translate all its official documents, it does so, Choquette says, on the basis of the perceived need. Among the bilingual documents are the monthly "Bulletin Municipal". The cover is strictly in French, but inside, while French remains predominant, what the mayor describes as essential information is regularly presented in both languages.

Minority language services

One such piece of information of special interest to those following official language developments was in the March 1990 "Bulletin", shortly after the decisions of Sault Ste. Marie and some other Ontario municipalities to declare themselves unilingually English. In response to these actions, Outremont, together with the northern Ontario town of Elliot Lake, explicitly reaffirmed its acceptance of official language policies and its determination to provide services to its citizens in both English and French — "minority language services... that are deemed appropriate and necessary" in the words of resolutions passed by the two municipal councils. In a statement accompanying the resolutions printed in the "Bulletin", the mayor clarified the council decision: "Council cannot take a stand on all aspects of the language question, since in many ways this matter falls outside of municipal jurisdiction. However, with regard to domains in which it does have competence

and responsibility, it seemed essential that it make its position clear."

During the same month, Westmount also reacted to the Soo and its few Ontario allies with a resolution reaffirming "its commitment to the fundamental linguistic duality of this community....The Council of the City of Westmount encourages all cities across Canada to act in a similar spirit of tolerance and goodwill."

Two cities, quite different in many ways, but with a common attribute: a determination to take a human, civilized approach to language minorities within their jurisdiction. And, while it is true that since 1976 Westmount has had no legal alternative to doing so, there is every reason to believe that today, law or no law, it would be acting in the same way. This partakes, perhaps, of an article of faith. But, in today's atmosphere of sourness and cynicism, there may well be a place for faith in the power of such an attitude where there is evidence it is sincere.

T.S.

Minority Languages

Britain: The dramatic increase in immigrant numbers in the 1960s has resulted in over 100 languages being used in Britain by ethnic minority communities. The most widely spoken languages appear to be Punjabi, Bengali, Urdu, Gujarati, German, Polish, Italian, Greek, Spanish and Cantonese.

France: There are several minority languages indigenous to France — Basque, Breton, Catalan, Corsican, Alsatian, Flemish, and Occitan. In a 1978 survey, three-quarters of the population wished to retain this diversity, but only 35% actually understood or spoke one of these languages.

Cambridge
Encyclopedia of Language.

One Word or Another

Because butter is butter....

In an article on marketing, *L'Actualité* for October 1, 1990, points out that bilingualism is a major consideration in developing brand names. "Not only are all-purpose names required," writes Michel Saint-Germain, "but differences of perception must be taken into account."

"In the case of food products in particular, the habits and expectations of the two cultures differ: Francophones like a more poetic name, Anglophones a more functional one."

Pure wool/Pure laine

Dyed-in-the-wool Francophones in Gatineau were shocked to discover a huge sign in their community inviting them, in the language of Shakespeare, to "discover natural quality... pure wool." (*Le Droit*, September 21, 1990)

Meanwhile, an English-speaking reader of *La Presse* took exception to unilingual English signs on St. Catherine Street in Montreal announcing, in flashing red neon letters, "Erotic peepshow — 25 cents", which offended her in several respects.

The Commissioner Speaks to Canadian Parents for French: Good News for the 90s

Jean MacIsaac



From left to right: Pat Brehaut, national president CPF, D'Iberville Fortier, Kathryn Manzer, national past president CPF

"Learning French — Good News for the 90s" was the theme of the Canadian Parents for French (CPF) 14th National Conference held in Halifax in October, at which D'Iberville Fortier was invited to speak.

In his talk, "The 90s: A Time for Faith and Continued Progress", the Commissioner told the 250 delegates from all provinces and territories that their efforts to promote increased opportunities for the learning of French as a second language have been a major factor in improving dialogue and communication between our two official languages communities.

Twenty-five years after it began as a pilot project at St. Lambert Elementary School in Montreal, French immersion counts over 250,000 students enrolled in its programs from Newfoundland to Vancouver

Island. At the same time, enrolment in core French has increased; a substantial majority of Anglophone children now study their second official language at some time during their elementary schooling.

The stories of French second-language learning in Canada and of Canadian Parents for French are closely intertwined. From 30 parents who attended a "Parents Conference on French and Exchange Opportunities" convened in 1977 by Keith Spicer, the first Commissioner of Official Languages, CPF has grown to a powerful national association with over 18,000 members active in every province and territory in Canada.

Mr. Fortier told the delegates that the 90s will be a time for faith and further progress. "Despite some setbacks, there have been significant long-term

advances towards the equality of our two official languages communities. This is obvious in many federal institutions, in services to minorities and in improved access to quality second-language instruction. As a result, Canadians are able to work together, develop common values and share in the responsibility of building our country."

"The current generation of young Canadians is not only the most bilingual in our nation's history," said the Commissioner, "but their more generous and open attitudes bode well for improved mutual understanding." He acknowledged that after the Meech Lake Accord failed some started to revel in the prospect of finally seeing French disappear from their cereal boxes, if not from a Canada from which Quebec would be excluded, while others were fervently calling for the clear-cut but radical choice of independence.

"These attitudes aside," he concluded, "I do not think faith in our country would be blind faith, for we have shown that we can build a solid foundation for linguistic duality. I am convinced that people of good will will see to it that the foundation is further strengthened in the months and years to come."

As well as celebrating the 25th anniversary of French immersion, conference delegates discussed serious issues facing French second-language teaching in the 90s [see page 30]. ■

Kaput, caput and capot

In the Toronto *Globe and Mail* (October 16), Ray Conlogue wrote: "the media, rather melodramatically, persist in telling us that Canada as a nation is kaput."

According to *The Atlantic* (September 1990) *kaput*, meaning broken, ruined, destroyed, was adopted by English from German in the 1890s. But German itself borrowed it from French during the Thirty Year's War (1618-1648). The French expression *faire capot* (to be defeated) was translated by the Germans as *caput machen*, later on abstracted to *kaputt*. French *faire capot* is also an expression from the card game piquet and means "to make no tricks". English borrowed the term *capot* directly from French when the game came to England.

Erratum

In our last issue, Aline Chalifoux was referred to as the ACFO Ottawa-Carleton regional president on page 30. In fact, she is the development agent. The president of ACFO is Marielle Beaulieu.

Press Review

Editorial Comment from Quebec

Tom Sloan

Essentially, only in Quebec did editorial comment on language issues continue, post-Meech Lake.

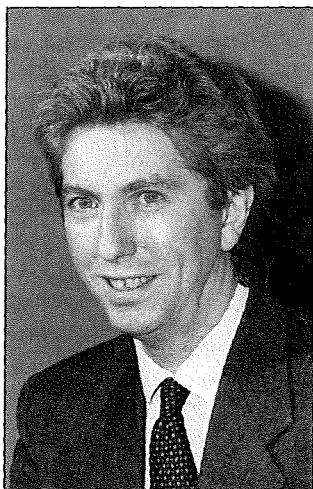
As the post-Meech Lake era became well and truly installed in the Canadian psyche last summer and fall, it was as though a good many commentators had decided to take a long holiday from matters concerning language rights and the constitution. In eight provinces, the editorial guns were silent and, while the occasional salvo came from Toronto, it was essentially only in Quebec that there was a steady barrage of editorial comment. The major topics were themselves Quebec-based events, the two main ones being the victory of the pro-sovereignist Bloc Québécois (BQ) in a Montreal by-election in August and the setting up of the Quebec constitutional commission in September. A certain deterioration in relations over the issue of new Quebec powers in the field of immigration also caused some ink to flow.

The Bloc Québécois

The overwhelming victory of BQ candidate Gilles Duceppe in the Laurier-Sainte-Marie riding was seen by Quebec French-language papers as a slap in the face for just about everybody: the three federal parties, English-speaking Canada and the whole notion of Canadian federalism as practised until now.

Writing in *La Presse*, editorialist Pierre Gravel called it "a clear message to English Canada." The vote was "a categorical rejection of present-day Canada and enthusiastic

support for a new vision, still somewhat vague, but essentially Quebec-oriented, of the future." According to Gravel, "the voters of Laurier-Sainte-Marie yesterday wrote the last chapter in the painful story of Meech Lake. They have issued a stinging rebuttal to all those in English Canada who were wagering that the frustration and anger engendered by the failure of Meech would rapidly become blurred. They have not only taken advantage of the first opportunity to express their discontent, they also gave the new Bloc Québécois the legitimacy that it still lacked by giving it its first Member of Parliament elected under that name. The victory...also constitutes a total rejection of any new attempt to bring about constitutional reform within the present Canadian framework." The result, Gravel conceded, was not "the triumph of a precise idea."



Gilles Duceppe

It was, however, evidence of "deep popular feeling...a warning to all those who might be tempted to distort, for their own immediate political profit, the meaning of the period of reflection which is getting under way in this Quebec that is now on the move."

Martine Corriveau of Quebec's *Le Soleil* agreed that "the victory of a candidate who doesn't even belong to a political party" was a historic event. "Only the future will tell what significance the other Canada will attach to this message of Quebec's unhappiness. One thing is certain...more and more Quebecers are looking to the future and intend to look after their own interests."

"The die is cast," wrote *Le Devoir* publisher Lise Bissonnette. While she conceded that the traditionally nationalist riding was not an exact mirror of Quebec, "the results... confirm the giant strides that Quebec is now taking, while the principal federal parties are stubbornly floundering in the status quo." The big loser, Bissonnette said, was Liberal leader Jean Chrétien, who lost on all fronts: "that of his constitutional option and, just as important, that of the style of leadership he thought he could impose. English Canada, and most particularly the dazzled Liberals who crowned him in June in Calgary, can no longer be unaware of the resistance that Mr. Chrétien will meet in Quebec if he tries to 'sell' Canada like a pair of old slip-

pers to which Quebecers will return, to get snugly out of the cold, after having played around with the idea of separation."

For his part, *Globe and Mail* columnist Jeffrey Simpson thought the Conservatives had fared even worse than the Liberals. "The Conservatives captured a measly 4 per cent of the vote and finished a humiliating fourth....So the results were dispiriting for the Liberals, but utterly deflating for the Tories."

The *Montreal Gazette* agreed. The Liberals and their leader must take stock of their situation. "But these times will be still more difficult for the Tory MPs in Quebec, who will look at this week's results and wonder whether they could survive the test of a general election." For *Gazette* columnist Gretta Chambers, "The Tories seem to have lost their nationalist base and have founding nothing else with which to replace it." The clearest message, however, was a constitutional one. "Times have changed and Confederation along with them."

After its victory, however, the future of the Bloc in Parliament remained a question mark. To Jean Vigneault of Sherbrooke's *La Tribune*, that future was anything but clear. "Is it not unrealistic to believe that a group of seven MPs who do not hold the balance of power and who have not received from the electorate an official mandate...will exercise real influence....If one day the sovereignty of Quebec



is achieved, it will be in the city of Quebec that it will happen.”

A strongly negative voice on the matter was that of Jean Paré, editor of the magazine *L'Actualité*. Noting that a similar attempt had failed in the 1930s, Paré foresaw the same result today. “This step, in fact, involves all sorts of contradictions. Can a party be both federal and anti-federalist? Can ‘sovereignism’ be practised in a federal parliament? Does not its participation in this Parliament contradict the principle of Lucien Bouchard of negotiating state to state, nation to nation?...As long as it is in Canada, the interest of Quebec is for Canada to function, and certainly not alone, without Quebec....If Quebecers do not participate massively in one party or another on the federal scene, Quebec is simply out of the game.”

The Constitutional Commission

After months of negotiations among the provincial political parties, the Quebec National Assembly in September created a 35-member commission to consider the options open to Quebec in its constitutional relations with the rest of Canada. Earlier, in August, Premier Robert Bourassa had already created controversy by appointing two co-leaders for the group. They were Michel Bélanger, president of the National Bank of Canada and Jean Campeau, head of the Quebec Deposit and Investment Fund. The two men were widely considered to be the personal choices, respectively, of Premier Bourassa and Parti Québécois leader Jacques Parizeau.

Editorialists in all three major Montreal dailies had serious reservations about the move.

Lise Bissonnette in *Le Devoir* described it as “a lame compromise made by tired minds that can only sap the initial impetus.”

