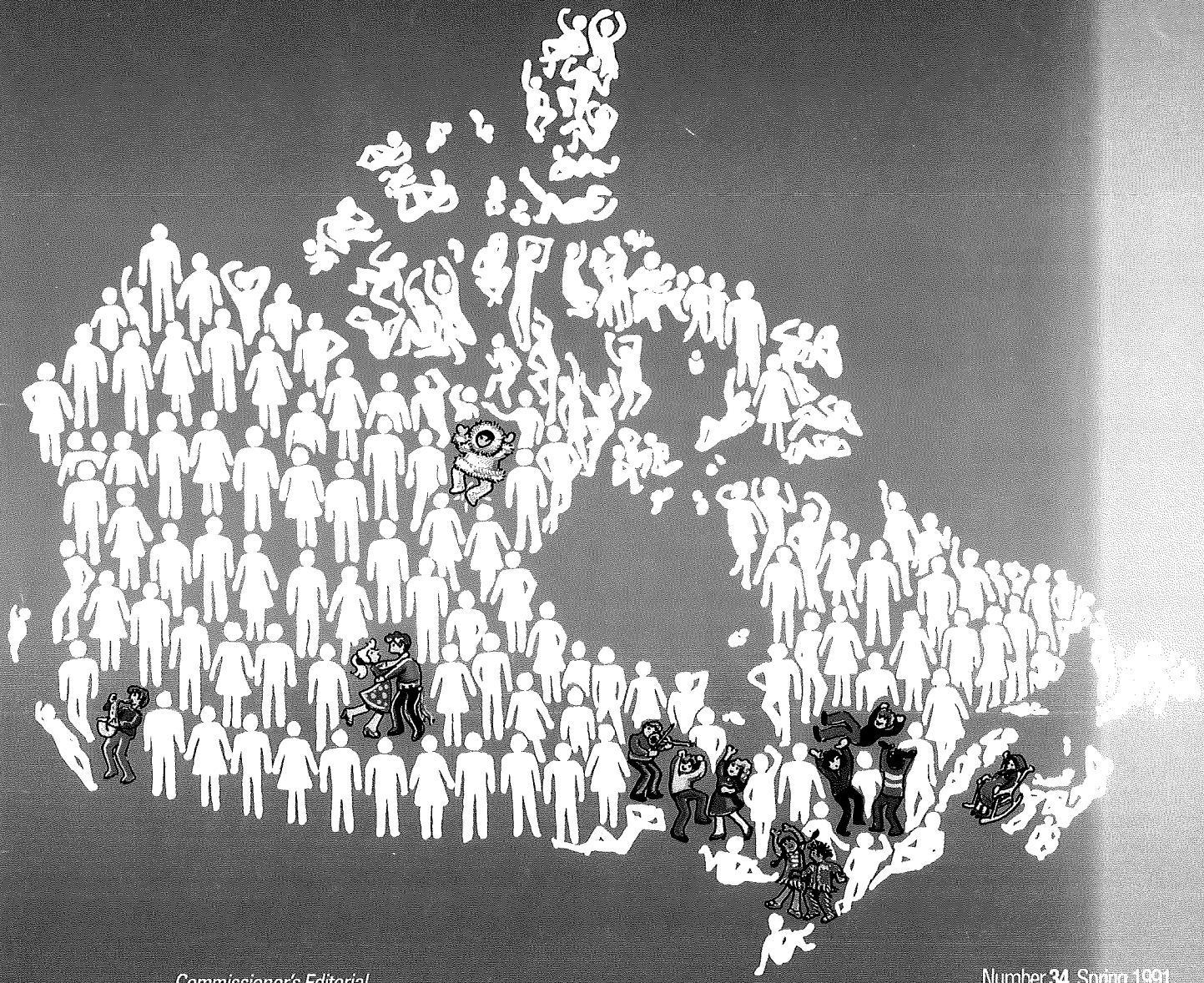
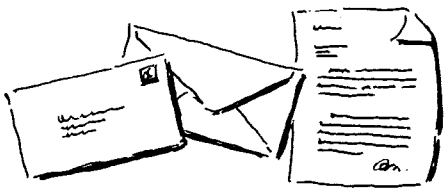
LANGUAGE AND SOCIETY



Number 34, Spring 1991

Letters



A Job Well Done

I must congratulate you on a job well done. Your special report on New Brunswick in your Winter 89 quarterly was great. You are certainly trying to unite this great country.

A suggestion from a humble Irishman! A quarterly devoted to the history (well researched) of both official languages would be very informative. We know so little of the language we use every day. Your periodical could help to correct that situation. The French and English might find they have more in common than they would even dare to dream about. Napoleon understood this very well and was able to conquer half of Europe.

Francis W. Forestell
Fredericton, New Brunswick

University of Ottawa Disappointed

We read with interest the article by Tom Sloan that appeared in No. 32 (Fall 1990) of your magazine under the title "A Very Special Mandate." You can imagine our disappointment to find that there was no mention of the University of Ottawa as one of the chief promoters of bilingualism in the National Capital Region....

Caroline Midgley
Director
Public Relations and Information

Editor's Note

It is true that the article might have mentioned the University of Ottawa. The author will recall that No. 29 devoted three pages to the university in an article by its former Rector, Fr. Roger Guindon.

Speaking with a Forked Tongue?

I have been reading *Language and Society* for many years now, and I am quite impressed by your intellectual standards and your basic sense of fairness. At least until I saw your No. 31 of Summer 1990 and what I found on p. 30 (E), but could not find on p. 30 (F) or anywhere else in the French version.

Five of the six items in the left-hand column of p. 30 (E) would be read with less satisfaction by a Francophone than an Anglophone is likely to draw from them, so that your offering them to the latter while withholding them from the former reminds me strongly of the proverbial politician who adapts his promises to his respective audiences....

Wolfgang Helbich
Ruhr-Universitat Bochum
Bochum, Germany

Editor's Note

The French versions of articles are longer than the English versions. This is why we include more brief items in our English pages.

Do Quebec Schools Produce Functionally Bilingual Students?

In *Language and Society* No. 33, Michel Beauparlant maintained that Quebec schools produce functionally bilingual students. A reader disagrees.

...The fact is that the French-speaking population of Quebec under the age of 40 is totally incapable of speaking or writing English, with the exception of those who have learned English by working in downtown Montreal or who have English members in their family....

In all my years in the Quebec Civil Service, I have never met a Francophone civil servant who could write a letter in English, except for those mentioned in the first paragraph, Montrealers or those with an English member in their family....

There is one honourable exception....and that is the acting profession. Louise Marleau, Patricia Nolin and Albert Millaire have all acted in both French and English. Albert Millaire will be playing at Stratford next summer. There are always Francophones in the audience at any performance of an English play. The theatre does more for bilingualism and national unity than any other agency.

Donald Hughes
Sainte-Foy, Quebec

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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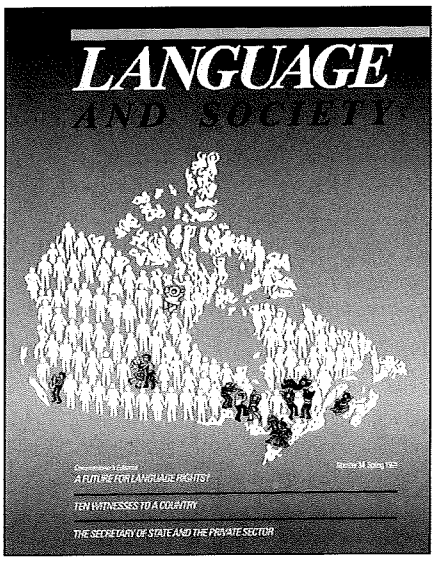
Language and Society is a publication of the Communications Branch.

Articles may be reprinted as a whole or in part on request to the Editor-in-Chief or his Associate, Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages, Ottawa, Canada K1A 0T8. Tel.: (613) 995-7717.

Printed in Canada
ISSN 0709-7751



Cover Design: Rachel Dennis

The people of Canada are its spirit and its hope for the future. Our cover celebrates the richness of Canada's cultural diversity and the values that define us as a nation.

NOTICE

Letters to the Editor, with the writer's name, address and telephone number, are most welcome. The Editor reserves the right to publish letters, which may be condensed. Send to:
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COMMISSIONER OF OFFICIAL LANGUAGES
COMMISSAIRE AUX LANGUES OFFICIELLES

LANGUAGE AND SOCIETY

A Future for Language Rights?

Let me state clearly at the outset that although my professional concern as Commissioner of Official Languages focuses on one facet of the constitutional problem, no single aspect of the debate on this question can be looked at in isolation. All the more so where languages are concerned, since they go to the heart of the matter and have left a profound imprint on today's Canada. My last three editorials have attempted to examine official languages on the national scene, assessing the results achieved and the role this formidable asset must play when the time comes to plan for the Canada of tomorrow. This time I propose to be more specific about the tomorrow.

The current debate, and I have no particular province or group in mind when writing this, leaves many pessimistic about the future of the Canadian federation. Some question the capacity of this country to bridge its regional and linguistic divisions and re-establish a commonality of interests among its citizens. Defining a purpose that is common to all of us cannot be accomplished by provocative speeches. Only by defining more clearly the needs and objectives of each region and also by listening to each other with increasing sensitivity can a new vision of the country emerge. It is to be hoped that federal initiatives will make a major contribution to this process.

Naturally this phase of our constitutional renewal, far from focusing on the things which unite us and conciliating those which divide us, centres largely on special pleading. There is, of course, a price to be paid for this, not only in the distorted quality of polarized thinking but also in the intolerance which some leaders on all sides have been quick to exploit with historical wrongs and stylized facts.

Will this reawakened regionalism perhaps lead to a new linguistic cold war? The invisible sectarian walls which divide people in the world, whether linguistic, cultural or regional, can in many respects be far more insidious than any Berlin Wall; they are the products of intolerance and incomprehension rather than an understandable pride in who we are. Good fences may make good neighbours but we must ask ourselves whether this adage holds up for a country. Ultimately it is Canadians who must speak for a new Canada and they alone who can tell us whether they see themselves and their future principally through their differences or their community.

No one should underestimate the ability of the Canadian federation to adapt. Federalism is necessarily about flexibility — the need to define and occasionally re-define those things we wish to do together until a consensus is reached. Shaping our nation's future will require understanding, patience and a willingness to address difficult issues, as well as a determination to chart a common course. The traditional Canadian principles of civility, equality and respect for diversity must guide our footsteps, not only when times are calm but also in times of crisis. In short, the current crisis of values demands not a retreat from linguistic duality, which remains one of the keystones of our identity, but a reaffirmation of duality as part of the constitutional agenda that has as yet barely been sketched out.

That agenda surely includes the need to correct real inequalities in the status of English and French and to protect and promote our official language minority communities, for they constitute an intrinsic part of our historical and human reality. It also includes, in our opinion, the need to respond to Quebec's desire for a greater measure of autonomy in the areas most intimately linked to its linguistic and cultural development and its collective future. The realities which the Meech Lake Accord sought to address have not vanished. In the wake of its failure, Quebec is no less distinct and Canada's linguistic duality is no less fundamental. These, along with issues such as aboriginal rights, Western aspirations, Senate reform and the amending formula will have to be addressed sooner or later. As we make choices about constitutional modernization we must also reconfirm our will to live together on a basis of fairness and mutual respect.