Le Presse's Alain Dubuc noted that the commission has a double role: that of preserving the “holy alliance” of the two major parties and that of providing the Liberal government with a constitutional position of its own. “The co-chair principle compromises both these objectives.” Given the opposing premises from which the two men start, the final result could be two different and opposing reports. “There is thus the risk of reproducing the classic cleavage that has divided political life in Quebec: sovereignty against renewed federalism. So much for consensus!”

In an editorial entitled “Two Heads not Better than One”, the *Gazette* acknowledged that both men are “of solid experience, strong intellect and independent mind.” Nevertheless, “...as they lead this commission across the province...Mr. Bélanger will be seen as the token federalist, Mr. Campeau as the token sovereignist.” The ability of the commission to come to credible conclusions would thus be seriously impaired, the paper concluded.

Beyond the issue of its leadership, there was some scepticism concerning the whole makeup of the new body.

Lise Bissonnette wrote of a “scandalous imbalance”, with business people and politicians dominating the commission to the virtual exclusion of the social affairs, cultural and university communities. In general, Bissonnette was not optimistic about a successful conclusion to the commission's work. “With so many hands on the wheel and a hairpin turn through all the concrete posts marking the options of each member, there is a real danger of a breakdown.”

The *Gazette* also had some sharp criticism for the commission's membership, especially concerning the absence of the Anglophone and native communities from the list of groups that the National Assembly said

must be represented. “It is a strange group for such an important task,” the *Gazette* concluded.



Robert Bourassa

A more positive view came from Pierre Vennat in *La Presse*. In setting up the commission, “the National Assembly lived one of its great moments, if only because it was clearly stated, even from the government side, that federalism, as we know it, has had its day.” Above all, he hoped that the work of the group would enable the government to clarify its own position. “What matters is that the Liberals of Robert Bourassa propose to the people a clear option and that the people then choose between it and the PQ's sovereignty-association.”

Somewhat less happy with the prospects was another *La Presse* writer, editorial columnist Marcel Adam. The size and ideological disparity of the commission, he argued, will make agreement almost impossible. It would have been better to give the task to “a more classical kind” of body. “It seems to me that a commission that was simpler, more flexible, and above all more neutral in its composition...would have been better able to take account of the contribution of the various social groups to its labours —

and certainly more likely to come up with a consensus.”

Immigration

As the commission started its work, a new flareup occurred in relations between Ottawa and Quebec, with Premier Bourassa assailing the federal government for allegedly stalling on the implementation of an agreement to give Quebec still greater powers over immigration.

Editorialist Pierre Gravel gave strong support to Bourassa in *La Presse*. “Ottawa is in the process of succeeding in what René Lévesque never managed to do: ridding Robert Bourassa of his last illusions on present-day Canadian federalism, and convincing him that the relations of Quebec with the other provinces are bound to deteriorate rather than improve.” Ottawa, Gravel wrote, was clearly caving into the “ill humour” of the English-speaking provinces, thus demonstrating to Quebecers that federalism, as now practised, “leads inescapably to the isolation of Quebec from the rest of Canada.”

Not surprisingly, the *Gazette* had a different reaction. “Impatience does not become him,” the editorialist said of Bourassa. “Why should Ottawa rush ahead with an agreement which might eventually affect relations with other provinces. Besides, a perfectly good Ottawa-Quebec agreement on immigration has been functioning well since 1978.” Why, the paper asked, is the premier making an issue of the matter when relations between the two governments have been proceeding smoothly. “Surely the premier is not stooping to a little gratuitous Ottawa bashing just to please the nationalist gallery.”

Bissonnette and Orr

A Montreal paper and its policies were themselves briefly the centre of attention by the *Globe*



Lise Bissonnette

and *Mail* in Toronto. It began when Royal Orr, a former president of Alliance Quebec and now a Montreal talk-show host, published an article in the *Globe* accusing the new publisher of *Le Devoir*, Lise Bissonnette, of having abandoned the principles of the paper's founder, Henri Bourassa. He accused Bissonnette of taking the paper along the road of narrow nationalism, to the point where it was no longer interested in the French-speaking community outside Quebec. "In a nutshell, *Le Devoir* is no longer committed to French Canada."

A sharp reply from Bissonnette came five days later, totally rejecting the charge of narrow nationalism. "I do not hold simplistic views about the future of Quebec and Canada." *Le Devoir's* stand was for "the maximum sovereignty of Quebec, with an organic entente with the rest of Canada." She also took issue with Orr's claim concerning her attitude towards the French-speaking community outside Quebec. "As long as I am publisher of *Le Devoir*, and even if I have to reconcile this commitment with my constitutional opinions, the newspaper will remain a staunch ally of Francophones in other provinces." ■

Bilingual Software: Ready by January 1991?

On July 15, the *Vancouver Sun* broke a story that would soon attract headlines in Toronto and Ottawa. "B.C. software developers have found a 'Trojan horse' in Canada's Official Languages Act," Ken Bell, the *Sun's* business editor, wrote. Apparently harmless, a 'Trojan Horse', in computer parlance, is a program that creates havoc at a set time.

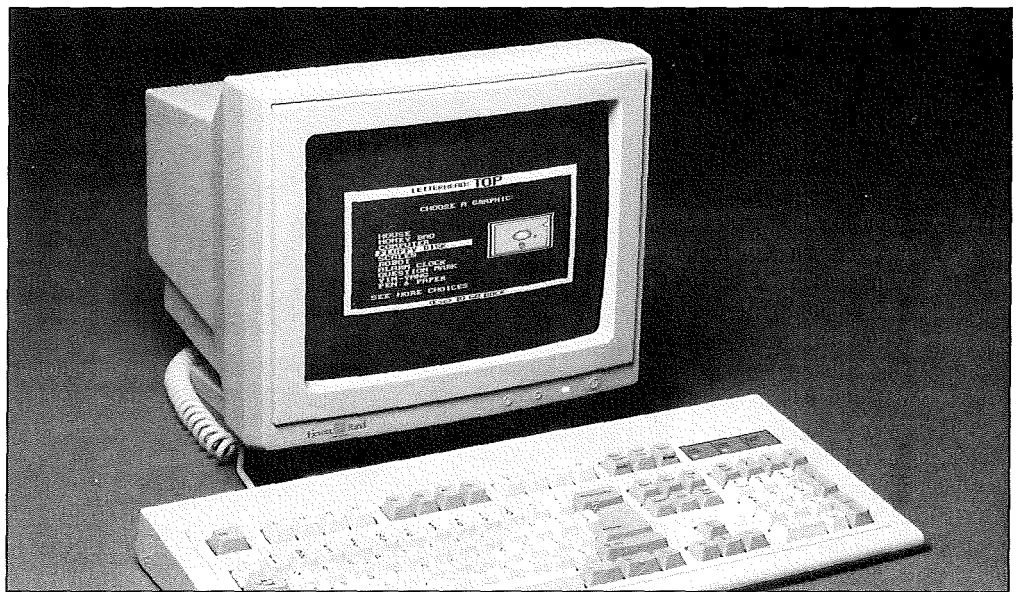
And the British Columbia software developers had woken up to a clock set for January 1, 1991, when the Official Languages Act requires that "regularly and widely used automated systems for the processing and communication of data acquired or produced by [federal institutions]... can be used in either official language".

This requirement applies chiefly to new systems acquired to be used — regularly and widely — in areas where English and French are commonly used on the job, that is, in the National Capital and in parts of New Brunswick, Quebec and Ontario.

The story concluded that "major U.S. software companies stand to gain the most. More attuned to selling software in Europe, [they] have French-language versions of their programs aimed at the French market." The small British Columbia software developers interviewed said it was impossible for them to produce bilingual versions by the target date.

Treasury Board, the federal government agency responsible, had issued a circular on December 30, 1988, spelling out progressive objectives for bilingual microcomputer systems. The guidelines were the result of wide consultation and information sessions the Board had with industry associations and representatives. A lengthy CBC interview with a Treasury Board spokesperson put the matter at rest. Rather than having cold feet, as the story suggested, the Board explained that it is currently reviewing the impact of the January 1, 1991, deadline on the Canadian software and hardware industries. However, its spokesperson also indicated the Board had no intention of postponing the implementation of the bilingual software requirement.

An October 23 *Globe and Mail* report on the office and computers signals that as a result of the federal requirement software and hardware suppliers "are scrambling to bring to the market French versions of their products." The Kanata, Ontario, based Digital Equipment of Canada, the report indicates, has translated its software, hardware and documentation. Digital's federal accounts represent 45% of the company's sales in Canada. According to SDM Inc., a Montreal organization that catalogues every software package distributed in Quebec, about 3,260 applications are currently available in French. ■



An International Role for Canadian Ombudsmen

A widely recognized mechanism for the promotion and protection of human rights, the institution of the ombudsman, originated in Sweden in 1809-10 and has been copied in various forms in 40 countries around the world.

In Canada there are generalist legislative ombudsmen — accountable to a legislature — in nine provinces and four specialized federal ombudsmen (official languages, correctional investigator, access to information, and privacy) as well as human rights commissioners at the federal (1), provincial (10) and territorial (1) levels.

A 1978 United Nations seminar on institutions for the protection of human rights recommended that member countries appoint ombudsmen and an International Ombudsman Institute (IOI) was formed that year. Located at the University of Alberta in Edmonton, it has members from every continent. One of the IOI's objectives is the promotion of the concept of ombudsman and the encouragement of its development throughout the world.

At the 1988 International Ombudsman Conference held in Canberra the absence of ombudsmen from Francophone Africa and Latin America was noted, and Eastern Europe was of course not yet represented.

Even though 1988 was the 40th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the actual state of human rights in the world was a gloomy one overall. Clearly, much needed to be

done — and still needs to be done — to improve the situation in many countries, and ombudsmanship is an interesting option.

For that reason, at the 1989 Quebec Conference of Canadian ombudsmen, the Commissioner of Official Languages, who is a specialized ombudsman, presented a brief concept proposal to his colleagues. It emphasized the idea of Canada's offering its expertise to interested countries in Francophone Africa and in Latin America, two regions which are the least well served as far as the ombudsman's institution is concerned.

Why Canada? Because of Canada's clear commitment to human rights, because of our expertise in the democratic institution of ombudsmanship, because of Canada's unique characteristic of providing ombudsman services in two major world languages, English and French, and because the IOI's headquarters is in this country. The Commissioner's

proposal gained consensus support from the legislative ombudsmen.

Subsequently, the Commissioner's Office developed a more detailed proposal following numerous consultations with Stephen Owen, British Columbia's ombudsman and President of the IOI. Feedback also came from Ed Broadbent, President of the International Centre for Human Rights and Democratic Development.

The draft further developed the rationale, suggested that the IOI be the implementing agency and proposed that funding from Canadian sources as well as from other like-minded countries be sought to:

- prepare a document describing the role of the ombudsman for distribution to interested parties in regions where the institution does not yet exist;
- develop, in co-operation with interested local leaders, pene-

tration strategies appropriate to each region and establish contacts with countries which could be our partners in implementing the project in particular regions; and

- convene regional symposia at which representatives from target countries and resource people from countries with ombudsman expertise would explore the applicability of the idea to each country's circumstances.

The draft proposal was widely distributed and discussed. It was seen to be appropriate in terms of Canada's foreign policy objectives and its aid policy in relation to human rights. Stephen Owen, who had already submitted the proposal to the International Ombudsmen Institute Board, reported that it had been received very positively. As well, the United Nations, over the past 10 or 11 years, has placed great emphasis on the institution of the ombudsman as a means of protecting and promoting human rights.

The need for institutions that can help promote and defend human rights all over the world is perhaps greater now, and will be greater in the 1990s, than ever before.

As Mr. Fortier said in an address to the National Conference of Ombudsmen in Halifax in September 1990: "Why could not the ombudsman institution, which has been so useful to citizens of Scandinavian and other Western countries in their dealings with the state, be as useful in countries of Eastern Europe, Latin America and Africa? And why should Canada, which has demonstrated considerable leadership in the defence of human rights both within and outside its boundaries, not be actively involved in the expansion of the ombudsman concept around the world?"

The proposal jointly presented by Fortier and Owen was



Stephen Owen, President of the International Ombudsman Institute

approved and the following resolution adopted unanimously: "The 1990 National Conference of Ombudsmen supports the efforts of the International Ombudsman Institute (IOI), located in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, to promote and create the institution of the ombudsman in regions and countries of the world where it is not fully developed or does not yet exist, and to obtain human and financial resources to this effect."

It is hoped that this further endorsement will allow the project to get started in the not too distant future. ■

A matter of speed

"In general Franco-phones do speak French faster than Anglophones speak English," wrote A. Trevor Hodge in the *Toronto Globe and Mail* (October 11, 1990).

"This means that Franco-phones listening to Anglophones fluent in French will wrongly attribute their relative slowness to ignorance or difficulty with the language. It would be interesting to know how many civil servants have failed bilingualism courses simply because the French examiner did not realize that this was also how they speak in English?"

Three Special Reports by the Commissioner to Treasury Board

Colette Duhaime*

While the investigation of complaints on an individual basis has always, over the years, proven an effective means of correcting various shortcomings of the official languages program, the grouping of complaints on a thematic basis, a relatively recent approach taken by the Office of the Commissioner, should help to rectify certain systemic problems associated with the inadequacy of existing systems or policies.

In order to draw attention to certain structural shortcomings of the program, the Office of the Commissioner has just published three reports, based essentially on complaints grouped together, and has submitted them to the President of the Treasury Board. The following is a summary of these reports.

Use of the media

The most important of these reports is undoubtedly that dealing with the insufficient use of media of the official language minority communities by federal departments, agencies and corporations. This problem has persisted for more than a decade. Such media play an essential role in the life of the minority communities and in providing them with information.

In addition, for the first time, the Commissioner has decided,

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with the consent of the complainants, to apply to the Federal Court for court remedy against Air Canada. In 1989 the corporation was the subject of 165 complaints, accounting for 24.2% of the complaints submitted concerning the use of minority media by federal institutions.

deteriorated. Between January 1 and September 18, 1990, the Office of the Commissioner received 315 complaints.

This state of affairs is attributable to the absence of government policies, regulations and control mechanisms, combined with the difficulty certain institutions experience in



Air Canada: 165 complaints

Complaints concerning the minority press have shown the greatest increase in numbers. They accounted for 18.5% of the complaints dealt with in 1989, compared to 10% in 1988.

From 1986 to 1987 the number of complaints concerning the minority press rose by almost 62% — from 237 to 383. This indicated that there would be no improvement unless the Treasury Board clarified its policies and, in particular, unless it advocated effective controls to ensure that the Act was respected.

In the years since, far from improving, the situation has

complying with obligations that are still poorly understood.

The fact is that, while the Act is explicit concerning the use of the media to publicize announcements and notices to communicate effectively with the public in both official languages, it seems that many government officials still have a poor understanding of their obligations.

In a report submitted in July 1990, the Office of the Commissioner therefore makes clear recommendations to the Treasury Board to rectify the situation. Among other things, the Commissioner asks that the Treasury Board publicize and

implement, by December 31, 1990, a policy and directives addressed to all federal institutions concerning the application of Sections 11 and 30 of the Official Languages Act in order to publicize and promote federal services.

Secondly, the Office of the Commissioner asks the Treasury Board to put in place control and follow-up mechanisms to ensure that all federal institutions respect this policy.

Active offer

The Commissioner of Official Languages has always maintained that federal institutions must actively inform the public of its right to choose the official language in which it receives services.

Between 1977 and 1982 the policies of the government concerning "active offer" of services in both official languages were gradually strengthened. In 1988 the main elements of a directive issued in 1982 by the Treasury Board were incorporated into the new Official Languages Act. Unfortunately, while the concept of active offer is now an integral part of the Act, the old government policies and directives have not yet been revised to take adequate account of active offer in person, which is a basic aspect of service to the public.

One year after the Official Languages Act came into force, the Office of the Commissioner therefore decided to undertake a study to evaluate the extent to which this legislative requirement was being respected by federal institutions. In all, 381 checks were made concerning various aspects of the active offer of bilingual services, including requests for service by telephone and on-site visits to check on counter service, signage and documentation.

This survey revealed that while there is a high level of compliance with regard to the visual aspects of active offer of

bilingual service, the same is not true with respect to the active offer of service in person. The federal employees with whom the investigators met during this study rarely used a bilingual greeting and some even resolutely discouraged requests for service in the minority official language. As for telephone communications, the answers were bilingual 60% of the time, a figure that indicates that the situation in this regard too still leaves much to be desired.

Unfortunately, the fact has to be faced that members of the public, all too often, must still insist on their right to be served in the language of their choice.

From 1986 to 1987 the number of complaints concerning the minority press rose by almost 62%.

It is hardly surprising, therefore, that the Office of the Commissioner continues to receive a large number of complaints about this situation. For example, during just the first year since the Act took effect, the Office received 414 complaints that required on-the-spot checks.

In addition to informing employees about their responsibility to offer members of the public their choice of language of service, the Office of the Commissioner believes that the Treasury Board should compile and distribute a directory of visual means used to ensure the active offer of bilingual service. In addition, the Treasury Board should, in the Office's opinion, evaluate public satisfaction with the linguistic aspect of federal services. Finally, federal offices should take appropriate measures to publicize the availability of bilingual services.

Language requirements

Section 91 of the Official Languages Act is a new provision that did not exist in the 1969 Act. It stipulates that the obligations related to language of service and language of work do not authorize "the application of official language requirements to a particular staffing action unless those requirements are objectively required to perform the functions for which the staffing action is undertaken." It therefore constitutes an important tool to protect government employees of the two linguistic majorities in particular against any kind of linguistic discrimination with regard to employment and opportunities for

appointment to a bilingual position, as opposed to other staffing actions where the successful candidates have up to two years to attain the required level of bilingualism. Only one complainant, however, contested the validity of the language test.

Most investigations, which are very sensitive because of their impact on the complainant and their possible repercussions on the work environment, particularly on career opportunities, succeed in revealing the source of the problems.

These problems include ignorance of the provisions of the Act, the absence of specific rules, the complexity of the classification and staffing systems for bilingual positions, the use of the least restrictive solutions, outmoded policies and misunderstanding of the needs of clients.

In his Annual Report 1988 and again in that for 1989, the Commissioner pointed out the imperative need to formulate specific directives in certain key areas of the Act. The study conducted in July 1990 once again confirmed the pertinence of the recommendations contained in these Annual Reports.

The Commissioner has therefore asked the Treasury Board to establish, by December 31, 1990, objective criteria designed to clarify the provisions of Section 91 in the light of the other provisions of the Official Languages Act.

He has also asked it to inform the employees of institutions of the scope and extent of this section and of the objective criteria that should be used when staffing positions.

In order to achieve these objectives, the Commissioner, finally, recommends that the Treasury Board implement selective control measures to ensure more effective administration of this provision of the Act ■.

(Our translation)

advancement, while at the same time recognizing the public's right to be served in the official language of its choice.

By including this provision, the legislator intended to remind federal institutions of an obligation inherent in the Canadian model of linguistic arrangements based on the linguistic designation of positions.

Between the promulgation of the Official Languages Act on September 15, 1988, and May 25, 1990, the Office of the Commissioner received 176 complaints concerning possible violations of this section.

While 59% of the complainants alleged a contravention of the Act in terms of the linguistic designation assigned to a position, 21% of them questioned the level of bilingualism required. The others, i.e., 20% of the complainants, challenged the imperative nature of an

The Ontario Election and Language Rights: Nobody Talked

Peter Cowan*

As campaigning politicians danced around the ring, opponents of French-language rights seemed to pack little punch.

While language was a factor in the September 6 Ontario election upset, it made but a minor contribution to the demise of former Premier David Peterson's Liberal government.

In the wake of last year's *Strum und Drag* over Bill 8, the legislation that provides Ontario Francophones with services in their own

Language did emerge during the Liberal's summer cakewalk-turned-disaster.

French-language rights were, quite understandably an issue for the Association canadienne-française de l'Ontario (ACFO).

They were also an issue for a vocal hard core of extremists opposed to rights for the French-speaking

After Bob Rae's New Democrats won the pundits identified the main factors in the Liberal defeat:

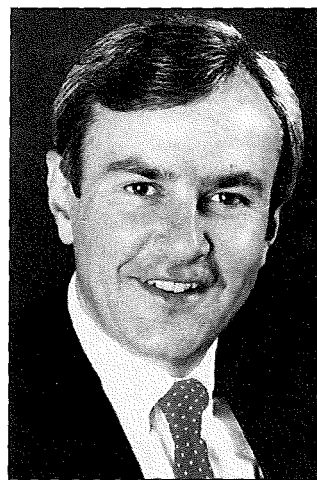
- Opposition to Meech Lake and the extent to which Peterson was identified with the agreement. Ontario voters seemed ready to forget that Rae also supported it.
- Anger over Peterson's decision to seek what appeared at the time to be an easy victory by calling an unnecessary summer election in the middle of the convincing mandate given his government in 1987.
- General disillusionment with politicians.

Another restraint on the language issue was the politicians themselves. They were determined to keep Pandora's box shut.

In the wake of the country-wide reaction to towns declaring themselves unilingual and to a man taped by TV cameras as he trampled the Quebec flag, a belated sense of embarrassment set in. The scene was shown frequently in Quebec in the heat of the post-Meech reaction, putting anti-bilingualism forces on the defensive.

The language of language

During the campaign local politicians and anti-French rights activists were busy explaining that, indeed, they were not really "anti-French".

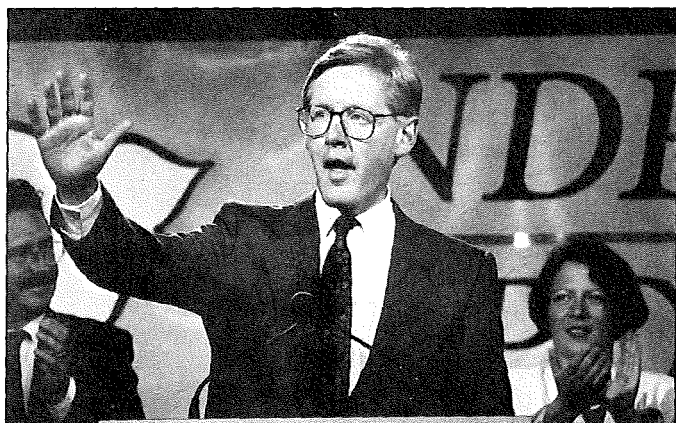


David Peterson

When Conservative leader Mike Harris toured Brockville — scene of the flag incident — local Tory MPP Robert Runciman said that while language was an issue in his Leeds-Grenville riding, his area had got a bum rap. Referring to the flag incident, Runciman told reporters that there was only one local person at the demonstration and that the man who trampled the flag was a Montrealer. (This was later disproved when a Leeds-Grenville resident admitted to the deed in an interview with the *Ottawa Citizen's* Roy MacGregor, but claimed his gesture had been misunderstood.)

Party leaders walked on eggshells where language was concerned.

Peterson rarely spoke French when touring areas with major French-speaking populations.



Bob Rae

Photo: The Ottawa Citizen

language where numbers warrant, it might have been assumed that French-language rights opponents would form a formidable one-issue political bloc. But the rush of municipalities — starting with Sault Ste. Marie — that declared themselves English-speaking seems to have been a protest wave that expended itself as quickly as it formed.

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

minority, including the Alliance for the Preservation of English in Canada (APEC). The obvious lightning rod to attract votes was the populist Confederation of Regions Party (CoR). But with few exceptions, even in ridings where language had been a hot issue, CoR could not do better than a usually poor third-place finish.

A non-starter?

By late summer, politicians were saying that the language issue was a non-starter.



Photo: *The Ottawa Citizen*
Mike Harris

On August 9, as he toured Wiarton on the shores of Georgian Bay, Peterson reiterated a claim first made in 1987 that Ontario would one day be officially bilingual, but said such a move would not be constructive at this time.

He took Quebec to task for its law allowing only French signs and suggested Quebec has been nasty in dealing with its English-speaking minority. "But that doesn't give me the right to go and be nasty to someone else....It takes a lot of generosity of soul to try and understand the other guy," Peterson said.

Prudent language could also be heard from NDP leader Bob Rae, whose party's platform supports bilingualism for Ontario.