As Socrates noted, "If a man does not know to what port he is sailing, no wind is favourable." Any proposed constitutional reform, however profound, must in our opinion embrace the following essential principles designed to reduce certain gaps and linguistic inequalities.

- A recognition of our two national languages as a fundamental characteristic of Canadian society.
- The equality of status and use of the English and French languages should continue to be recognized in the institutions of the central government. So long as Canadians continue to have shared institutions, those institutions will have to reflect our linguistic duality.
- Existing minority language rights should continue to be guaranteed and respected by both the federal and provincial orders of government as, in the words of the Supreme Court, a well-known species of human rights.
- Indeed, these rights will need to be enhanced to reduce the current imbalances in the status of the two languages or, in accordance

with the words of the Charter of Rights, to "advance the equality of status or use of English and French". This might be done, as has been suggested, in the form of a code for official language communities, setting out objectives, taking into account the diverse situations and needs of the nearly two million Canadians who live in provinces where their principal official language is in the minority. These objectives should include commitments at least in areas such as community governance of public schools, access to health and social services in their language, as well as access to justice in courts and tribunals.

- Such a code would allow for real progress towards equality by making it not only possible but desirable for individual provinces to opt into its provisions. Once enshrined in the Constitution they could be amended thereafter only with the concurrence of the federal government and of the province concerned.

These proposals, which we have not thought it advisable to couch in legal terms here, would ensure greater equality and reciprocity with regard to language rights while prescribing the necessary flexibility in their application. They would also continue to recognize the historical rights of our linguistic minorities, which, regardless of the eventual outcome of constitutional reform, should remain inalienable. We must not allow minority voices to be lost in the constitutional chorus.

The search for a constitutional consensus may be seen as an end in itself or as a means of achieving a common vision of what our country is. There is an important qualitative difference between the two. Should we eventually fail as a country, it would obviously be the result of our failure to formulate a common vision or purpose. Too often we have viewed the presence in our country of two of the world's most useful languages as a problem rather than a gift, as an irritant rather than a source of pride. As I suggested in my last editorial, I believe we can take pride in the enormous progress we have made in recognizing linguistic duality in the last 20 years. After seven years as Commissioner of Official Languages, travelling across the length and breadth of this country listening to the views of countless Canadians, I am convinced that most Canadians still believe that harmonious relations can be achieved between our linguistic communities and that we are fortunate to have each other to share this country with. Perhaps it is not too late to explain to each other what we don't understand and to adopt constitutional provisions that will enable us to live together more harmoniously.

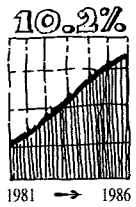
D'I. F.

A matter of grey matter?

"It is possible that the greater co-operation between the two hemispheres of the brain observed in bilingual people is related to the fact that they have a different type of intelligence — more flexible, with a greater propensity for taking the broader view. Their perceptions are organized differently, since bilinguals are adapted to two systems of thought." So says Wallace Lambert, a professor in the Department of Psychology of McGill University, as quoted by Carole Thibodeau in *La Presse* (May 21, 1989). "Bilingualism," according to Professor Lambert, "increases a person's abilities."

What do Canadians think?

An Environics poll taken in February 1990 showed that three out of four Canadian parents hoped that their children would become bilingual.

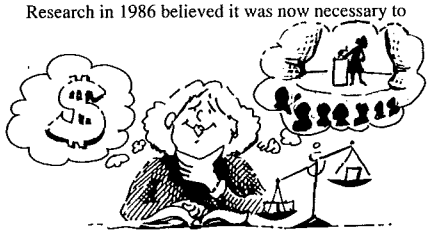


In the 1986 census more than four million Canadians said they were bilingual. The number of bilingual Canadians has been increasing at the rate of 10.2% a year since 1981. The increase is fastest among non-Francophones and younger Canadians.

A quarter of a million young people are enrolled in immersion classes. In 1989-90 2.6 million students were learning a second language. Nearly half of the funds

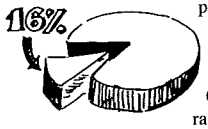
spent by the federal government on official languages go towards the teaching of English and French in our schools.

Half of the Anglophones questioned by Decima Research in 1986 believed it was now necessary to know English and French to succeed financially in Canada. And Canadians are convinced that their Prime Minister should be bilingual.



A first!

Generals John de Chastelain and Kent Foster, both Anglophones, were important figures in the Oka crisis last summer. Both of them, as Canadians saw on television, could conduct a press conference in both English and French.



Some people claim federal linguistic policy is a failure, pointing to the fact that after 20 years only 16% of Canadians are bilingual. In reality, the policy was never to force Canadians to become bilingual, but rather to make federal institutions bilingual. There's quite a difference!

Even so, as we have seen, the policy has not done badly in terms of individual bilingualism as well.

***Is that so?* is prepared by the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages, Ottawa, Canada K1A 0T8.**

Is that so? is new from the Office of the Commissioner. It's intended for members of the media who wish to tell people about linguistic duality and our official languages.

For camera ready copy call us at (613) 995-0651, and for another sample see page 25.

Press Review

Commissioning Ideas and Opinions

TOM SLOAN

The end of 1990 and the beginning of 1991 could well come to be known as the Era of the Commissions in Canada as the federal government and some provinces independently set up their own groups to study the constitutional issues the country faces in the wake of the failure of the Meech Lake Accord.

While it may seem strange, given the role that disputes over language have traditionally played in Canadian constitutional discussions, for the moment at least that preoccupation seems to be a thing of the past. Language is, of course, still at the core of the debate, but it is almost as though it is now simply taken for granted, and the constitutional debaters have gone on to other things.

The two major players in the game were the Bélanger-Campeau Commission set up by the Quebec National Assembly and the Spicer Commission, more formally known as the Citizens' Forum, created by the federal government. Both had a mandate to take the collective pulse and both were greeted with varying degrees of enthusiasm and scepticism as to their prospects of success.

Bélanger-Campeau

In general, the Bélanger-Campeau Commission received a good press in Quebec. But an exception was Lise Bissonnette, publisher of *Le Devoir*, who was not enthralled by what she saw as an almost exclusively business orientation in the approach as well as in the make-

Lise Bissonnette

up of the Commission, including the fact that its co-chairs are prominent businessmen.

"If there is no longer any orthodoxy on constitutional matters, there is certainly one when it comes to money. The Commission, from which the cultural and intellectual milieux have been excluded like the plague, has deigned to invite a hundred or so experts and personalities from the arts, letters and cultural fields to reply to a number of questions on the future of Quebec, which read like a rigorous examination of their competence in the subject. Once these ladies and gentlemen, poets that they are, have given their opinions on the problems facing Quebec and their vision of its future, they will have to do nothing less than to explain the implications of their reply on the maintenance and the promotion of the living standards of Quebecers, taking into account the economic, commercial, fiscal, financial and monetary aspects. This would be funny if it were not so obtuse. Let us hope that some writer or philosopher asks the Commissioners in turn for an essay on the spiritual, moral and cultural implications of the implacable laws of the market place....In naming businessmen to lead the Commission, Mr. Bourassa sent a message to the whole world, not forgetting Washington and Toronto, that Quebec would not allow its distress to interfere with its finances."

Also taking note of the economic thrust of the operation, but judging it more positively, was Alain Dubuc in *La Presse*. In an editorial entitled "Quebec in the post-romantic era", Dubuc conceded that the emphasis on the real costs of basic constitutional change would not necessarily be popular. "These questions are devoid of romanticism. That will upset a good many Quebecers who haven't forgotten the celebrations of June 24, and the veterans of the struggle for sovereignty who forged their convictions in a vibrant and exciting period. But these impulses, which coloured Quebec nationalism and still colour Canadian nationalism... can no longer play the same role in Quebec....The Commissioners are not there to act as cantors or social therapists. Their job is to make the connection between the dream and the reality."

The attitude of the *Toronto Star* to the Quebec Commission was one of resignation. "It's not every day that a provincial commission, led by its premier, declares Canada passé and attempts to assume most of the federal governing authority." There is no use deploring the failure of Meech Lake, the *Star* wrote, because Meech itself would have been simply "the first step in a continuing process of handing over ever greater control to the provinces.... Now, as the Commission begins its six-month mission, there is at least some consolation in knowing, at last, what is really on the table. In fact, what was always on the table. It may not be a heartening debate, but at least it will be an honest one."

Jean Chrétien

The *Star* could not, however, contain its enthusiasm over one session of the Commission. "Against all odds, Jean Chrétien went into the lions' den yesterday and came out fighting — not for himself, but for his country. In a historic face-to-face confrontation with Quebec's nationalist naysayers, the Liberal leader stared down his separatist opponents.... For Chrétien, it was a vintage performance, delivered in Canada's hours of need. Who now will follow his lead?"

For its part, the *Ottawa Citizen* took a slightly calmer view. The Chrétien appearance was "a qualified success". While he failed to win over his immediate audience, the Liberal leader did make "a forceful and coherent case for federalism." If he is to enhance credibility, Chrétien must now go beyond statements of general principles to specific proposals, the paper concluded.

Jean Chrétien

Alain Dubuc in *La Presse* also gave Chrétien credit for a "sober and intelligent" brief. However, he saw no indication that he had understood today's reality in Quebec. "This shows that Mr. Chrétien's long march to become a man for today is not yet completed. Because his brief deliberately ignores the realities that are dominating the political debate in Quebec and in Canada...Mr. Chrétien's pilgrimage to Quebec was essentially a useless gesture."

Le Devoir's Gilles Lesage was tougher. "The worst adversary of Jean Chrétien...is the little guy from Shawinigan himself, a prisoner of his own past." Citing Chrétien's record from his role in the constitutional isolation of Quebec in 1981 to his lack of support for Meech Lake, Lesage saw danger ahead. "In Quebec, the words of Mr. Chrétien evoke polite indifference or vague concern. But elsewhere there is a risk they might make people think there has just arisen in Quebec another leader who, when the moment comes, will be able once again to put Quebec in its place. That would be a grave and dangerous misapprehension."

Keith Spicer

The creation of the Citizens' Forum, under the chairmanship of Keith Spicer, was generally received hopefully in English-speaking Canada. "A pulpit for the people" was the title of an editorial in the *Ottawa Citizen*, which described it as "a unique experiment...a self-examination — almost a group catharsis....This is to be fresh, informal, imaginative and creative — aimed at bringing together ordinary Canadians, their concerns and vision for this country. It is, however, a difficult tas for all concerned. Nor can the best and the brightest help much if the national will is lacking. It is Canadians now, through this commission, who will be bailing out the politicians. The vision must come from those who care, passionately and without prejudice, that Canada survives."