In Sudbury, Rae said: "I don't know how you can govern this province without the need to respect minorities. We can't ignore the needs of half a million citizens in this province, nor can we ignore the basic fact of life that English is the language of the majority. I think we've taken a very balanced approach."

Tory leader Mike Harris took the view that Ontario should be English-speaking but provide French-language services where numbers warrant.

It was all very carefully phrased.

The three leaders knew what a poll commissioned by the *Toronto Star* and CFTO television showed. Most Ontario voters opposed making Ontario officially bilingual: 57% of respondents said "no" to official bilingualism for Ontario, 38% said "yes" and 5% had "no answer".

Other reactions

But ACFO President Jean Tanguay was not about to allow the politicians to let sleeping dogs lie. On August 31 he publicly graded party leaders' replies to an ACFO questionnaire on language, giving Peterson a B, Harris a C and Rae an A.

Tanguay complained that the leaders' statements on language were "coloured by a lot of caution. Too much caution in our opinion."

The Franco-Ontarian press, including the Ottawa-Hull daily *Le Droit*, kept a strong focus on language.

In Quebec the press said little about language, taking the view that Peterson deserved re-election because he was a proven ally of Quebec.

Non-issues

Among the public, however, except those for whom language was a vital concern, the issue did not ignite. By late August candidates of all stripes were admitting that language and national unity were not influential issues.

Carol-Ann Ross, CoR candidate in Cornwall, told an interviewer that the failure of the Meech Lake Accord had calmed many voters down. "People feel good about it," she said.

When the votes were counted, 70% of the electorate supported the NDP and Liberals — parties that endorse language rights. The Tories, who support them conditionally, got 23.5% and other parties and independents 6.6% per cent of the vote. CoR's share was 2%.

Perhaps attitudes were best summed up by Bob Rae during a campaign swing through Ottawa when he told *Ottawa Citizen* reporter Daniel Drolet, "I personally feel that a lot of people really want this issue to be resolved. And they don't like the incredible emotion and division it engenders." ■

Bilingualism and Aboriginal Languages

"Canada's other languages — and more notably our Native languages — have a place within our educational systems...." (Extract from our 1986 Annual Report.)

The Northwest Territories' Official Languages Act makes English and French the official languages of the Territories as well as recognizing seven official aboriginal languages....We are very sympathetic to recognition of the language rights of the aboriginal peoples in the Territories; however, it should be recognized that the problems raised by their implementation are different and more complex. They should not be an obstacle to realizing the already long-delayed promise of services in French...." (Extract from our 1989 Annual Report.)

Strine

The contrast between regional dialect and standard English usage has been a source of humour the world over. In *Let Stalk Strine* (1965), Afferbeck Lauder (said to be the professor of Strine Studies at the University of Sinny) uses standard spellings to represent the popular impression of an Australian accent, with bizarre results:

Jezz
Articles of furniture.
As in: "Set the tible, love, and get a coupler jezz."

Money
The day following Sunny.
(Sunny, Money, Chewsdy, Wensdy, Thursdy, Fridy, Sairdy.)

Scone
A metereological term.
As in: "Scona rine."

Sly Drool
An instrument formerly used by engineers for discovering Kew brutes and for making other calculations.

Tiger
Imperative mood of the verb to take.
As in: "Tiger look at this, Reg...."

X
The 24th letter of the Strine alphabet; also plural of egg; also a tool for chopping wood.

Cambridge
Encyclopedia of Language

All Quiet on the Western Front?

The presence in western Canada of the Commissioner and his Office has made for progress, but much remains to be done.

Nowhere are the circumstances of the official language minority and the challenges it faces more complex, more urgent and more difficult than in western Canada

If the challenges are complex, the reason is simple. In Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, British Columbia, the Yukon and the Northwest Territories, the official language minority population is small in percentage terms, geographically dispersed and therefore very fragile and prone to assimilation. The Francophone population presently ranges from 1.4% in British Columbia to 4.5% in Manitoba — a province where a little over a century ago it accounted for almost half of the total. Everywhere it has been steadily shrinking. The problem is clear, the solution far less so, all the more so due to what can only be described as a certain lack of political will on the part of authorities at all levels of government. One result has been a perpetual shortage of minority language educational facilities, which has in turn exacerbated the difficulties of the struggle for survival.

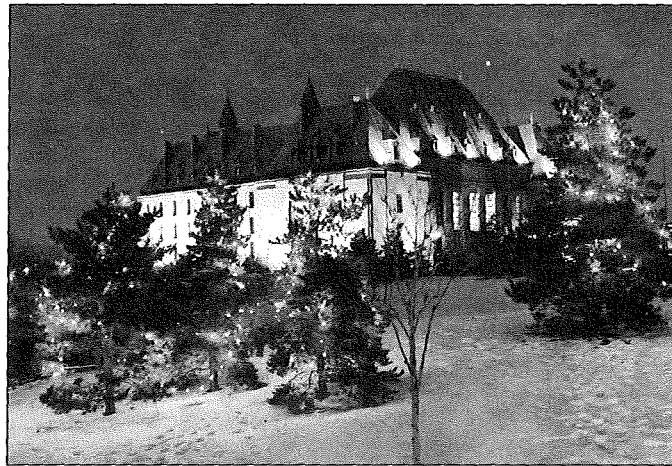
The responses of the three successive Commissioners of Official Language can be divided into four reasonably distinct categories:

- direct intervention with various levels of government;
- active encouragement and support of minority communities;

- direct appeals to the majority population concerning the justice of the struggle;
- insisting on the urgency of full implementation of minority language education rights guaranteed by Section 23 of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms and promoting the teaching of French as a second language at all levels of education.

Interventions

Interventions before the courts are an action of last resort and, as such, have been rare, but



Supreme Court of Canada

effective. The most important recent one was the Mahé case in Alberta, concerning the right of the French-speaking community to manage and operate its own school system. The Supreme Court of Canada's March 15, 1990, decision recognizing that right was a major victory for minority rights and minority language communities everywhere. The Commissioner's

Office was actively involved in the case from the start.

OCOL also provided support and advice to the Commission des écoles francsaskoises in a case before the Saskatchewan Court of Queen's Bench, which in 1988 ruled in favour of the Fransaskois parents. The ruling served as a basis for the province's decision to proceed with the creation of a Franco-phone component within the educational system to permit an appropriate measure of management and control by parents over French-language schools. In the spring of 1990

sharper because the Fransaskois component of the Saskatchewan education system had been unanimously supported by all concerned in the educational community and approved by cabinet.

In 1987 the Léo Piquette incident in the Alberta legislature, when Piquette, an MLA, was censured for speaking French, provoked a sharp reaction from Commissioner D'Iberville Fortier, as did the 1988 decisions of the Alberta and Saskatchewan governments to rescind certain French-language rights that, according to a Supreme Court of Canada ruling, had been illegally ignored for more than a century.

The regular contacts between the Commissioner and the regional directors of federal departments are usually among the smoothest. Given the fact that the federal government is bound by its own laws to recognize minority rights and provide services in both official languages, it is usually not so much a matter of persuasion — although that is sometimes called for — as it is of reminding the officials concerned of their responsibilities.

Persuasion takes on more importance when dealing with provincial and territorial governments. The Charter of Rights and Freedoms is a powerful tool, as is the constitutional obligation of Manitoba, which is bound by its recognition of both official languages. In addition, French has a special legal status, with English, in the Yukon and is an official language along with

English and six aboriginal languages in the Northwest Territories.

Provincial and territorial responsibilities in the West are to a large extent self-imposed, resulting from their commitment to Canada and its duality, and are usually structured through, and certainly facilitated by, agreements arrived at with the federal government in a number of interrelated fields, especially education, justice and provincial services.

The combined efforts of OCOL, the Department of the Secretary of State and the communities themselves have produced some positive results. A framework agreement between the federal and Saskatchewan governments covering the fields of education,

phone control of schools, similar to the one in Saskatchewan, and the Yukon has adopted a new Education Act that will allow its Francophone minority — through a territory-wide French-language school board which could be established as early as 1992 — to have effective control over French-language instruction and the facilities providing it.

Co-operation between all three levels of government was a major factor in the opening in Vancouver of the Maison de la Francophonie, a cultural centre bringing together under one roof most Francophone organizations and important French-language social and cultural activities in the area.

While direct contacts at the municipal level are less fre-

their direct discussions with the municipalities concerned were an important factor in the linguistic success of the events.

Contacts with the administrations of major western cities have been helpful in other areas too. The Manitoba Association of Bilingual Municipalities was created in 1989, an initiative that the Commissioner's Office had encouraged and supported from the very conception of the idea a few years ago. Winnipeg, for example, is embarking on a program to give effect to the requirements of its incorporation act and to improve the range and availability of its French-language services.

A vital presence is that of two regional offices that have brought caring support to the western Francophone communities from St. Boniface (1978) and Edmonton (1981). The two offices are the listening posts for OCOL headquarters in Ottawa. They are not, however, merely observers or reporters. They handle a steady stream of inquiries about language issues from the public, and they are the recipients of complaints from private citizens concerning violations of the Official Languages Act. In about 40% of cases they resolve the complaints themselves. The rest end up in the Complaints and Audits Branch in Ottawa, where they are handled in co-operation with the regional offices, which are often called upon to offer expert advice based on their knowledge of local conditions.

Complaints are numerous. Between 1984 and 1988 each western office received an average of close to 200 a year. In 1989 the numbers jumped considerably. The St. Boniface office received 304 complaints (250 from Manitoba and 54 from Saskatchewan). Edmonton opened 334 files (142 from Alberta, 181 from B.C. and 11 from the Territories).

Although the overwhelming majority of complaints

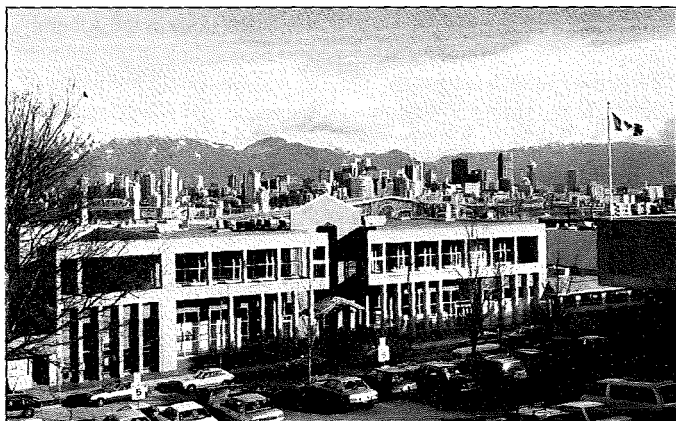
concerned language of service (the largest single source being the travelling public and the principal targets being Transport Canada and the publicly and privately owned airlines), criticisms were levelled at many targets, including lack of respect for both official languages in government forms, correspondence and publications, and in telephone communications.

The regional officers have found that they can on occasion use complaints as springboards for achieving some reasonably significant reforms in the operations of at least a few government agencies and departments.

Following a significant number of complaints to the St. Boniface office, for example, the office initiated discussions with officials involved and, as a result, both signage and other bilingual services have improved noticeably in two Manitoba federal parks and in several departments, including Employment and Immigration, Communications, and Health and Welfare. And, after a large number of complaints on the subject, Transport Canada has announced a comprehensive program to improve the situation at Winnipeg International Airport, where a number of private concessionaires have been systematically ignoring language regulations.

The Edmonton office has also helped initiate reforms in government departments, including Employment and Immigration and Revenue Canada (Taxation). Negotiations with the Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation led to long-term plans for improved bilingual signage and services on Vancouver's Granville Island, for the upkeep of which CMHC is responsible.

While both bureaux have acknowledged recent improvements in the performance of the Canada Employment and



Maison de la Francophonie, Vancouver

Photo: Michel Gascon

bilingualism in the legislature and the courts and some provincial services, as well as a development agreement with the Fransaskois community, has been welcomed enthusiastically by D'Iberville Fortier as opening the way to similar accords elsewhere. The Saskatchewan model is making progress: discussions are taking place with governments and between the Secretary of State and the Manitoba and Alberta Francophone communities.

British Columbia has recently launched a process to define an appropriate system of Franco-

quent, they too play a part in OCOL's work. In the past few years, they have been particularly evident in the realm of sports and exhibitions. Meetings with the administrations of Vancouver, Calgary and Saskatoon played a key role in ensuring a high degree of bilingualism in the 1986 Vancouver World's Fair, the 1988 Calgary Winter Games and the 1989 Canada Games. The provinces and the federal government were closely involved, but practical suggestions from the Commissioner and his representatives during

Immigration Commission, a long history of complaints spurred them to undertake a study of the specialized services offered by the CEIC to western clients. A 1989 audit report published by OCOL concludes that the quality of such services remains spotty. "In general, the situation is good in Manitoba, variable in Saskatchewan and Alberta, and poor in B.C."

Encouragement

Both Edmonton and St. Boniface are active in helping strengthen the minority community as well as relations between the two official language groups. The St. Boniface office maintains close contacts with La Commission nationale des parents francophones, a group founded in Winnipeg in 1979 and revitalized in 1988 with the help and support of the Commissioner.

Both offices emphasize ongoing contacts between Franco-phones and the many other cultural communities that abound in western Canada. One result has been the foundation of a "Coalition Against Racism" bringing together many cultural groups, including Franco-phones, in Alberta.

Both offices are also in close and continuous contact with Canadian Parents for French, a group that originated in the West in 1979 with the full support and encouragement of the then Commissioner of Official Languages. CPF is a key factor in focusing Anglophone support for minority and official language rights.

Publicity

In addition to their other objectives, visits by the Commissioner assume a vital importance, especially in the West, as a means of "showing the flag", of assuring the minority communities that, however dispersed and lonely they may be, they are not alone, that they have friends in high places.

The basic means of spreading the message are speeches, press conferences, seminars, interviews and radio phone-in programs. During the past five years D'Iberville Fortier has had at least one meeting with the editorial board of every major daily newspaper in the West. That his and his predecessors' efforts have borne fruit is demonstrated by the fact that all the major dailies have consistently adopted a sympathetic editorial policy in their discussions of language rights,

minority language children in their first language is the basis of their cultural survival. We must recognize the importance of teaching the second language to the largest possible number of pupils throughout the school systems. There can be no better way to solidify mutual respect and understanding among our youth.

The encouragement of this aspect of education has been a major goal of OCOL since its creation. While there is still a long way to go, the steady

The official language minority population is small, dispersed, fragile, prone to assimilation.

both in the country as a whole and in their own provinces.

In the whole approach to the West there has been from the start a realization of the special importance of reconciling official bilingualism with the multicultural heritage that characterizes the region. On every possible occasion the Commissioner and his representatives have put out the message that, in a country and a region that emphasizes the values of pluralism, the two concepts are fully complementary and mutually supportive. The fact, for example, that in the Manitoba language disputes of the mid-1980s several non-official language communities threw their support behind the concept of French-language rights suggests the message has been getting through. A multicultural organization was even formed with the goal of defending those rights.

Education

Education is generally recognized as a cornerstone of linguistic duality. The teaching of

increase in second-language training in the West has been more than encouraging. In 1989 more than half of the secondary school pupils in Saskatchewan, British Columbia and the Yukon were studying French and the numbers are growing elsewhere as well.

The biggest single success story has been the growth of French immersion programs. Since 1978 the number of Anglophone pupils in immersion has exploded from 3,000 to more than 80,000 in the region.

The immersion phenomenon must, however, be accompanied by an adequate network of French-language schools serving the minority population exclusively. Immersion, as the present Commissioner has repeatedly pointed out, is not, cannot and should not be viewed as a substitute for the schooling of minority language children in their own language. This must remain the priority because it is essential to the very existence of two official languages and two strong language communities.

One important event in recent years was the colloquium, "Official Languages: a western perspective", sponsored by OCOL in Edmonton in May 1984. The gathering resulted in a lively discussion that was summarized in *Language and Society* 14. The magazine has since devoted other issues and many articles to a continuing examination of western linguistic attitudes and challenges. Those attitudes and their effects have also been the subject of ongoing examination and analysis in successive annual reports of the Commissioner's Office.

While the credit must certainly be shared, there is no doubt that the active presence of the Commissioner's Office, whether through its regional offices, through the visits of the Commissioners, through its publications, or in other ways, has had a beneficial impact on events and decisions. Whatever the degree of progress that has been and may be made in the future, the continuous work of the only institution devoted exclusively to the respect and the promotion of our two official languages is vital to the process.

T.S.

CONGRATULATIONS

Fred Hazel of the Saint John *Telegraph-Journal* took a commentary award for columns on language tensions in New Brunswick.

“Dorchester Penitentiary, Bonjour!”

At the other end of the telephone line, an attractive female voice, with just enough of an accent to lend charm to her “bonjour”, answered me. Immediately, she told me that I could speak to her in my own language and that she too would be pleased to use French.



William Gibbs

A few minutes later I was able to attest that William Gibbs, Atlantic Region Deputy Commissioner, for his part, had no reason to be jealous of the receptionist who had answered me. Only rarely did he stumble over a difficult word during our 15-minute conversation.

I should not have been surprised, however, since the two persons I spoke with simply reflect the new atmosphere that prevails at Dorchester Penitentiary in New Brunswick, where, for the past four or five years, every effort has been made to offer French-speaking inmates services in their mother tongue.

It all began with the arrival of Claude Dumaine, a Franco-Manitoban, as warden of the penitentiary. “Previously,” Gibbs explained, “we were, to be sure, doing everything we could to comply with the Official Languages Act, but I must admit that, unfortunately, the system was clumsy.”

The arrival of the new warden led to changes in the rules of the game inside the walls. In his view, it is important to offer essential services to French-speaking inmates in the language of their choice, especially since the prison population is a rather special one. Most of the inmates require psychiatric care, while others were sent to Dorchester to provide them with maximum protection from other inmates.

The new official languages policy, however, did not please everyone and, at first, the

unions expressed some reservations and were somewhat reluctant to change established routine. “But we succeeded,” Gibbs told me proudly. He noted that today nearly 30% of the staff is able to provide essential services in French. Francophone inmates, if they wish, can obtain health or psychiatric care in their own language and have interviews in French with the specialists in charge of managing their case. Courses have even begun to be offered in the minority language to inmates who wish to pursue their studies, and this service is expanding within the institution. Gibbs is no less proud of the results achieved by the institution with regard to official languages.

This new approach takes its place within a much wider context of improving living conditions at Dorchester. For example, the institution is cur-

rently undergoing major renovations. This work is essential, considering the antiquated character of the building, which opened in 1880. The institution previously held nearly 250 inmates; today it has only 150. Management and employees are therefore much better able to meet all the inmates’ needs. Moreover, everyone is responsible for the quality of the services provided, whether in terms of health care or official languages.

“I can tell you that, once their initial reluctance was overcome, the employees did their best,” Gibbs noted. “Those who had the ability were enrolled in language courses, and inmates, upon their arrival, are asked to indicate in which language they wish to receive essential services.”

At Dorchester, those who attend language courses are thrust into an environment where they can apply what they have learned. The active offer of service in the minority language is not just a fine theory but a tangible reality of daily life in the institution.

Indeed, Dorchester Penitentiary is setting an example. That is why the Commissioner, D’Iberville Fortier, accompanied by Jeanne Renault, visited the institution on August 10, 1990. Nothing pleases the Office of the Commissioner more than success and the Commissioner goes out of his way to congratulate those responsible and to spread the word about the recipe for their achievements.

C.D.

(Our translation)



Dorchester Penitentiary

Regional News

Nova Scotia

Radio-Clare officially went on the air on September 29 in Comeauville, thanks to the efforts of many volunteers. The station serves residents of Clare, Yarmouth and Argyle.

Newfoundland

The Quatre-Saisons television network will begin broadcasting in St. John's in December 1990.

New Brunswick

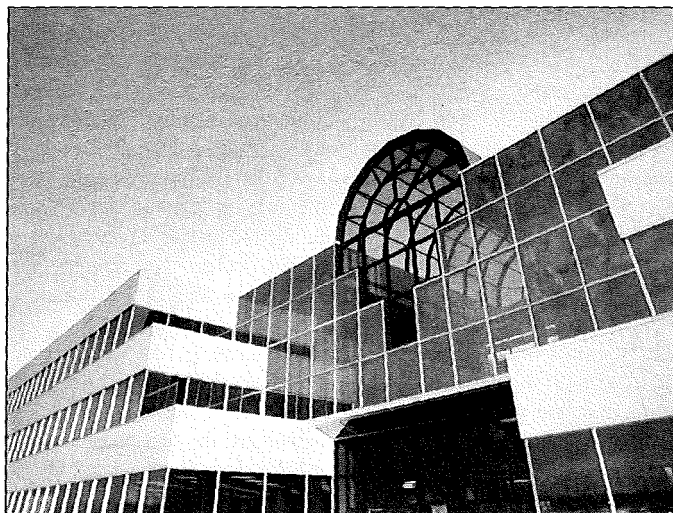
In Pokemouche, CKRO has achieved a high listener rating after two years of operation and in Restigouche the new community radio station will be the only French-language one serving the people of the region.

The Fédération des jeunes Canadiens français participated in the development of some 20 community radio projects. At least seven communities in New Brunswick and six in Ontario plan to apply for broadcasting licences this year.

The Moncton municipal council has followed through on its promise to make its 911 emergency telephone service fully bilingual.

Quebec

The Quebec Superior Court last August reversed a decision of the



Cité collégiale

Office de la langue française which, in 1987, had abolished Rosemere's status as a bilingual municipality.

Ontario

Community radio station CHOD-FM went on the air on a trial basis in Cornwall and Alexandria, thanks to the support of 500 members. In addition, the provincial government announced last August that the French service of TVO would receive permanent funding of \$5.7 million.

The Association française des municipalités de l'Ontario (AFMO) was founded in Toronto on August 18. Comprising more than 100 municipalities, this association received a vote of confidence and encouragement on August 21 from the Association of Municipalities of Ontario

(AMO), which, for its part, has a membership of 706 of the 839 municipalities in the province. It will be recalled that 47 municipalities had declared themselves unilingual English last spring.

One of them, Essex, will replace a bilingual sign at the county's school and community centre which had been changed, for two months only, to a unilingual English sign.

In education news, the first French-language college of applied arts and technology, Cité collégiale, opened its doors in Ottawa in September. It is clear that this new college meets a real educational need — it enrolled 2,300 full-time students, 35% more than had been anticipated. In addition, the distance education service of the University of Ottawa recently added new programs, including one in French-language teacher training, in Essex (Windsor) and a Master's in Education in

French at the University of Regina for 14 students from Prince Albert, Regina and Gravelbourg, Saskatchewan. The distance education service serves a number of communities across Canada in both languages.

Manitoba

Community radio CKXL will be the first FM station to broadcast in French, starting in the summer of 1991. It will reach approximately 85% of Francophones from its studios in the Centre culturel franco-manitobain de Saint-Boniface.

Winnipeg, for the first time, published its annual report in both official languages.

Northwest Territories

In Yellowknife, the Association franco-culturelle has just signed an agreement with Radio-Canada to allow residents of the city to receive radio and television broadcasts from Montreal beginning in the spring of 1991.

National Capital Region

Rogers Cablesystems has just submitted an application for an operating licence to the CRTC in which it guarantees that all services will be offered in English and French and anticipates the establishment of programming studios. The French-language studio will be located in Orleans.

Quebec Schools Produce Functionally Bilingual Students

Michel Beauparlant*

Students are taught a utilitarian rather than a literary language, with reliance on the cultural context.

We hear a great deal, and rightly so, about French immersion and second-language instruction for Anglophone students, but less about the reverse process.

Nevertheless, Quebec schools have been producing students who are functionally bilingual, even in the most homogeneous areas of the province, since the Quebec government revised its program for the teaching of English as a second language early in the 1980s.

This degree of bilingualism is sufficient for some because it constitutes a firm foundation on which to graft the formal elements of the language. For others, it is clearly insufficient. "Functionally bilingual" students trained by a Quebec school are, according to the general objective of the Department of Education, non-Anglophone students who are able to use English to communicate in situations that correspond to their needs and interests.

Background

Until the end of the 1970s the teaching of English in Quebec schools varied in intensity depending on the motivation of school boards and of the teachers assigned to the task. Consequently, the core English pro-

gram adopted in 1971 was relatively unstructured: objectives were too general, there was no time schedule and the criteria for assessing teacher competence were imprecise. Moreover, the method was oriented towards the development of correctness in utterance and in writing. In 1976 instruction in grammar was added to the program.