To the *Toronto Star*, the commission was "a national experiment....We will now see whether the future of the country is best left to the elites, or is in better hands with Canadians.... By focusing on our shared identity and inherent diversity, the commission might finally force Canadians to come to terms with themselves, and to come up with a common purpose by its July 1 Canada Day deadline."

The Spicer Commission has no time to lose, wrote the Montreal *Gazette*: "it is the body to which Canadians must now turn to express their hopes and concerns about the country's future. This is the body that must provide a platform for the federalist Canadian voices that have gone unheard for too long. And this is the body that will have to propose how to remake this country in ways that can satisfy all its disgruntled parts. The challenge is enormous, the time short."

"Brace yourself, it's that time again," was the first reaction of the Victoria *Times-Colonist*. It was "another resurrection (perhaps regurgitation is the appropriate term) of the constitutional reform process." The commission has a long and difficult agenda. "Whether anything constructive or coherent can emerge from such a long-winded business is uncertain.... But better late than never. Canadians will finally be allowed full participation in the process...an opportunity they were shamefully denied in the whole Meech Lake fiasco."

The informality of the Spicer group was seen as a positive element by Raymond Giroux of Quebec's *Le Soleil*. Nevertheless, "the Spicer method does not guarantee success. For he and his colleagues are fighting the clock. Will they be able, in a few months, to cleanse the minds of Canadians of some of their long-held phobias? Will they have time to stick back together what appears to be more and more broken? Will they be able to explain Sault Ste. Marie on the one hand and Bill 178 on the other?"

While a meaningful consensus is unlikely, *La Presse*'s Alain Dubuc thought the process might be psychologically beneficial. "While Quebec is approaching maturity in the search for its identity, the rest of Canada in many ways is still going through the throes of adolescence....It is healthy for Canadians to go through collective psychotherapy to air the frustrations that the debates between constitutionalists and the closed door sessions between first ministers have not allowed them to express. Certainly such an enterprise will not lead to concrete proposals, but it will permit us to gain an idea of the state of the nation and to evaluate its readiness for the changes that Canada will not be able to avoid."

Possible psychological benefits were also cited by Roch Bilodeau in *La Tribune de Sherbrooke*. The process "will not be totally useless at a time when Canadians are suffering so much from a crisis of political leadership." However, Bilodeau continued, it is precisely this lack of leadership that raises doubts as to what will be accomplished. "What political leader will have the ability and the openness of mind to find a solution to all the evils that will be spread out before this commission?"

Keith Spicer

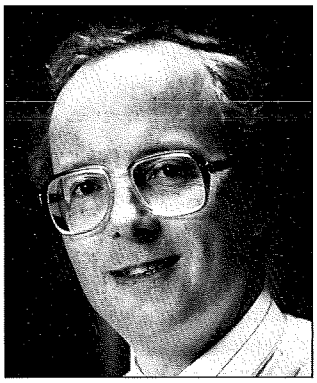
For Lise Bissonnette of *Le Devoir*, the whole operation smacked of "voodooism". Mocking Chairman Spicer's suggestion that this was going to be an extraordinary exercise in democracy, she commented: "The Citizens's Forum has as much to do with democracy as have radio open-line shows and man-in-the-street interviews.... To the extent that the Spicer forum manages to bring citizens into the discussion, by methods one as arbitrary as the next, its experts in synthesis will be free to interpret the popular will, or the general cacophony, in any way they like." Bissonnette admitted the sincerity of many of those involved. But "the romanticism and good will of the participants are so touching that they tend to hide the reality of this immense machine that, in five months, will spew out a report that is already being described as the soul of a people. The very time frame, which is ridiculous, shows the superficiality of the whole operation."

⇨

As the meetings started, Francophone commentators noted bitterly that at some hearings in the Maritimes, Acadians had to address the commission in English due to a lack of bilingual facilities. To *La Tribune*'s Bilodeau, "The Spicer Commission will not be completely futile, because no public consultation ever is. But let's not have any illusions about its usefulness. Behind it, the vacuum is too immense."

Special status?

The most specific suggestion to the Forum in the realm of policy came from the *Financial Times of Canada* and involved a concept that was likely to be anathema to former Prime Minister Pierre Elliot Trudeau and his followers: "Precisely because the expectations placed on it are so low, the Spicer forum has the opportunity to transform the listless constitutional debate in English Canada. Robert Bourassa has declared the only options Quebec won't



Norman Webster

consider are the status quo and application to join the U.S. In the same vein, the Spicer Commission should announce that it's willing to take seriously an idea that's been equivalent to a dirty word in Ottawa since 1968: special status for Quebec." The Trudeau dream of a firm national unity, including Quebec, based on bilingualism coast to coast, has died, the *Times* argued, and it is time to take a new look at the situation. "Special status was always a slippery concept, and Trudeau often made hay against it by contemptuously challenging its adherents to spell out coherently what they meant. Now that it's clear that Trudeau's own vision has failed to resolve the Quebec issue, it's time to take that challenge seriously."

Support for the idea came a few days later from Norman Webster, editor of the Montreal *Gazette*. "Canada's problem can be simply stated. Quebec is not a province like the others and can no longer be treated as one of 10. What Quebec requires (and will go to the wall to get) is more than the other provinces want or need.... Special status is not an easy concept to work with....Trudeau used to crucify proponents of the idea for woolly thinking, and certainly some were guilty. But we are in a new game, post-Meech, and these questions must be tackled. Some form of special status for Quebec is likely to be the minimum. Is anyone out there thinking about this? Or are we all sleepwalking?"

One of those who was thinking about it was Claude Masson of *La Presse*. In an editorial entitled "Between the status quo and independence", Masson did not use the term "special status", but he was clearly thinking of something similar. "With imagination, with lucidity and with the spirit of creativity that characterizes us, there is certainly a way of reaching greater autonomy, a larger degree of political sovereignty for Quebec without breaking a federal bond that is essential in fields such as currency, the army, customs, international trade, postal services and rail, sea and air transport....Between the status quo and pure and simple independence there is a place for formulas that are intelligent and acceptable — acceptable first of all to Quebecers, but also to English Canadians who want to maintain the integrity of the country." The solution, Masson suggested, might be a confederal system — a union of sovereign states. But whatever it is called, "Confederation, a confederal system, a Canada of regions, sovereignty association, the term doesn't matter. The main thing is to recognize Quebec as a distinct society, as a people, as a nation, to provide it with the powers that are implied and to find a formula that is sufficiently flexible to keep Canada intact, benefiting from the riches of all its regions and its strengths as a geographic, economic and political entity. When one can choose the best of two worlds, why be content with one?" ■

Devilishly different

According to *The Big Picture*, only 25% of French Canadians believe in the devil, while 46% of their English-speaking compatriots do. (*Report on Business Magazine*, January 1991.)

Nobody's minority

A reader of the Montreal daily *Le Devoir* does not like the expression "linguistic minority". She writes, "There are as many people of British as of French origin in Canada, and it is therefore ridiculous to say that one is the minority of the other. One does not say 'its' minority any more than 'its' aboriginal peoples....As a founding people, we are not a 'minority', and still less the 'minority' of anybody."

Kébec spelling

English is prohibited on signs "to protect French". But what kind of French is being protected?

Here are some examples — along the lines of the infamous "ouerâsse" — of this new pidgin used either to be "smart" or to circumvent the French-only rule.

A florist's shop: "Fleuri-moi". A pizzeria: "Ditalie". A restaurant: "O bor de l'O". A photographer's: "Ta Tè Foto Tantô". A construction firm: "Décor-toit". A transportation company: "Luc qui Luc" (Lucky Luke?). A sock store: Chez Soc-Raties" (the sound bring to mind Socrates in English; visually, one thinks of "sock"). A Thai restaurant: "Even-thai". This is more subtle: visually the appeal is to Anglophones, while the sound (éventail) is meant to please Francophones. (Lysiane Gagnon in *La Presse*, December 1, 1990.)

Federal Action and Initiatives: A Quebec Perspective

1. Are Linguistic Matters on Hold?

A decade or two may be reckoned as little or nothing in the sweep of universal history; but even such a relatively short period can witness enormous changes not only in the lives of individual human beings, but also in the life of a nation. The evolution of language policies and practices is one of many examples in Canadian history alone.

Here we concentrate on just one aspect of these policies and their effects — the changing situation of the French language and of French-speaking federal public servants in Quebec over the past 20 years.

At first blush, such a focus might seem strange. Quebec is, after all, overwhelmingly French-speaking, and it would seem normal that French would be the day-to-day working language of Francophone public servants. This is indeed the case in the provincial and most municipal administrations. The situation of the federal Public Service is, however, considerably more complex.

Just 20 years ago, while French was secure in the sense that the large majority of federal public servants had French as their mother tongue, it by no means followed that it was the acknowledged language of the workplace. Quite the contrary. Despite where they were living and working, the evidence suggests that a large number of Francophone public servants had to do a good deal of their work in English.

There were at least two closely related reasons for this phenomenon.

One was the very nature of the federal bureaucracy as it had evolved over the preceding century. The traditional language of work everywhere in Canada except Quebec was almost exclusively English. And in Quebec, as elsewhere, a knowledge of English was essential for advancement in the ranks.

The second was the nature of the national capital, where English-speaking senior officials, usually if not always unilingual, held the reins of power and tended to dictate the language used by their Francophone colleagues not only in Ottawa but to a large extent in Quebec as well. If Quebec officials wanted to communicate effectively with the centre, they had little choice. The linguistic fallout from Ottawa was all-pervasive.

The 1969 OLA

In 1969, with the Official Languages Act, however, the fallout shifted direction. The result was a profound change in the linguistic climate in the Public Service throughout the country, and most especially in Quebec.

The principal event, resulting from the findings of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, was the passage in 1969 of the first Official Languages Act, with the backing of the leadership of all federal political parties. Now there were new and quite different signals coming from Ottawa. They were signals of new openings and new opportunities for French which, for the first time,was explicitly given legal equality with English in federal institutions across the country. French suddenly became important, necessary, even trendy. Anglophone public servants began to discover it was to their advantage to learn the other official language.

Further, it was now the policy to encourage not only the use of French but also those who spoke it as their mother tongue. A drive to increase the percentage of Francophones within the Public Service had an impact everywhere, but particularly in Quebec and the National Capital Region.

Certainly, significant change took time; but what did not take long was a change of climate involving growing Francophone insistence on their new legal rights. Boycotts of unilingual English documents and similar demonstrations drove the point home.

Not surprisingly, the new policies had a major effect on English-speaking officials in Quebec, especially those who could not operate in French — an effect compounded by the new atmosphere in the province generally, resulting from the Quiet Revolution and the growth of nationalism. Their numbers were diminished by a wave of transfers out of the province, while at the same time a considerable number of veterans of the Second World War reached retirement age and quietly left the scene. By the middle and later 1970s the federal Public Service in Quebec had become overwhelmingly Francophone and the Anglophones who remained were adapting to the new situation.

A revealing study

The extent and significance of recent developments have been studied in some of their personal and professional aspects by the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages over the past year. That study involved 330 English- and French-speaking public servants working at all levels in the Quebec region. Some 30 group interviews were held to elicit responses to a number of key questions as to what has and has not been achieved. The responses are revealing.

The picture that emerges of the federal Public Service in Quebec in 1969 is one where English was dominant, where senior supervisors tended to be English-speaking and usually unilingual and where, in some instances and departments — even in overwhelmingly French-speaking Quebec City — Francophones were

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forbidden to speak to each other in French or even to provide services in French to their clientele.

Twenty years later the situation has been completely reversed, to the extent that some Anglophones say they feel uncomfortable using English around their Francophone colleagues. The language of work is overwhelmingly French and the relatively few Anglophones who remain are fluently bilingual and themselves work mostly in French. It might appear that, for Francophones, the millennium has arrived.

But, as usual in life, things are not quite that simple, and the situation then and now was and is more complex than it may appear.

For one thing, there are some French-speaking officials who were around in 1969 and who maintain that even then not all was black.

Georges Duey, for example, now works for the Official Languages Branch of the Treasury Board in Ottawa, but from 1967 to 1970 he was with the Department of Employment and Immigration in Montreal. As he recalls it, it was essentially the client who determined the language used by the public servant, which meant that in the great majority of the 65 local offices, work was almost exclusively in French. In the Montreal regional headquarters, where English was also widely used, all senior staff members were Francophones and French was the basic working language.

"Were we typical?" he asks. "Probably not. We had maximum contact with the French-speaking population. More technical departments were probably less client-oriented."

So in a real sense there is no basic contradiction between the recollections of Georges Duey and the quite different memories of many of his colleagues of the time, on the degree to which French was used — or even tolerated. Much depended on the extent of the direct contacts between the department, or at least its frontline personnel, with the Francophone population.

Another factor, the OCOL study team has concluded, was the attitude of individual senior officials. Some, no doubt thinking they were following the lead of Ottawa, simply assumed that English was going to maintain its position of predominance for ever and applied that reasoning to Quebec, which they saw as simply another undifferentiated part of Canada. This was a time, it must be remembered, when, even in Quebec, bilingual Anglophones were a rarity; it was taken for granted that in a situation where representatives of both groups were present the conversation would take place in English.

Today the situation has changed dramatically for the better. But in the eyes of many of those involved it is still far from completely satisfactory. In fact, the OCOL investigation found that to many of the Francophone public servants interviewed there has been a marked slow-down in the rate of progress during the past few years. While it was agreed that most of the objectives have been achieved, several obstacles remain and there is no real indication they are being overcome or even, in some cases, being taken seriously.

Where this is the case, the blame is placed squarely on headquarters offices in the National Capital Region.

In the last few years, participants noted, there has been a reappearance of unilingual English memos and other documents in a number of departments, with the note "French to follow". When translations are provided they are of uneven quality and often extremely late in arriving.

As for verbal communications, there have always been problems finding French-speaking interlocutors in the NCR and, the study found, the situation has not improved. Anglophone participants representing departmental headquarters in regional meetings are too often either incapable of speaking French or, if they are capable, lack the expertise to adequately discuss the subject at hand. Due to budget cuts, simultaneous interpretation has all but disappeared, and again all too often professional development courses are available only in English.

Ironically, another complaint is that English-language training courses, for which many public servants feel an urgent need, are much too rarely available — yet another serious failing on the part of departmental head offices.

What is certain is that there is the impression among Quebec Francophone and Anglophone public servants of a waning commitment to official languages policies in day-to-day operations on the part of some senior government officials in Ottawa, if not by the government itself. The result has been an increasing feeling of anxiety and even pessimism about the future, compounded perhaps by recent political and constitutional developments. Reflecting the situation in the country as a whole, many matters linguistic appear to be on hold. *T.S.*

2. The Federal Government's Efforts Are Creditable

Can federal language policy be accused of restricting the full development of the French language in Quebec? Admittedly the Supreme Court did strike down a number of provisions of the Charter of the French Language, the most recent being its signage and commercial advertising provisions. However, in that case the Court nevertheless found that French could be required to have greater prominance than that accorded to any other language. Most of the main thrusts of the province's language law were not rendered invalid when the constitutional protection of the rights of the English language were restored.

Before the 1969 Official Languages Act was proclaimed, service in French from the federal government could not be taken for granted, even in Quebec. Not all the problems have been solved, but few would argue that the situation now is not profoundly different. What should have been normal at the outset had been achieved by dint of much effort. Moreover, the new draft regulations on communications and services proposed under the 1988 Act guarantee the provision of services in French throughout the province, while ensuring services in English where there is significant demand. Does anyone seriously believe that providing federal services in English (or provincial services for that matter) in certain regions of Quebec will lead to

the anglicisation of Quebec's French-speaking population?

The Act has also set out in law the right of the 50,000 federal employees in Quebec to work in French. As the second-largest employer in Quebec, the federal government has over the years made an important contribution to the use of French in the province, without in any serious way compromising the right of English-speakers to use their language. As for the participation of Francophones in the federal Public Service in Quebec, the transformation has been such that the problem now is the significant under-representation of the English-speaking community in federal departments and agencies (though not in most Crown corporations).

The federal government has also been the Quebec government's partner in many circumstances, in promoting and developing the French language through support for major cultural initiatives like TV5 or the Sommet de la Francophonie. It has encouraged the use of French in technical and scientific fields not only by co-operating with the province in achieving significant progress in the development of terminology but in establishing agencies such as the Canadian Office Automation Research Centre in Laval or the Maurice-Lamontagne Institute in Mont-Joli. Nor does its protection and promotion of the weakest of our two official languages stop at the Quebec border. Through direct and indirect aid to Francophone communities across Canada in the fields of culture, education and social development, the federal government has strengthened the fabric of the French language in North America and elsewhere. Far from being the "living dead" (the term used by a distinguished Quebec author who ought to have known better), a large majority of Francophones outside Quebec (almost 20% of all Francophones in Canada) are "consumers" of the French language and its cultural products.

We should also be prepared to factor into this linguistic equation the 1.3 million English-speakers in Canada who, led by the young, have become bilingual. Viewed in this light, the often heard suggestion that federal language policy is some sort of Trojan horse whose purpose is the assimilation of Francophone Quebecers is only slightly less ludicrous than the converse proposition that it is aiding and abetting a French takeover of Canada. Some plot! Some takeover! The journalist Lysiane Gagnon explained succinctly, some time ago, the importance of federal initiatives:

> On the contrary, it can be said that anything that promotes the vitality of the French language anywhere in America is good in principle for the future of a French-speaking Quebec. It can be said, as the directors of the Collège de Saint-Boniface recently told me, that Anglophones who learn French as a second language "become our natural allies." It can be said, at a time when Quebecers fear their "disappearance", they would be quite wrong to ignore the million Francophones who share the same language and culture. It can be said that even a sovereign Quebec would have to conclude agreements with English Canada concerning the protection of minorities.
>
> It can be said, in a word, that it is suicidal, when we are a small people, to carry on needless jurisdictional quarrels in the area of language, and that it is in the interest of Quebecers to have both Bill 101 and the federal Official Languages Act, even if, theoretically, the two laws seem to be irreconcilable and indeed in conflict. It is simply a question of ensuring maximum protection for French, "wall-to-wall".[1]

As auditors of their language performance, we are the first to recognize that federal institutions do not always deliver on their promises in the area of language reform. Also, we are well aware that the protection of the French language in North America will always be a David-and-Goliath struggle. There are no easy solutions. However, we remain convinced that the federal government has made and will continue to make creditable efforts to give French its due in Quebec, in Canada and in the world. ■

Note

[1] Lysiane Gagnon, *La Presse*, November 21, 1989, p. B3

Aside from the Mohawks....

It is true that the Mohawks in the Montreal area are English-speaking. But the some 10,000 Montagnais, 3,000 Attikamek, the Huron, the Malecite, various Algonquin bands and most of the Métis have French as their second or first language. In some cases, not a single member of the band speaks English.

According to Statistics Canada figures for the 1986 census, 61,640 of the 80,940 aboriginal people in Quebec, or some 76%, speak French. (From a letter from students in Native law published in *La Presse*.)

The Montreal Book Fair

In its index the National Library of Canada regards as French books only works by Quebec and Acadian authors. "French-language publishers outside Quebec have had enough of being treated as 'Anglos'," ran a headline in *La Presse* (November 20, 1990). It pointed out that 13 publishing houses present at the Book Fair protested to the federal body not only on principle but also out of concern for their economic survival. Their publications are not listed in catalogues of French-language works presented to libraries in Quebec and their authors are not to be found in data banks listing researchers and authors published in French.

Language in Quebec: A Historical Review

DANIÈLE NOËL*

Is the French language the basis and expression of the uniqueness of Quebecers? Is it the foundation of their identity? What sort of French do they speak? Is this French distinct from that spoken in the other French-speaking areas of the world? Is it specifically North American?

There is really nothing new about any of these questions. Even in right-minded circles there may be a tendency to regard them as "old hat". But, thanks to the interminable Meech Lake debate, and especially the "distinct society" concept, it has become clear that they are far from settled. Not only do these questions of language continue to surface in the speeches of political figures and the writings of journalists and opinion leaders, but it is fascinating to note that they are still being asked today in the same terms as in the past and, what is more, with the same acuteness. A brief historical review will serve to clarify these recurrent questions.

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A language of translation

1803 – Joseph-François Perrault, *Lex Parlementaria: ou traité de la loi et coutume des parlements*, Québec: P.-É. Desbarats, 1803.

"I would be mortified, Mr. Speaker, if the use I make of various English terms in this translation, or if the forced turn of phrase of certain expressions involving technical terms were to cause some readers distress.

"However, if they reflect that the French language provides no terms equivalent to them, and that these terms have been hallowed by custom to mean certain things that otherwise could only be rendered by tiresome circumlocutions, they will no doubt excuse me, particularly if they consider that the law is based as much on the words as on the meaning."

1987 – *Le Devoir*, Septembre 15, 1987.

Senator Arthur Tremblay prevented the tabling of the report on the Meech Lake Accord because of serious discrepancies between the English and French versions. He explained that "agreement was far from being rigorous in a great many cases", and stated that these errors were attributable "to the very nature of the document, which is largely technical and requires close reasoning."

In the early 19th century the "Canadiens", as the French-speaking inhabitants then called themselves, were already participating actively in the colony's administration. They formed a majority in the Assembly, but the rules of this very British institution were unfamiliar to them. Accordingly, in 1803, they made a request that the *Lex Parlementaria*, the compendium of the laws and customs of parliaments, be translated for the benefit of the Assembly's Francophone members. The task was assigned to Joseph-François Perrault, then prothonotary for the district of Quebec. Judging by his preface to the work, he clearly did not find this an easy task. Perrault excuses himself for the "forced turn of phrase of certain expressions involving technical terms", stating that "the French language provides no terms equivalent to them."

The problem seems to have been the same in 1987 for the translators assigned to translate the report of the Meech Lake committee. At Senator Tremblay's request, the tabling of the report was held up for a week. Most of it had been drafted in English, and Senator Tremblay, far from blaming the translators, explained that it was difficult to find French equivalents for English legal and constitutional terms. A problem of language or one of culture? In any event, the parallel between the situations is striking in that today, as in the past, official French is usually a language of translation.