Two studies conducted for the Department of Education in 1977 and 1978 included an analysis of the program. The 1978 study concluded that students were not motivated because they had no opportunity outside the classroom to use the English they had learned. Students were then asked to state their needs. In all regions they showed a marked desire to learn English and to improve their ability to use the language outside the classroom in real-life situations.

The result was a departmental policy document entitled "The Quebec School: Policy Statement and Action Plan", which laid the foundation for a new English second-language program having the objective of making students aware of the bilingual social context in which they live and encouraging them to develop positive attitudes to the learning of English, as well as to Anglophones.

The method of instruction was changed at the same time. Emphasis was now placed on communication, so as to teach students a utilitarian rather than

a literary language. Reliance was placed on the cultural context (e.g., the multitude of media offering abundant opportunities to hear and read English) as a means of enabling students to acquire the formal elements of the language through use.

In 1982 the then Minister of Education, Camille Laurin, authorized the first phase of this reform. Two hours a week of instruction in English became compulsory in the second cycle of primary school, from grades 4 to 6 (216 hours in all).

This reform did not go unnoticed and raised a hue and cry in certain regions where there was a call for instruction in English to begin in grade 1. There was also a call for more hours of instruction, but the minister did not budge.

The reform was extended to the first cycle of the secondary level in 1983 (Secondary I, and II) and then, in 1986, to the second cycle. Students thus were required to devote 100 hours a year to the study of English during their five years of courses.

Students' academic results showed that Laurin's reforms were now turning out functionally bilingual students at the end of their secondary curriculum.

The Outaouais

Thus, the "Statistical Report of Secondary Test Results" of June 1989 showed that 92.1% of the students tested achieved an average score of 75.4% in

English as a second language. In looking at the results by region, we note that students from areas with a high percentage of Anglophones achieved the best results.

As noted above, the minister, in reforming the teaching of English to Francophones, relied on the cultural context to supplement basic instruction with the formal elements of the language. This is exactly what happened.

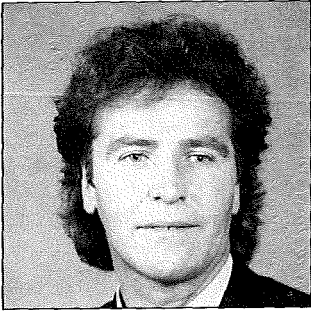
Montreal

The Montreal region also produces young people who are bilingual to varying degrees, depending on the environment in which they live. Jules Levasseur, an education specialist on the Montreal Island school board (an organization that co-ordinates the eight school boards on the Island), believes that, by the end of secondary school, young Quebecers are equipped to manage for themselves. He points out, however, that those from the bilingual areas of the West Island have a better knowledge of English than those from the French-speaking working-class neighbourhoods of the East Island.

Central Quebec

As for central Quebec, Normand Dubé, director-general of the Trois-Rivières school board, notes that "the region is not in contact with English," and that it is difficult to produce bilingual students there. In

* Michel Beauparlant is a journalist with *Le Droit* in Ottawa.



*Normand Dubé, director-general
Trois-Rivières School Board*

Victoriaville, however, it has been found that an activity outside the program, English theatre, was an excellent means of motivating the most gifted Secondary III and IV students.

Lac-Saint-Jean

Similarly, the La Vallière school board in Saint-Félicien, north of Lac-Saint-Jean, has its own way of motivating the best students.

Its director-general, Roger Guillemette, told us of an annual exchange program with school boards in western Canada which encourages the local students and provides them with excellent training — to the point where, after completing secondary school, they can pursue their education in English. This program, however, is limited to the best five or six students out of some 50 who apply each year.

Lac-Saint-Jean, 99.55% French-speaking, is the province's nationalist bastion. In general, Lac-Saint-Jean produces students who are no more than "functionally bilingual" because, according to André Perron, director-general of the Dolbeau school board, "Our young people do not have an opportunity to speak English." In his opinion, instruction in English as a second language should begin earlier in primary school.

SPEAQ

Peter Charles Brown, a professor of teacher training and president of the Société pour la

promotion de l'enseignement de l'anglais langue seconde au Québec (SPEAQ), believes that the English program is well suited to young Quebecers because it was designed "by and for Quebecers." In addition, the teachers in charge of it are increasingly competent. But, he adds, it take more than conventional instruction to produce students who are bilingual.

Among the initiatives supported by SPEAQ are the "linguistic baths" which have been gaining in popularity for the past five years. These "baths" allow students to be "immersed in English" for five months of a school year and to return to the conventional program for the other half of the year. In September 1989, 24 school boards had a "linguistic bath" activity and 33 classes participated in one.



*Ghislain Dufour, president of the
Conseil du patronat du Québec*

Business

This is all well and good, but, we may ask, are Quebec schools producing bilingual young people who can meet the requirements of employers?

On this subject, Ghislain Dufour, president of the Conseil du patronat du Québec, refers to a survey of 125 firms conducted in October 1989 that showed that 43% of the respondents were satisfied with the written English of their employees and that 58% felt their employees

spoke English well. Mr. Dufour interprets these results with caution, since the questionnaire also asked about the employers' degree of satisfaction with employees' written French (50% of them were satisfied) and spoken French (79% were satisfied), and because it discriminated among them by age group but not by category.

According to Mr. Dufour, "Today's young people are not very good in French. It is therefore difficult to ask them to be good in a second language." He adds that Quebec schools should "first improve the teaching of French without in any way neglecting instruction in English."



*John Dinsmore, executive vice-
president of the Quebec Chamber
of Commerce*

John Dinsmore, executive vice-president of the Quebec Chamber of Commerce, for his part, expresses confidence in human beings and their capacity to adapt. He credits the theory that "people will adapt to requirements." He points out that not all Quebecers will have to know English in the new context and that those who will have to speak it will be motivated to learn it.

To confirm this theory, Dinsmore notes that a quarter of the students at McGill University, the prestigious Montreal Anglophone institution, "are not prepared when they arrive to

study in English," but that they learn the language in order to pass their courses.

Then he cites his own case. A native of Toronto, Dinsmore said he arrived in Montreal as a high school student without knowing a word of French. "I learned as an adult to speak French because I needed to," he says.

It should be noted that John Dinsmore speaks French flawlessly. ■

(Our translation)

**Encounters
of a
different
kind....**

APPEAL (Apprentissage, pratique, perfectionnement et enseignement de l'anglais... à loisir), a non-profit organization in the Quebec area, continues to offer Francophones the opportunity to engage in leisure activities each week with Anglophones, as noted in *Le Soleil* (October 13, 1990). But since some Anglophones new to the provincial capital wanted to meet Francophones to improve their knowledge of French, the organization has arranged evening events. Its president told the newspaper: "These events, in which equal numbers of Anglophones and Francophones participate, are not aimed at matching up one person with another by means of a questionnaire. We want to let people decide for themselves whether they want to see one another again and the nature of their relationship."

French Second-Language Issues of the 90s

As the Commissioner noted in a speech at the Canadian Parents for French (CPF) 14th National Conference (see story, page 14), CPF's efforts to promote increased opportunities for the learning of French as a second language have been a major factor in transforming this aspect of the educational process in Canada. Today, over 250,000 students are enrolled in French immersion programs from coast to coast and a substantial majority of Anglophone children study their second official language at the elementary level through regular core French programs. As well as celebrating their achievements at the conference, CPFers discussed important issues facing FSL teaching in the 90s. Here are some of the principal ones.

Pros and cons of different starting points to immersion programs

- Is there a "best" time to begin studying a second language? According to some observers, there are advantages and disadvantages at every age level. In a future issue we will examine this question of age and second-language learning, including research on results of early, middle and late immersion programs.

FSL teacher shortage

- Probably the single most important problem for all French second-language programs is the teacher shortage. Nearly all provinces are experiencing difficulty in ensuring an adequate supply of well-qualified FSL teachers. (See *Language and Society* 30, p. 32.)

Enhancing core French

- It remains to be seen just how broad an effect the National Core French Study will have on core French teaching in Canada. Already, a large number of participants working all across the country have developed experimental teaching material, bibliographies and other resources that have only begun to be put to use. Training and retraining of teachers will play an important role.

French at the secondary level

- A particular concern of parents and educators is that there has been a tendency for students to drop out of immersion programs as they enter high school. In general, a "critical mass" of students is needed in order to provide a good choice of courses to students at the secondary level.

Role of extracurricular activities

- Although there is no recent study to confirm it, teachers, parents and students agree that exchanges, French camps and similar activities add immeasurably to the value of in-class instruction. (See p. 31 for an article on Rendez-Vous.)

Second-language retention

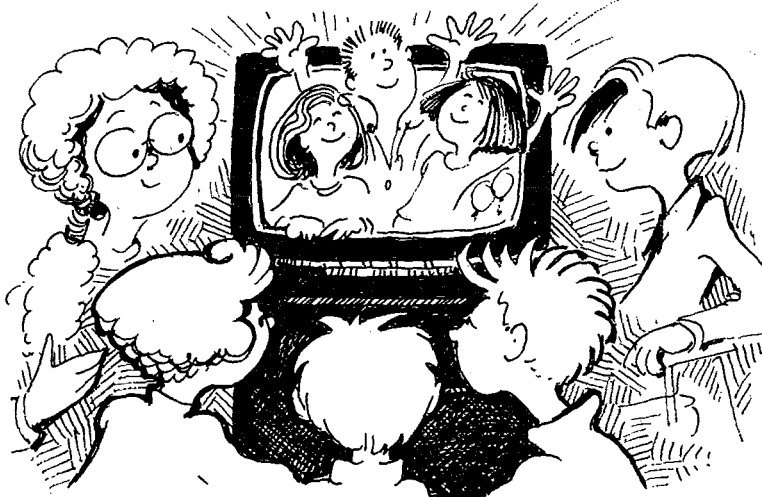
- There are two main aspects to this issue: expanding opportunities for Anglophone students to use and improve their knowledge of French at the post-secondary level and identifying useful language retention strategies for individuals. This Office is sponsoring research on the latter.

Bilingual job market

- Several questions present themselves here:
 - what jobs are available?
 - can immersion graduates cope in these jobs? This area is just beginning to be explored; preliminary research indicates a possible mismatch between some immersion graduates' aspirations and types of bilingual jobs available. ■

"A Wider Vision" from Canadian Parents for French

Canadian Parents for French has released a half hour video, available in English and French, called "A Wider Vision". It shows young people from six to eighteen participating in activities across Canada, living in



French and taking obvious pride and pleasure in their ability to do so.

For more information, please write to:
Canadian Parents for French, 309 Cooper St.
Suite 210, Ottawa
Ontario, K2P 0G5.

Rendez-Vous Canada

Sarah Hood

Rendez-Vous Canada, a program carried out by Canadian Parents for French, has done valuable work in bringing French first- and second-language students together. It is one very special extracurricular activity program out of many. Our next issue will bring you a general view of these programs and what's happening to them.

Wilfred Dubé says, "I think that kind of work is the peak of what education is about. I think we're in the forefront." The University of Regina's Dubé is talking about Rendez-Vous Canada, an exciting and recent addition to the list of extra-curricular activities available to Canadian students.

Rendez-Vous is an initiative of Canadian Parents for French (CPF), the national parents' association that promotes excellent French-language education. Originally conceived as an incentive for students to continue studying French after their transition from elementary to secondary school, Rendez-Vous is described as "an activity-centred youth conference designed to meet the needs and interests of French first- and second-language students in grades 7 through 9."

A Saskatchewan brainchild

Rendez-Vous was largely the brainchild of the Saskatchewan chapter of CPF and Laura Van Loon in particular. The idea of getting Anglophone students and the French community together in a "youth conference in living French" was born out of a 1987 series of CPF-sponsored conferences about French in post-secondary education. "We're not going to let French die," says Van Loon. "What I'm aiming for is to prove it's alive and well."