Quality of language

1930 – Michel Bibaud, *Épîtres, Satires, Chansons, Épigrammes, et Autres Pièces de Vers*, Montreal: Réédition-Québec, 1969, p. 38.

Laziness makes our
language worse:
Even in the shortest discourse,
How few place words
with proper thought,
And start and finish as
they ought?

In the middle of good
French prose
Unthinkingly some
English goes:
Presently, indictment,
impeachment, foreman,
Sheriff, writ, verdict,
bill, roast beef, watchman.
(Translated, with apologies to the author)

1990 – *Le Devoir*, July 23, 1990.

"Our language is sick, it is seriously ill. Anglicisms have

crept into everyday speech to an unimagined extent. We tend to pronounce any foreign word required by modern life in the English manner. The meanings of words suffer distortions that quickly become fashionable. But, above all, the French we use is characterized by failure to observe normal sentence structure."

French is a language of translation because it is a minority language in Canada and in North America. The linguistic and cultural environment accordingly is, and always has been, English.

After the Conquest in 1759, British institutions were imposed upon Quebecers — the parliamentary system and the statutes and legal procedures that go along with common law. Quebecers adopted the concepts of common law and, perforce, the words to express them. It was this latter tendency that Bibaud execrated in 1830, attacking syntax (word order), semantics (proper meaning) and Anglicisms (indictment, writ, verdict). All these errors, in his view, were attributable to laziness. Laziness?

Paul-André Comeau came to virtually the same conclusion on the editorial page of *Le Devoir* for July 23, 1990, when he lamented the fact that it was possible "to bring hundreds of thousands of Quebecers into the streets to defend language legislation", while "at the same time, every day we witness the constant and thoughtless 'massacre' of this same language." He added: "The spectacle is as distressing as all the fine excuses trotted out over the years to disguise laziness and tastelessness." Laziness? He, in turn, denounced Anglicisms ("Anglicisms have crept into everyday speech to an unimagined extent") and cited semantic problems ("the meanings of words suffer distortions that quickly become fashionable") and syntactic problems ("failure to observe normal sentence structure").

Twentieth-century Quebecers regularly listen to American or English music, religiously follow American television series, read American best sellers and watch American films by the score. The linguistic and cultural environment is therefore largely an English-language one. In this century as in the previous one, although cultural productions are translated, Quebecers adopt certain concepts that these productions convey and, perforce, the words to express them. This is not an excuse, it is only — to use a fashionable expression — an incontestable fact for most people.

Self-definition — identity

1806 – *Le Canadien,* November 22, 1806.

"Too often we hear the expressions 'Parti Canadien' and 'Parti Anglais'. Is there a civil war going on? Are not all the inhabitants of the province British subjects? The English here should no more be called 'English' than the French Canadians 'French'. Shall we never be known as a people, as British Americans?"

1990 – *La Presse,* 19 janvier 1990.

Another example of definition: In *La Presse* for January 19, 1990, journalist Guy Cormier reported that the Saint Jean-Baptiste Society was categorically opposed to the Meech Lake Accord, that its President, Jean Dorion, did not like the term "distinct society" and thought that it should be replaced with "people".

But a language is more than a means of communications. It expresses a culture, a way of thinking, a way of looking at the world and of defining oneself.

Besides, as far as identity is concerned, French Canadians are no Johnny-come-latelies. In 1806 the newspaper *Le Canadien* spoke out against the tendency to oppose French and English Canadians, asking whether there was "a civil war going on." The paper's editors wanted all the province's inhabitants to be known "as a people, as British Americans." The same newspaper, on May 21, 1831, said, "...there are, so far as we know, no French people in this province....We are neither French, nor English, nor Scottish, nor Irish, nor Yankee, but Canadians."

In the last century the province's inhabitants, though Catholic by faith and French by language, were "British subjects", and wished to be "known as a people", as "British Americans" and, finally, as "Canadians".

Complicated? No. These problems of self-definition are still with us today.

At the time of the Francophone Summit in 1987 the literary critic Jean Royer pointed out that the very use of the term "Francophonie" was not without its ambiguities (*Le Devoir*, June 5, 1987). At that time Canada, as the official Summit host, represented itself as a "bilingual" but "Francophone" country, while Quebec represented itself as a "Francophone" but "bilingual state". Royer went on to ask what was happening to the term "Quebecer". He noted in this regard that a week had been proclaimed in honour of the *French song in Quebec* and wondered whether the expression "Quebec song" ought henceforth to mean both French songs in Quebec and English songs in Quebec. Ambiguity reached its peak at the final gala of ADISQ when singer Céline Dion refused the Félix prize as best Anglophone artist for her album "Unison", which was done in English. She explained her refusal as follows: "The public understands very well that I am still a Quebecer and a Francophone, even if I sing in English." (*La Presse*, October 22, 1990.)

To summarize, one can therefore be a Francophone, a Canadian or a Quebecer today, and everyone can live in a "state" or a "country" and form a "people" or a "distinct society". What does this mean? That we are engaged in a war of synonyms, a dispute over words?

The perception of reality

1838 – *Lord Durham's Report.* Edited by Gerald M. Craig. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Ltd., 1963, pp. 34-35.

"The articles in the newspapers of each race are written in a style as widely different as those of France and England at present; and the arguments which convince the one, are

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calculated to appear utterly unintelligible to the other."

1990 – *Language and Society*, No. 31, 1990, p. 13.

"Those [newspapers] that did run editorials and other commentaries were divided to a large extent, but by no means exclusively, on the basis of language.

"From some French-speaking commentators came fierce complaints that the Report [of the Commissioner of Official Languages] coddled English-speaking Quebecers while systematically ignoring the anti-French backlash in Ontario.... the document came under equally fierce fire from some Anglophones for allegedly underplaying the plight of the Anglophone minority in Quebec."

Photo: National Archives of Canada

Lord Durham

Perhaps these problems have to do with our perception of reality. As early as 1838 Lord Durham pointed out that, since the educational system of the colony's French-speaking inhabitants was different from that of their English-speaking counterparts, the inevitable result was a great dissimilarity in the way their ideas were formed. He went on: "Those who have reflected on the powerful influence of language on thought, will perceive in how different a manner people who speak in different languages are apt to think." While this opinion is debatable, the fact remains that a simple reading of the newspapers "of each race" was enough to make Lord Durham aware of the extent of the cleavage between French Canadians and British Canadians. Hence, his conclusion that "the arguments which convince the one, are calculated to appear utterly unintelligible to the other."

A similar phenomenon manifested itself in the French-language and the English-language press reaction to the publication of the Commissioner of Official Languages Annual Report 1989. Francophone journalists criticized the Report for ignoring the wave of "Francophobia" that was sweeping Ontario; Anglophone journalists castigated it for allegedly underplaying the plight of the Anglophone minority in Quebec. One and the same reality, and yet totally different readings of it.

Despite the parallels, it would be a mistake to think that nothing has changed. The questions of language and identity are being asked in the same terms and with the same acuteness, but the context is radically different, particularly since the 1960s.

During that decade Quebec embarked upon a wide-ranging program of social reforms: the nationalization of the power companies, the creation of the Department of Education, of the Quebec Pension Board and of the Caisse de dépôt et placement du Québec, passage of the Health Insurance Act, etc. The establishment of these new institutions gradually enabled Quebecers to take charge of the political, socio-economic and cultural aspects of their lives. Moreover, all of these reforms were accompanied by slogans such as Jean Lesage's "Masters in Our Own House," Daniel Johnson's "Equality or Independence," and René Lévesque's "Sovereignty-Association".

The slogans sometimes conveyed different messages, but language issues were always involved. We have only to think of the vicissitudes surrounding the passage of Bill 22, the misadventures of Bill 101, which is still not finished being amended, and the recent failure of the Meech Lake Accord to realize that, behind the "distinct society" concept, issues of language are still latent.

The failure of the Meech Lake Accord is a good example of this. For nearly six months, Canadians tore themselves to pieces in letters and newspaper articles in an effort to define their respective rights and privileges. But there was a hitch — the "distinct society" concept. There was no agreement, and there still is none, about what makes Quebec a distinct society. The difference in language, yes. The difference in culture, yes. But to what extent do these differences make Quebec distinct? That is still the sticking point.

What is alarming — and what is behind the apparent parallels — is that with the least spark, the slightest friction, issues of language and identity immediately resurface. If we are to understand the present and gain more control over the future, we must first acknowledge this fact and then take measures fully to come to terms with it. It is a question of cultivating our historical memory and drawing lessons from our past experience — both good and bad — in order to break the impasse. ■

(Our translation)

Fluids in subduction zones

That was the title of an international conference held in Paris on November 5 and 6. As in the case of the International Conference on Nuclear Energy, "ENC 90", which took place in Lyon from September 23 to 28, the program was entirely in English and stated that the only authorized language was English.

These recent examples prompted the office of the International Association of French-speaking Parliamentarians to express its keen concern about the increasing number of congresses and symposiums organized in French-speaking countries, including France, in which the use of French is deliberately prohibited.

A reputation for being special

The number of scholarships offered to students with over an 87% average doubled this year at Glendon University College, according to *University Affairs* (Vol. 31, No. 9, 1990). According to the Principal of the College, Roseann Runte, this success is attributable to the reputation Glendon has acquired for certain programs in the social sciences, computer science, mathematics, interdisciplinary studies and Spanish. She also believes that candidates must be "special" to accept the additional effort required to learn in a bilingual environment.

Quebec — A Distinct Society?

*RÉJEAN PELLETIER**

Quebec has long considered itself a distinct society. From the time of Canadian Confederation in 1867, at the urging, among others, of Francophone delegates, property and civil rights were placed under provincial jurisdiction so that the civil law of French origin in effect in Lower Canada could be protected. Other provisions of the 1867 Constitution also safeguarded the special character of Quebec, such as Section 133, which established a form of bilingualism in Ottawa and Quebec.

Particularly since the start of the Quiet Revolution, Quebec has sought to affirm its distinctive character, not by withdrawing in upon itself, as it had previously, but by opening up increasingly to the outside world. Accordingly, in 1965 Quebec concluded agreements on education and culture with France. This was a means of signifying its attachment to the cradle of the French-speaking community. It was to pursue this vision in the years that followed by its participation in international conferences and organizations. The signing of international agreements in areas under its own jurisdiction, such as education and culture, was represented by Quebec as the necessary extension externally of its internal powers and, at the same time, as a means of protecting and furthering its French-speaking character.

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In the previous year, following a bitter struggle with the federal government, Quebec had established its own pension plan, believing that this sector was within its jurisdiction. Above all, at a time when the Quebec government was increasingly asserting itself in various areas of activity, it was felt important to be able to count on a large pool of capital through the creation of the Caisse de dépôt et placement du Québec. The assets of this agency would become the envy of many other Canadian provinces in the years to come.

The famous preliminary report of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism recognized this new situation by depicting Quebec as a distinct society with its own civil code and political institutions, a comprehensive network of social institutions, a large number of economic institutions and, above all, a strong concentration of Francophones within its borders. It saw a possible solution to the "problem of Quebec", however, in the introduction of bilingualism rather than in the establishment of a twofold unilingualism based on territorial divisions.

Fourteen years later another commission, the Pépin-Robarts Task Force on Canadian Unity, stated that "the heart of the present crisis is to be discovered in the intersecting conflicts created by two kinds of cleavages", one rooted in Canadian duality and the other in regionalism. "In our judgement," the commissioners added, "the first and foremost challenge facing the country is to create an environment in which duality might flourish...." And Quebec, it was acknowledged, was at the heart of this duality.

The distinct character of Quebec is based on more than the possession of a common history and a civil code based on the tradition of French law. First and foremost it is the existence of a strong concentration of Francophones in Quebec that ensures its distinct character: Quebec is largely Francophone and is increasingly so, while the rest of Canada is increasingly Anglophone.

As political scientist Léon Dion pointed out, "if language is primarily an instrument of oral or written communication between human beings, it is also the token of what is deepest within them: their mental structure." He added that it is "not only the primary expression of

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the individual identity of a person, but also that of the community to which he belongs." In this sense it is as much a collective as an individual matter.

This is a fundamental point. In the minds of a great many Quebecers protection of the French language cannot be assured simply by the introduction of a policy of bilingualism designed to ensure that individuals can receive services in the language of their choice in national Canadian institutions. Yet that is the objective of the 1969 Official Languages Act as well as of the revised 1988 Act. It is also the policy enshrined in the 1982 Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, which is clearly dominated by the theme of individual freedoms so dear to former prime minister Trudeau.

"The linguistic powder keg," in the words of Pierre Godin, dates back to the 1960s. Since then, Union Nationale, Liberal and Parti Québécois governments have tackled this issue that lies at the heart of the distinct character of Quebec. In the face of the overwhelming numbers of Anglophones on the North American continent, of the invasive presence of Anglophone media of all kinds and of American culture in particular, in the face of the demographic decline that has seen the population of Quebec fall from 29% of all Canadians in 1941 to 25.8% in 1986, French-speaking Quebecers feel the need to protect their language by passing various laws, such as Bill 101, known as the Charter of the French Language, and Bill 178 on public signage.

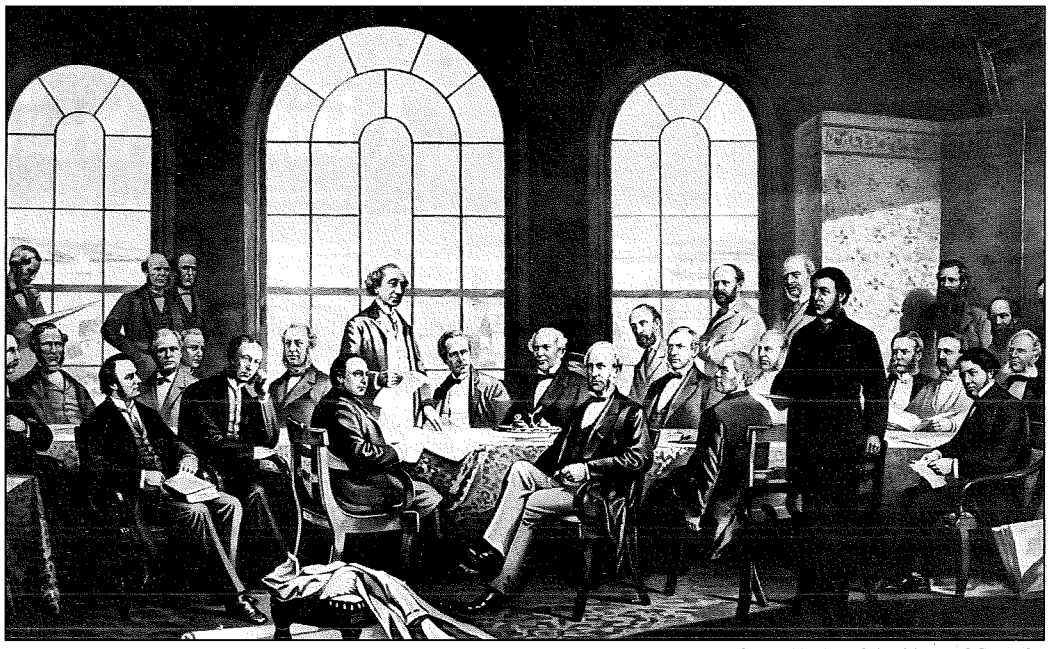
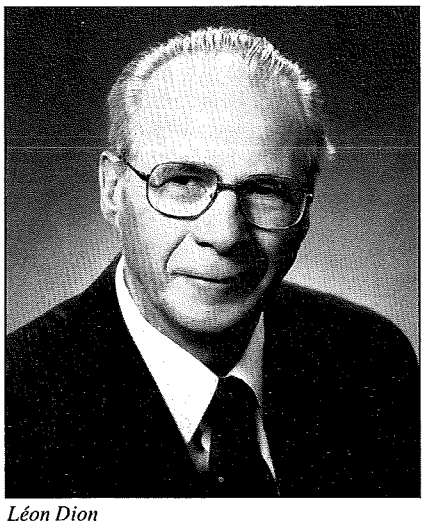


Photo: National Archives of Canada

The Fathers of Confederation



Léon Dion

Similarly, they have felt the need to take action not only with respect to political and educational institutions but also in the employment sector by gradually imposing French as a language of work, since, in large firms in particular, Francophones were often required to work in English. They also wished to preserve the dwindling demographic weight of Francophones by concluding an agreement (the 1977 Cullen-Couture agreement) stipulating that Quebec can select and train its own immigrants. This agreement has just been broadened by the present Conservative government and currently still applies only to Quebec.

In sum, as long as linguistic insecurity persists in Quebec it is unlikely that the restrictions on English will be abolished. For French-speaking Quebecers to lose their language is to lose their culture, their distinct character and their uniqueness — in short, their identity.

In all these instances language is not regarded as an individual matter but truly as an issue that concerns the entire community, especially since the vast majority of Canadian Francophones live in Quebec. At the same time, the opposite feeling prevails among Anglophones, who are concentrated outside Quebec.

This unique concentration of Francophones in Quebec constitutes the very basis of the distinct character of Quebec society. This is exactly what Quebec wanted to see acknowledged in the Meech Lake Accord, which was only a rule of interpretation of the Canadian Constitution, like the recognition of linguistic duality as a fundamental characteristic of Canada. It was not a question of wishing to be different at all costs or of needlessly complicating the life of the rest of Canada. It was simply a question of recognizing both the distinct character of Quebec and its desire to develop in its own way.

Some decided otherwise, however, so that Quebec is now exploring other avenues of obtaining not only recognition for the distinct character of Quebec society but also greater control over its own destiny. This would be taking the fact that Quebec truly constitutes a distinct society to its ultimate conclusion. ■

(Our translation)

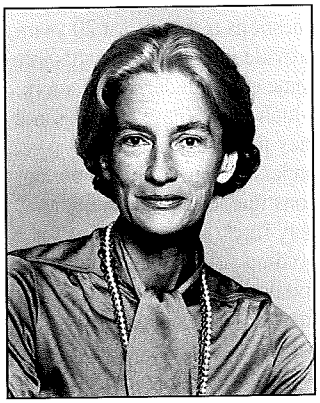
Anglophone Quebecers: Aliens at Home?

GRETTA CHAMBERS*

In a recent poll conducted by Decima Research for *Maclean's*, 51% of Canadians said that Canada should "just let them go" if Quebecers wanted out of Confederation. There were few English-speaking Quebecers in that majority *laissez-faire* category. They are more likely to be found huddled among the 47% who felt that the rest of Canada should do "everything it can" to persuade Quebecers to stay. And one of their greatest political frustrations at the moment is that their own contributions to the federalist cause carry little weight and even less persuasive power.

The Bélanger-Campeau Commission

Anglophone Quebecers have presented briefs to the Bélanger-Campeau Commission, several of which have been heard in public session. Most have been received with courtesy, even disingenuous sympathy. Lucien Bouchard, the leader of the Bloc Québécois and a member of the Commission, claimed to have been touched by the assertion of Robert Keaton, the president of the English-rights group Alliance Quebec, to the effect that Anglophone Quebecers were often made to feel like aliens in their own province. This, apparently, was the first time Mr. Bouchard had been presented with this distressing aspect of linguistic community relations.



***Gretta Chambers is a Montreal journalist, broadcaster and political commentator.**

English Quebec is expected to be against the separation of Quebec for the cultural reasons that make its federalist propensities suspect in the eyes of many Francophones. Quebec Anglophones were divided on the Meech Lake issue. By and large, they were in agreement with Quebec's five conditions but a significant proportion of them wanted clarification about the possible effects of the "distinct society" clause on future interpretations of the Quebec and Canadian Charters of Rights.

Francophones tend to find this distrust insulting. It is however more than understandable. As Alliance Quebec's Bob Keaton tried to explain to the B-C commissioners, English-speaking Quebecers feel about Bill 178, the prohibition of any language but French on outside commercial signs, as French-speaking Quebecers feel about the non-ratification of the Meech Lake Accord. Both are viewed as a rejection of their respective communities by the other national language group. For English-speaking Quebecers, their future security within an independent Quebec bent on asserting its Francophone distinctiveness is not assured. And while French Quebec can decide to guarantee its own constitutional safety through a process of self-determination, no such escape hatch is available to English Quebec.

Having your cake...

Quebec Anglophones, like their Francophone compatriots, want to have their cake and eat it too. The problem facing English Quebec is that it cannot alone protect its Canadian and Quebec roots. It must serve two masters and, as public opinion in Quebec draws further away from mainstream political thinking in English Canada, Quebec Anglophones are being torn apart by their divided loyalties. They are suffering from a mild to acute case of political schizophrenia.

They identify with Canada. Most of them will always feel Canadian no matter what Quebec's eventual constitutional status. They have joined other Canadians in identifying the Charter of Rights and Freedoms as a common reference point serving to bring the diverse and disparate regions and peoples of Canada into a national unit. In this, they are out of step with the prevalent political thinking in Quebec, where the interpretation of both the Quebec and Canadian Charters is informed by "distinct" cultural values.

...and eating it too

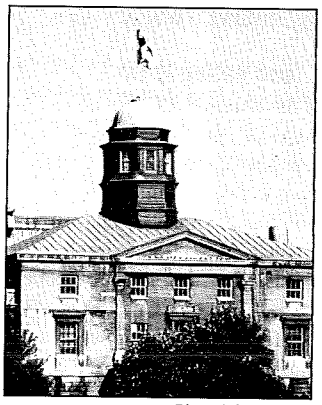
If the national identity of Anglophone Quebecers is unambivalently Canadian, they do not today identify with the political thinking of English Canada. When the federal minister responsible for Quebec, Benoît Bouchard, exhorted western Canadians to wake up and face up to the dangers, to themselves and the country at large, of pushing Quebec out of Confederation through intolerance and indifference, he could have been speaking for English-speaking Quebecers. They themselves have nothing to offer Quebec in the way of constitutional guarantees and their resentment against the rest of "English" Canada for not coming to the country's rescue is growing. They recognize the impossibility of the status quo holding. Most of them sympathize with the constitutional frustration of French Quebec. They are watching with great anxiety the development of a separatist movement which takes for granted the gracious compliance of the rest of Canada. They find themselves playing a Cassandra role to Canadian and Quebec audiences, warning of the inherent danger for each in ignoring the political realities of the other. They are in a privileged position to understand both.