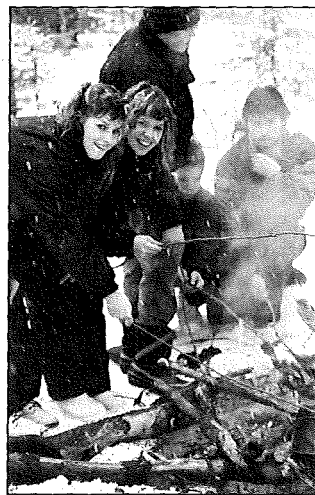
Like some other CPF activities (including their annual national French public-speaking conference), Rendez-Vous quickly proved itself to be an idea that couldn't be kept down. After Van Loon organized the trial Rendez-Vous in 1987, four more were scheduled for 1988. Seven took place in 1989 and another five were organized for the first half of 1990. By June of this year every province will have hosted at least one.

Meeting and teaching

What makes Rendez-Vous different from other second-language teaching activities (such as exchanges) is the emphasis on meeting people from all kinds of interesting fields — and learning about what they do, in French. Normally a two-day event, Rendez-Vous brings students to a university, a cultural centre or some other community institution for a concentrated, exciting series of new experiences. The crowded schedule for the Orleans, Ontario, Rendez-Vous held in October 1989 gives an idea of the variety of possible activities: after registration and a concert on the Friday night, students participated in workshops, Tai Chi classes, a dance, a talent show and an excursion to the Gatineau. By Sunday at noon they were already on their way home.

When she devised the trial run, Laura Van Loon started by approaching Francophone mem-

bers of her community to organize "hands-on" workshops in French. She describes phoning Wilfred Dubé to ask "could you find a game for 100 kids? And he did!"



Serious games

"I had the responsibility of organizing the final event," explains Dubé. He resorted to an interactive game meant to teach students about poverty that he had encountered in a drama workshop in Melbourne, Australia. "You organize a village," he says, describing how students are assigned positions (shopkeeper, policeman, etc.) and given some or no money to help them acquire the materials to create a collage.

In this context the students had to use their French to beg, borrow, steal or buy scissors,

glue and magazine photographs within half an hour. "We had 'translators' to help with vocabulary. If they spoke any other language than French they went to 'prison,'" Dubé explains. "After they'd done it for about 20 minutes I stopped the game and asked them to write a letter to their friend describing how they lived in this society."

"It was fun," says 12-year-old Darcie Burke of Regina, who took part in the game. "My partner and I went around to find money. Once we did our collage we needed money — for taxes! So we went to one shop to see if we could work there. And after we paid our taxes we gave our money to other people for supplies."

Burke also enjoyed the journalism session. "We had to write a script or a cartoon or a story and we were taken to *L'Eau Vive* (Saskatchewan's French-language weekly newspaper) and they published it for everyone who went to Rendez-Vous. They taught us how to use the computer. The people who were at *L'Eau Vive* were really fun."

Another popular session at Saskatchewan's 1989 Rendez-Vous was the science workshop held by Bernard Laplante, Assistant Professor at Saskatoon's University of Saskatchewan. "I don't believe in coming down on them with heavy scientific rules," he explains. "I believe in giving them experience. I see the task



of the immersion teacher as a dual task. You have to teach the content and you have to teach the language."

In introducing the subject of chemical reactions Laplante told the students that — because of the delicate nature of the experiments — he would have to test their dexterity before beginning the real work. The task was to tip beakers full of vinegar and baking soda back and forth without spilling. "Of course, nobody could do it," says Laplante with a grin. "We all had a good laugh and cleaned up the mess."

Apparently the students approved Laplante's method. "It was excellent," says 11-year-old Michael Arnot of North Battleford. "There was stuff exploding before your eyes!" But some of the most appreciated activities were the simplest. "They had all sorts of books in

French," says Arnot approvingly, "and Monopoly in French!"

New cultures, new friends

The mix of cultures is in itself a new experience for many. About 50 Anglophones and 50 Francophones attended a Charlottetown Rendez-Vous in 1988. One of its strongest points, says Ray Arsenault of CPF in Prince Edward Island, "was just simply meeting after the day's events to make new friends. They really went all out to get each others' addresses. There were letters that were written afterwards."

"I got along with some of the French kids," affirms 16-year-old Katrina Kinnear, who attended the Charlottetown Rendez-Vous. She came away from the event "wanting to learn more" French. "I think they should hold more of them," Kinnear says. "I enjoy speaking

French and there's not much chance around here."

Fourteen-year-old Megan Thomson of West Royalty was also at Charlottetown. "I went to the drama workshop and I really liked it," she says. "They didn't just do the acting; they did the advertising and the lighting and everything that went with it. I was the assistant stage manager. They really made sure you talked French." But, she continues, the language didn't seem forced upon the participants. "They made you speak French," she explains, "in a way that was half fun. We learned Acadian French at the Rendez-Vous — so it was a different kind of French. I just really liked it."

ed with the commitment of the parents." Bernard Laplante was also impressed. "I thought it was a very worthwhile experience; I was surprised how well the kids pitched in," he says.

"It must be tiring for the kids," agrees Dubé. "It must be tough, but it's got to be creative. Something's going on in those minds that usually isn't happening. It's an extremely exciting field we've just started looking at, what it means to be bilingual and to work bilingually."

Rendez-Vous has spawned some offshoots, including a pair of workshops at the Saskatchewan School of Performing Arts. Similar in structure to the Rendez-Vous model, these events concen-



"It's a tremendous experience for the children," Ray Arsenault believes. "They have a chance to realize that there are people out there who speak French — and that their [own] French is really good. They haven't had a chance to speak to Francophones in their community and it makes them feel really good about the French that they have learned. They're not afraid to go out and use it afterwards."

"Just the fact that you're bringing all these adolescents from all over the province — 100 or more — that's a feat in itself," points out Wilfred Dubé. "Then it's in French. You create an immersion environment for two days. I'm just also fascinat-

trated on choral singing, improvisation and dance. A spectacle was mounted on the last night. "The [local CPF] chapters are begging for this," says Laura Van Loon. "It's sort of exciting for us to see the enthusiasm."

"If it weren't there next year I think people would be disappointed," says Wilfred Dubé. "I hope it continues. It was really cool," agrees Darcie Burke. And where there's a will, there's a way, as students and their teachers and parents have already demonstrated. "In North Battleford, Saskatchewan, the kids just wanted it so much the teachers and students organized one," says Laura Van Loon. ■



Language and the Economy

Francophones Make Great Progress

Gilles Gagné*

A language cannot flourish unless it is the language of the economy and, as Lorraine Pagé, president of the Centrale de l'enseignement du Québec, said in an interview with *L'Avenir* (May 1989): "...French is a language that will be spoken well when it enables people to earn a living; people always choose to master a language that allows them to develop personally, to obtain a well-paying job and to advance in life. You do not learn a language solely for its cultural value, you learn it because it allows you to attain a certain status."

At the time of the Meech Lake crisis, certain newspapers published the results of economic studies indicating that Quebec (that is, 80% of French Canada) could survive as an independent economic entity — a sovereign country within a North American common market.

Only a few years ago, the French-Canadian Rockefellers — our heroes of big business — were mostly named Lévesque, Desmarais or Campeau; they were "self-made men". This image of the self-made man also carried with it its antithesis: that of the "self-destructive man". However, these born financial

geniuses are not primarily responsible for the economic rise of French Canada.

It is the natural maturing of our society and a combination of complementary circumstances that have led to the proliferation of businesses owned and operated by Francophones in the past few years. The progress we are now witnessing is the result of a number of factors which I will analyse briefly, namely education, legislation, the building up and channelling of savings in Quebec, and entrepreneurship.

First of all, in the area of education, French-speaking Canadians finally began studying economics, business and management in the 60s. Some 10 or more universities now offer courses on these subjects in French. Thanks to federal and provincial grants, the base of business-related literature written in French is expanding. In short, we now have the linguistic tools needed to both educate ourselves and work in French. In addition, several French-language universities in Quebec and in the rest of Canada are now offering master's degrees in business administration.

Finally, the Official Languages Act, more extensive bilingualism in the federal Public Service (which also provides managers for private industry), federal and provincial terminology centres and databases, and technical glossaries developed by or with the help of the federal government, make it

possible for public servants to work in French, not only in Quebec but also in certain parts of New Brunswick and Ontario.

Legislation has changed significantly in Canada, and especially in Quebec, in order to promote industrial and financial growth in the business world. Company pension plans grew significantly, and Registered Retirement Savings Plans, the Canada Pension Plan and its counterpart, the Quebec Pension Plan, were created. Because of their fiscal appeal and as a result of the legislation in place, these plans led to collective savings on the part of Canadians. These legislative measures made it possible to rapidly accumulate the large concentrations of capital that had to be invested. The General Investment Corporation of Quebec and the Quebec Deposit and Investment Fund handle billions of dollars which must be invested primarily in Quebec, but may also be invested elsewhere. Finally, another important factor in Ontario and the French-speaking Maritime provinces, as well as in Quebec, was the "caisses populaires" movement, which enabled Francophones to accumulate millions of dollars which were used locally, particularly to finance mortgages and personal loans. However, over the past 20 years, the "caisses" funds have been increasingly used to finance small and medium-sized businesses in Quebec.

Given that universities are producing more graduates, that

pension plans and the "caisses populaires" are amassing significant amounts of capital, and that consumers always want to spend more, it is not surprising that a class of entrepreneurs should emerge to satisfy the desires of all of those who play a part in the economic life of the country. Their activity, which can be defined as the pursuit of a dream fuelled by energy, know-how and capital, could perhaps be described as a "revenge of the mind" following what was often referred to as the "revenge of the cradle".

Inequalities in wealth and entrepreneurship between Anglophones and Francophones have also diminished since World War II. Young entrepreneurs who are now working in French are demonstrating throughout the Francophone business world the viability of linguistic duality in Canada. In this way, they are also supporting the efforts of the federal government and the Canadian International Development Agency in other Francophone countries.

Why should it be surprising that Paul Desmarais is exercising more and more "Power", that Bernard Lamarre is landing engineering contracts around the world? Why should it come as a surprise that the Mallette brothers are becoming the kings of the forest in northern Ontario? Were their ancestors not loggers? Why is Hydro-Québec the largest producer of hydro-electricity in North America? Undoubtedly because there is a lot of water to be found there, but also because the know-how is there as well.

We should no longer be surprised to find French-Canadian business people across the country and around the world. They have finally succeeded in bringing together capital, know-how and an entrepreneurial spirit. ■

(Our translation)

*Gilles Gagné, B.A. M.A. (Economics) was a finance professor at the University of Quebec at Hull for many years. He is now an investment counsellor with Burns Fry Ltd. in Ottawa.

The Historical Atlas of Canada: The Birth and Growth of a Nation

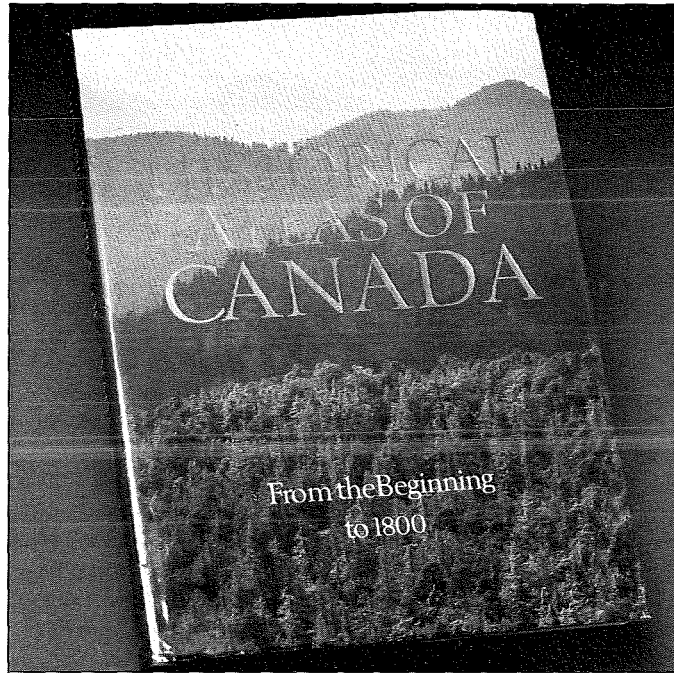
Jean Fahmy

About two years ago, scientists in Canada and abroad, historians, geographers, teachers and a host of Canadians curious about their history and their heritage greeted the appearance of the first volume of the *Historical Atlas of Canada* with unanimous praise. It has been followed just recently by the third volume, in English only for the moment. The *Atlas* constitutes an impressive work whose quality was immediately apparent to leading world figures in the hybrid yet fertile field of historical cartography.