Deep roots

The core of English Quebec, like Francophones outside

⇨

Quebec, is deeply rooted in its own province. Its Canadian identity has a Quebec face, shape and substance. It is often a regional loyalty. Anglophones from the Gaspé have a local history that marks their national and local identity. The same goes for English-speaking communities in the Eastern Townships. It is however with



McGill University Photo: Tibor Bognàr

Montreal that the largest percentage of Quebec's 800,000 Anglophones find the expression of their Canadian identity. There are hundreds of thousands of them who have made the investment in language to operate comfortably in French. Like Francophones outside Quebec, for whom the Parti Québécois suggestion they move to Quebec is a denial of their distinct identity, so Anglophone Quebecers, even those with portable skills and cultural mobility, will not willingly uproot. It is not that they are wedded to the existential concept of Quebec — a deficiency for which they are often reproached by Francophone Quebecers — it is that it is home; the quality of life, the physical, cultural, social and historical realities of their particular corners of "la terre Quebec" represent their Canada. Today, they would dearly love to be part of the solution rather than being almost automatically associated with Quebec's current constitutional problem.

That is certainly the strong impression left by a survey of some 2,500 English-speaking Quebecers undertaken by Alliance Quebec in meetings across the province as background documentation for its brief to the Bélanger-Campeau Commission, to which was annexed a compilation of quotations from 240 community round tables. As the introduction to the AQ submission points out, "These quotations reflect the general feeling in our community that we are part of Quebec as it is part of us — not simply by chance of birth or residence but as a matter of pride and affection.

"But, these quotes also reflect a most profound concern for the place of English-speaking Quebecers in the future of Quebec, a sense of being left out despite a sincere desire to participate and to be counted....

"The level of disquiet expressed by English-speaking Quebecers about their place in Quebec is striking; a sense that we are not accepted as full and legitimate members in this society — that the commitment, contribution and potential we have demonstrated are not recognized or appreciated."

Nothing that has transpired at the Bélanger-Campeau Commission or outside it has helped mitigate this pervasive feeling that the presence and viability of its English-speaking communities is of secondary importance in the drawing up of a blueprint for Quebec's political and constitutional future. With the prospect of being cut loose from its Canadian moorings without the assurance of finding a secure berth in its home port, English-speaking Quebec is in political limbo. The kind of constitutional change in which it has come to believe appears at the moment to be too much for its extended Canadian family and too little for the Quebec relatives with whom it lives. ■

The Silent Majority of Anglophones Speak

MICHAEL O'KEEFE

Surveys show that the perception of a general Anglophone hostility to bilingualism is false.

Major social changes rarely take place without causing some controversy and official language policies have been no exception. What Anglophones think about these policies and why they hold the opinions they do is a matter shrouded in clichés as old as the corn flakes box and as recent as the trampling of the Quebec flag in Brockville. Indeed, that event became, among Francophones, almost a visual metaphor for the perception of widespread Anglophone hostility to bilingualism, the French language and Francophones.

But is this perception accurate? Polls suggest that Anglophones are embarrassed by vocal anti-French attitudes expressed by groups like the Alliance for the Preservation of English in Canada. In a 1986 Decima poll Anglophone respondents agreed with the statement "As a Canadian, I'm embarrassed when other English-speaking Canadians complain about French-speaking Canadians." Indeed, the evidence suggests a high degree of support for federal official language policies and linguistic duality in general.

In an extensive nation-wide Canadian Facts survey of post-Meech opinion published in the Toronto *Globe and Mail*, two-thirds of respondents stated that maintaining the policy of having two official languages throughout the country best represented their opinion. Fewer than one in four Anglophones supported the concept of French as the sole official language in Quebec and English as the only official language elsewhere in Canada. Moreover, 57% said the federal government should provide services in both English and French across the country and a plurality of Anglophones said that having two official languages adds to what is good about Canada. Another indicator of satisfaction with these policies is a September 1990 Angus Reid poll which showed that only 1% of Canadians felt that language issues require the most attention from the country's leaders.

Reasons for belief

Surveys of opinion on language questions over the last 20 years provide interesting insights into some of the underlying factors which shape these attitudes and may provide a finer-grained understanding of this important constituency. While opinions may fluctuate, the reasons for holding beliefs tend to be relatively constant and are rooted in factors such as ethnicity, socio-economic status and geography.

Generally the vision Canadians have of bilingualism does not limit itself to simply providing federal services in both languages. There is strong support

for individual bilingualism. In 1986 fully 88% of respondents said that individual Canadians must participate in the promotion of bilingualism in order to achieve the aim of the government's bilingualism policy. And 50% said it was very or somewhat likely that they would personally become involved in supporting bilingualism.

The polls suggest that Anglophone respondents have a "where numbers warrant" assumption that underlies their support for bilingualism. Linguistic duality is a vision of Canada at variance with the social reality many English-speaking Canadians experience. Most Anglophones have little or no contact with Francophones. In the 1985 Canadian Facts survey only 14% of Anglophones stated that they heard French daily and most reported never hearing French. In the absence of contact with the French fact the primary justification for official language policies may well be a concern for national unity.

Contact with French is higher among the better educated and the young and is geographically associated with proximity to Quebec. The lack of contact also leads to a lower perception of the utility of French, though most Anglophones feel the utility of French will be greater in the future.

Reasons for disbelief

Those Anglophones who have anti-bilingual attitudes are much more sensitive to the cost of the programs (which they overestimate) and this appears to be the primary factor in their opposition. To most of us the idea that English is in need of preservation is an astonishing notion. The public opinion data contain a number of clues as to why people hold anti-bilingual attitudes. A 1989 study of attitudes on language questions in eastern Ontario by J.W. Berry and Diane Bourcier of Queen's University concludes that both cultural and economic insecurities are significant psychological factors in shaping opinion. It also identified age and education as the key demographic factors.

We are accustomed to viewing those of British origin as the dominant ethnic group in Canadian society. Yet in relation to its past position this group is in decline. At the mass level ethnicity has always been a poor predictor of economic attainment within Canada. Disparities in income by ethnic origin have steadily declined and these divergences are now almost entirely explained by non-ethnic factors. Disparities at the elite level have also declined substantially since the end of the Second World War.

Older Canadians may view that previous condition as the natural state of affairs and react negatively to the deterioration of the status and influence of their group. Resentment of language policies focuses on issues like jobs, discrimination, the small bilingual elite and cost, the cost being regarded as the cross-subsidization of one group by another. Thus, those hostile to official languages policy view it as the artificial promotion of one group at the expense of another and as a derogation from the merit principle.

Those who benefit directly from official language policies can be expected to be the most supportive; they include Anglophone and Francophone minorities, Francophones generally and bilingual Anglophones.

Indirect and abstract benefits (national unity, egalitarian principles, etc.) translate into weaker support. The survey data confirm that those who feel relatively secure are unlikely to become opponents of official language policies even when the benefits they receive are intangible and indirect. Most Anglophones would fall into this category. There appears to be a substantial and as yet untapped potential within Anglophone Canada which is primarily associated with a lack of involvement with either bilingualism or the Francophone presence. Measures which increase awareness, without raising the spectre of risks to unilingual Canadians, will lead to wider and more enthusiastic support. ■

The Bélanger-Campeau Commission

When the Fédération des groupes ethniques du Québec appeared before the commission on Quebec's constitutional future, "everyone seemed to be searching for distant ethnic roots to show just how open Quebec society is," reported La Presse (November 15, 1990). The following are some comments made by the commissioners as quoted in the Montreal daily:

Richard Holden (Equality Party): "We are all immigrants."

Gérald Larose (CNTU): "I count myself lucky in having a Haitian wife....I have two mulatto children who are pure Quebecers."

Louise Harel (PQ): "We are three Opposition members whose spouses are not of French origin."

Serge Turgeon (Union des artistes), noting the background of his neighbour to the left, Roger Nicolet (Union des municipalités régionales): "Born in Belgium, raised in Switzerland and a member of this very Quebec commission."

Exit

Monseigneur Laval elementary school of the French-language section of the Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic board does not comply with Ontario building code requirements that signs read "exit" in schools in the province. When the French-language school was renovated earlier this year, the Hamilton Spectator reported on November 2, "sortie" signs, along with French signs for all other purposes and facilities, were installed to comply with the Education Act, which says that communication in a French school must be in French. An appeal of compliance orders issued by city inspectors has been made to the Building Code Commission, a quasi-judicial body. No date had been set for the hearing, noted the Spectator. Official opening ceremonies took place on November 18.

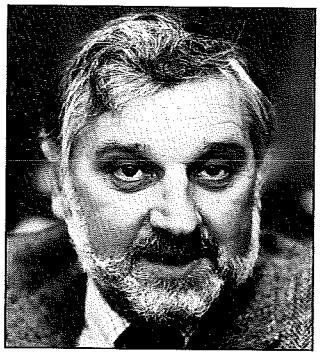
Western Attitudes: Growing Acceptance

JOHN DAFOE*

What do western Canadians think about bilingualism? Not much. That is to say, most of them don't think about bilingualism very much and, when they do think about it, they don't think much of it.

Despite the best efforts of their political leaders and their right-thinking neighbours to persuade them otherwise, at least half of the people in western Canada persist in the belief that much official bilingualism policy is unfair, unrealistic and a waste of money.

That awkward attitude has proven frustrating and intractable to a long procession of governments, royal commissions and Commissioners of Official Languages. It is a source of anger to many French-speaking Canadians and of distress to many in all parts of Canada who regard justice to the country's linguistic minorities as essential to the country's future.



*John Dafoe is editor of the *Winnipeg Free Press*'s editorial page and a weekly columnist in the Toronto *Globe and Mail*.

Governments proceed slowly, cautiously, but, more and more, Westerners are recognizing Francophone rights.

Difficult as those opinions can be, however, they are not cast in stone. Opinions can change according to the events of the day and western Canadians' opinions of bilingual policy are no exception. In the days before the collapse of the Meech Lake Accord an Angus Reid poll showed the proportion of westerners ready to support bilingualism as high as 60%. When the Accord fell apart, the support dropped below 50%.

Caution and understanding

Nor need those opinions prevent governments from extending the linguistic rights of the region's French-speaking minority. They certainly do not justify the grudging pace that some western provincial governments have tended to adopt in living up to their constitutional and moral obligations to their French-speaking citizens. Neither have they prevented small improvements in government services for Francophones across the West, and in one western province — Manitoba — they have not prevented the provincial government from taking some significant steps in the past few years to extend services to its French-speaking citizens.