The first volume bore the subtitle "From the Beginning to 1800". It brought together, under the direction of a first-rate editorial team, the work of several hundred Canadian researchers who had worked for nearly two decades to select, synthesize and transform into vivid maps the events and social and cultural developments which, from the last ice age to the dawn of the 20th century, have shaped the origins of our country.

The result was a work of incontestable graphic quality and great visual beauty. For the reader who peruses the work, this is the first impression. Another emerges gradually through a careful look at the 69 colour plates and the dozens of pages of text that surround and comment on them: the impression of a wealth and density of information that could only be the result of an enormous amount of preliminary work.

The maps and plates do not lend themselves to interpreta-



tion at the first glance. For the uninitiated reader, an attentive examination of the graphic design, the texts and the many explanatory symbols is necessary in order to absorb the information. This is hardly surprising, considering its abundance and complexity. Moreover, the reading and interpretation of any scientific and didactic work, even one intended for a broad public, is not reducible to a casual or inattentive examination; it requires effort.

But when the effort is made the rewards of the *Atlas* are great. From it we learn that North America was inhabited as early as 10,000 B.C. We see the growth and recession of the glaciers that scour the soil and shape the landscape. We follow with curiosity the seasonal

migrations of the cod which shaped the work and way of life of the first fishermen off the shores of Newfoundland. We study with fascination the currents of trade, especially of the fur trade, in the 17th and 18th centuries. We admire a topographical map of Quebec nearly 300 years ago, on which the names are still familiar and have acquired historical weight and an epic flavour.

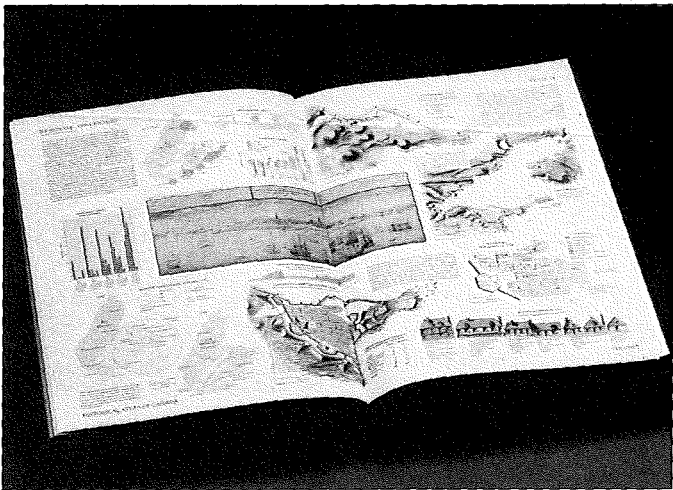
I could cite many other examples of such facts, events and persons from the *Atlas* — all of them interesting, some evocative, unexpected or fascinating. But there gradually emerge from the long, slow dance of Native Americans, French and English, conquerors and merchants, *coureurs des bois* and explorers, missionaries and settlers some broader per-

spectives, some panoramic views, some unifying lines of force. I would like to mention two in particular.

The first is the important, indeed essential, place of the Native Americans in this long and fascinating birth process of a nation. This may be an idea familiar to specialists and implicitly taken for granted by many Canadians, but when we see it illustrated in detail in the plates and text of the *Atlas*, we can better gauge its importance. This stimulating realization could hardly be more apropos at this time when our Native fellow citizens occupy centre stage in our consciousness.

The second realization I would like to mention is precisely what I referred to above as the "birth process of a nation". For that is what is involved. It may be true that the shapers of this history of Canada did not always have the same awareness of it, but their ceaseless labours, their exertions, their repeated struggles against distance and a hostile climate were not carried on in a context of indifference or haphazardly. We gradually see emerge the beginnings of the geopolitical and even psychological configuration of this nation in embryo that was to become Canada.

Volume III of the *Atlas* presents an image of this country, now fully formed and continuing to grow, that is as visually arresting, as precise and detailed, as the one it gave us of its beginnings. This volume, which deals with the period from 1891 to 1961, has



just been published in English and, by an accident of publishing, Volume II, covering the 19th century, has not yet appeared. Research requirements have obliged the authors to stop at a date (1961) that might seem distant and will frustrate those looking for a snapshot of Canada today. But this is a historical work and not a book of contemporary history.

The plan is the same as that of the first volume. The 66 plates and the texts preceding and accompanying them describe the extraordinary evolution of Canada in this century. They clearly show us how the rural and homogeneous society of 1891 has been transformed into the industrial and pluralist one of 1961. They illustrate the development of the western provinces, the growth of large cities (Edmonton, Ottawa, Montreal), the founding of social and economic institutions that form part of our everyday environment even today. They give us a capsule history of such institutions as the National Hockey League or the Canadian television networks. From a traditional point of view, sports and mass recreation may not be as glorious as battles, wars, heroes and treaties, but they may say more about the psychology of a nation and about those who inhabit it, who shape

it and who, in turn, are influenced by it.

The *Atlas* also has something to say to the reader curious about the development of the official languages. A plate showing the "bilingual belt" in 1961 already illustrates the heavy concentration of linguistic minorities in New Brunswick, Quebec and Ontario. This is the reality, now 30 years old but practically unchanged, that constituted the demographic background to the B and B Commission. Another small plate, this one more unusual, shows the ethnic origin of Montrealers in 1901. We see that at the start of the century the interpenetration of Anglophones and Francophones was much greater in the various neighbourhoods and parts of the Island than it is today, after the slow process that has led to the concentration of Anglophones essentially in the western part of the Island. References in other plates enable us to follow the fate of the minorities in the western provinces.

Specialists may scrutinize these two volumes to find distortions of historical perspective and shortcomings. They may debate the choice of one event rather than another. For the layman, the *Atlas* is a work of art combined with a didactic work. By searching

very carefully it is possible to find one or two errors. The *Atlas* is a contribution to the construction (by definition never finished) of a country, just as it constitutes Canada's contribution to the science of historical geography. ■

(Our translation)

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Sensitivities

The new president of the Office de la langue française, Jean-Claude Rondeau, said in an interview with the *Montreal Gazette* that he "always speaks English to Anglophones, out of respect for them." This comment was deemed "serious and disturbing" by the president of the Saint-Jean Baptiste Society of Montreal, Jean Dorion. Rondeau explained, "When, as president of the OLF, I respond in English to an Anglophone who represents only himself, I do so out of courtesy and without contravening the letter or spirit of the Charter of the French Language. However, in the case of an organization or corporation, in keeping with the Charter, I must reply in French only."

Quebec singer Céline Dion has refused the Félix award for Anglophone artist of the year at the ADISQ (l'Association québécoise de l'industrie du disque) gala. Her first album in English, *Unison*, has sold more than 150,000 copies since its release in September. In refusing the prize she stated that she was not an Anglophone. She had been the subject of comments and jokes in the press for several weeks for having allowed her name to be entered in competition in this category. It is now being insinuated that her refusal of the Félix was a publicity stunt.

Fast Flows the Bureaubabble

Harry Bruce*

The fashionable circumlocutions of government often hide ugly truths.

Bureaucratise recoils from simple words as though they were as slimy and dangerous as water moccasins. As Paul Dickson says in his new *Slang! The Topic-by-Topic Dictionary of Contemporary American Lingoes*, government jargonauts sacrifice *use to utilize, say to verbalize, start to activate, reasons to causal factors, orient to orientate, and money and cash to allocations and appropriations*. They revel in redundancies like *end result, past history, root cause, and unsubstantiated rumour* and, speaking of redundancy, the officialese for "too many workers" is "a redundancy of human resources."

"No matter how innocent the material under discussion seems to be, it is the nature of government to convert clear language to bureaucratise and gobbledygook," Judith Neaman and Carole Silver assert in another new book, *Kind Words: A Thesaurus of Euphemisms*. "Less colourful than the euphemistic vocabulary of many other subjects, government language works by depersonalizing and generalizing or abstracting.... Even an innocent tree is not a tree. It is a *reforestation unit*."

A buzz-phrase generator

The U.S. Navy has described high waves as *climactic disturbances at the air-sea interface*, but let us not smugly

*Harry Bruce is the author of *Down Home: Notes of a Maritime Son*.

assume the Canadian military are incapable of such nonsense. *Time* based its 1968 "bafflegab thesaurus" on a Royal Canadian Air Force collection of fuzzy phrases. The thesaurus offered three columns of 10 words each. By blindly plucking one word from each column, anyone could build impressive phrases that meant precisely zilch: *systematized transitional hardware, synchronized management flexibility, integrated logistical time-phase*, and so on.

William Safire, language columnist for the *New York Times*, once suggested that if the audience for the Gettysburg Address had been modern bureaucrats, Abraham Lincoln might have scrapped his opening. "We are now engaged in a civil war," and substituted, "We have entered upon a period of uncertainty involving fairly high mobilization." In proper bureaucratise, Safire continued, a cake recipe would urge the *interfacing* of ingredients in a *given time frame*, and the smoothing of infrastructures. But truth is sillier than fiction. In yet another new book about language, *The Mother Tongue*, Bill Bryson reports that the Pentagon's specifications, not for a cake but for "a regulation Type 2 sandwich cookie," continue for 15 densely typed pages.

Bureaucrap thrives not only on excess verbiage, but also on what one critic calls "reductive prefaces" in words like *debrief, destabilization, disequilibrium, disincentive, dysfunctional* (not working), *dicensus* (lack of consensus), and *disadvantages*.

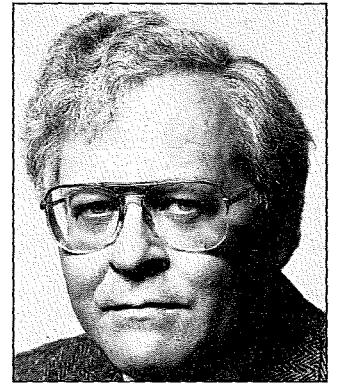
A character in a Jules Feiffer cartoon said he'd been *poor*, but soon became *needy*. After a while, *needy* was out, and *deprived* was in; then *deprived* was out, and *underprivileged* was in; and, finally, *underprivileged* was out, and *disadvantaged* was in. "I still don't have a dime," the guy concluded, "but I have a great vocabulary."

Bloated style...

What's most offensive about gobbledygook is that its bloated style hides ugly truth. Once you call starving and diseased children *economically disadvantaged individuals*, they no longer seem so starving and diseased. Are they victims of an economic *depression*? Nope. *Depression* is out; it's such a disturbing word. *Recession* is sometimes in, and so are *deflation* and *disinflation*. Even *recession*, however, has become so upsetting that, as William Safire reports, modern governments resort to such mumbo jumbo as *healthy slowdown, period of basic readjustment, minislump, crabwise movement, high-level stagnation* and, my favourite, *rolling readjustment*.

...restricted cure

But somewhere among the potted plants, movable partitions and vast smokeless corridors of our own federal bureaucracy, there lurk stubborn lovers of plain English. An Ottawa woman sent me two pages from Appendix C of an unidentified government manual. Under "Wordy



Harry Bruce

Phrases" Appendix C orders, "Don't use several words to do the job of one," and, "Don't be muddy when you can be clear."

Further instructions went like this: don't say *and for this reason* when you can say *so*; don't say *at the present time* when you can say *now*; don't say *be in a position to* when you can say *can*; don't say *due to the fact that* when you can say *because*; don't say *during that period of time* when you can say *when*; don't say *the question as to whether* when you can say *whether*; don't say.... Well, my two purloined pages of Appendix C boast 43 sets of such orders, and I like them all.

"I had no business going through this manual," my spy tells me, "but I needed something to read.... I was impressed by the amount of simple common sense." What puzzles her, however, is that the manual is classified "Restricted". That's not as serious a classification as Top Secret, Secret, or Confidential, but it must mean some bureaucrat believes it's risky to trust every Tom, Dick and Harriet with the knowledge that *ended* is better than *brought to an end*, *part* is better than *a certain portion*, and *except* is better than *with the exception of*. Once you encourage public servants to use short, lucid words to say exactly what they mean, well, heaven only knows what chaos might erupt. ■