They do, however, dictate that improvements must be made with a certain amount of care and caution and that change must be accompanied by a process which encourages public understanding and acceptance. Many people who object to bilingualism as a constitutional principle seem quite ready to accept the fact that their French-speaking fellow citizens ought, as a practical matter, to be served by government in their own language.

Opinions do evolve and the hard core opposition to any kind of bilingualism is diminishing. At the same time, a significant and influential minority is actively promoting linguistic justice. Tens of thousands of western parents are demonstrating their faith in Canada's bilingual future by sending their children to French immersion schools.

The evolution is gradual, however, and governments remain cautious about pushing the process too fast. They have learned from experience that attempts to push the extension of French-language rights in a way and at a pace that majority opinion will not accept can lead to the kind of confrontation which faced the Pawley government in Manitoba in 1983 and 1984.

1984

That government had negotiated an agreement with the federal government and the Société franco-manitobaine to entrench Franco-Manitobans' right to government services in French in return for a limit to the number of provincial statutes which, under a Supreme Court of Canada ruling, it would be constitutionally required to translate into French.

That agreement had much to recommend it in terms of common sense, convenience and economy. It provoked furious opposition for two reasons: it was devised by private negotiations in which the majority of Manitobans had no voice and it sought to entrench what many Manitobans, rightly or wrongly, saw as special privileges for a minority of the province's people. The reaction, in fact, was an advance taste of the response of many Manitobans to the Meech Lake Accord, another agreement that was cooked up out of sight of the public and which was perceived as giving special privileges to one group, the French-speaking people of Quebec.

The response to the 1984 deal was ferocious but it was significantly short-lived. Impromptu referendums in municipalities across the province overwhelmingly rejected the deal and the government was forced to abandon it.

The conventional wisdom at the time was that the affair had so badly damaged Manitoba's NDP government that it had been destroyed for all time as a political force in the province. In fact, it won the provincial election two years later, albeit

with a slim majority. After suffering a setback in the 1988 election, the New Democrats have rebounded as the official Opposition. Opposition to the party's bilingual policies appears to have done it no permanent political damage.

The lesson behind that experience is that language issues in western Canada, while they can create fierce political storms, do not have much political staying power. The reason behind this is obvious: language issues have virtually no effect on the day-to-day lives of the English speaking majority of the western provinces. Far from having French shoved down their throats, they can, if they choose, live their lives almost as if French did not exist, apart from an occasional exposure to the language on cereal boxes or federal government communications, or an occasional rumour of someone getting a government job because he or she spoke French.

Fighting assimilation

If bilingualism is a peripheral concern to most English-speaking residents of the western provinces, it is central to the concerns of their Francophone fellow citizens. The policies of federal and provincial governments determine whether their children are going to get a proper education in their mother tongue, whether they will have reasonable control over that education, whether they get practical government services in French and whether they feel at home in their own language in a region of Canada where English massively predominates.

Ultimately, it helps determine whether it is worthwhile trying to maintain their language or whether it is easier, more comfortable and less exhausting to give up and accept assimilation.

Francophones across the West are showing their determination not to accept assimilation. In Manitoba they are steadily getting more tools to preserve their language. In the provinces to the west the job is harder, the governments are less open and the road is longer, but even there some progress is being made.

The Société franco-manitobaine summed up today's situation in a brief to the Bélanger-Campeau Commission on the political and constitutional future of Quebec:

"In Manitoba, only one generation of Francophones has been able to study entirely in French in the public school system from kindergarten to university and this is a recent development. However, despite many drawbacks, we survived. In recent years, our community has begun to create its own institutions, a necessary condition for survival. The attitude of our young Francophones is not that of past generations, who were often forced to live their language in secret or to suffer the complexes resulting from a life on the fringes of society."

While still aware of the danger of "the ravages of assimilation", the Franco-Manitobans firmly reject the notion that they are an endangered species.

"Identifying us as a dying community can only harm Manitoba and Quebec. Despite our minority status, we have our own aspirations and gradually, by sharing our resources and claiming what is rightfully ours, we are making progress."

That new attitude reflects not only a growing confidence on the part of young Francophones in western Canada but a growing acceptance of their role and their rights by the majority society. ■

Federal Bilingualism Policy: Slow but Increasing Support

"The publicity given to the 'English only' movement in 1990 — in which close to 50 Ontario cities, including Sault Ste. Marie and Thunder Bay, declared themselves unilingual — obscured what has been a slow but increasing inclination for the country as a whole to accept the federal bilingualism policy. As of late 1989 58% of Canadians endorsed the two official languages policy, compared with 55% in 1980 and 49% in 1975. In every region there has been a slight increase since the 1970s in the proportion of Canadians who favour bilingualism — a noteworthy trend, given the policy became law only in 1969. In 1987 a comprehensive national survey of 15- to 24-year-olds found that 69% of the emerging generation support bilingualism.

"Such findings show that bilingualism gradually has been gaining acceptance across the country. The process has been slow with the reception particularly cool in western Canada. Differences by age and education, however, suggest that the level of acceptance could continue to increase with time — unless, with issues such as Meech Lake, the positive trend is sabotaged."

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Reginald W. Bibby, Mosaic Madness: The Poverty and Potential of Life in Canada, Stoddart, Toronto, 1990, pp. 51-2.

Dr. Bibby is a professor of sociology at the University of Lethbridge and one of Canada's best-known analysts of social trends.

Bilingualism and Multiculturalism

MARC THÉRIEN*

By the time this issue of *Language and Society* is published, a bill to establish a new department of multiculturalism and citizenship as well as a bill to create a Heritage Languages Institute may have become law. These initiatives, which follow in the wake of the 1988 Multiculturalism Act, seek to make Canadians more aware of their cultural diversity.

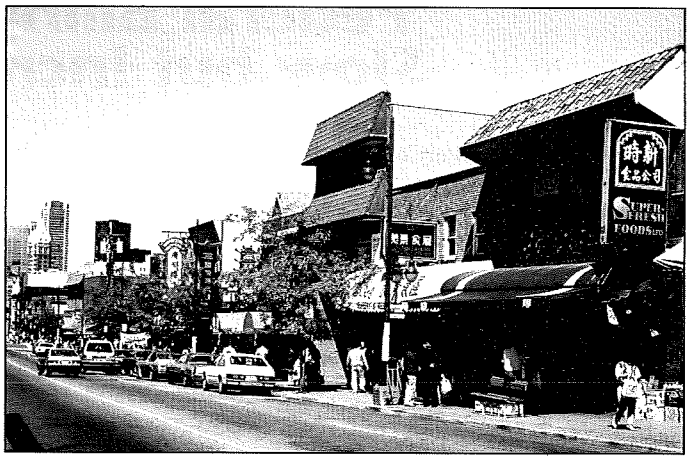
We have often argued that language duality and multiculturalism are complementary policies and that both will owe their success to the virtue of tolerance. As a country that has afforded formal recognition to two languages, Canada has also committed itself to the recognition of diversity. Indeed, one of the fundamental tenets of our society is the democratic belief in equality before and under the law without discrimination based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age or mental or physical handicap. These equality rights have been included in the Charter not only for the protection they give to individuals, but because they are beneficial for our country as a whole. They encourage the development of a sense of community founded on human dignity. The people who reject the ethnic and cultural pluralism of Canada are often the same people who oppose language reform.

When the Commissioner participated in the Fourth National Conference on Multicultural, Intercultural and Race Relations Education in November 1990, he reminded delegates that multicultural and intercultural education was essential to enable young people to learn and accept the fundamental equality of all Canadians. However, any policy of intercultural education would be incomplete if it did not also provide a full understanding of the history and demography that justify our having two national languages. These languages are the principal vehicles of our two fundamental cultures. English and French are the loom on which our national tapestry is woven. The English and French cultures in Canada have evolved over time and have developed a distinctive North American flavour. It is worth stating clearly that, far from having been obliterated by it, they are at the core of the concept of multiculturalism and that the other cultures which find expression in Canada naturally live in a symbiotic relationship with them. Taken as a whole, this dynamic convergence is what constitutes Canadian culture in the singular.

Few would argue, however, that Canadian culture, like its no less graceful and complex sister, Canadian identity, is at times a delicate creature needing the protection of the state. Recent events such as cuts in CBC regional programming, the possible negative impact of the GST on our publishing industry and, more generally, the imposing size and influence of the star-spangled cultural and economic elephant to the south have made Canadians very nervous. In a period of constitutional questioning, it seems to us important that the federal government reinforce, not weaken, its support for the cultural agencies that promote the identity and linguistic and cultural integrity of Canada.

Educational efforts aimed at the harmonization of our linguistic and cultural heritage also should focus on our identity as Canadians and should not be limited to the schools. It is important for all citizens to achieve a sense of shared purpose and values and it is the federal government's job to explain clearly the relations between federal policies on official languages and multiculturalism. It has been remiss on this and time may yet prove that sins of omission are entirely as dangerous as the other more prosaic kind. Our national government cannot content itself with repeating platitudes about diversity, duality and enrichment. Canadians are entitled to see the larger picture the "mosaic" will form. For the time being, the national objectives being pursued are not clear. They should be. The Multiculturalism Act of 1988 has its merits, but contributed very little to fulfilling this objective.

While seeking to preserve their original languages, immigrants to Canada quickly discover that English and French are in varying degrees the national languages of communication in which our political, economic, educational and social life is conducted. Their desire to learn one or the other or both is intense. Unfortunately, in a period of fiscal



Chinatown, East Pender Street, Vancouver, British Columbia *Photo: Reflexion*

***The author is Director General of the Policy Branch of the Commissioner's Office.**

Chinatown, Dundas Street, Toronto, Ontario *Photo: Reflexion*

restraint, the school systems in several provinces have not been able to keep pace with the special demands created by the arrival of more and more children and adults requiring specialized instruction in English or French as a first official language. A report of the Canada Employment and Immigration Advisory Council states:

> Many studies indicate that language training is, probably, the single most important issue directly affecting the integration of immigrants into the Canadian mosaic. As well, lack of adequate language training for immigrants results in loss of realization of immigrant potential both economically and socially.[1]

The Council among other things calls on the federal government and the provinces to ensure better co-ordinated language training programs and suggest that "both federal and provincial levels...provide a flexible range of language learning services that are consistently of high quality and geared to the varied need of newcomers."[2]

The five-year 332 million dollar power-sharing agreement on immigration reached between Ottawa and Quebec at the end of 1990 affords a positive example of co-operation in ensuring the integration of immigrants while taking fully into account the special requirements of Canada's linguistic duality. The agreement, which comes in force on April 1, 1991, takes into account the particular needs of Quebec in giving it the power to select independent immigrants and to ensure their linguistic and economic integration into Quebec society. The province hopes to recruit more French-speaking immigrants and to provide greater access to French-language training for immigrants who do not speak French. Other provinces are also in the process of negotiating immigration agreements with Ottawa.

While encouraging immigrants to learn the English or the French language, the federal and provincial governments are also called upon to promote the preservation and development of "heritage languages". Worthwhile in its own right, such promotion also makes strong economic sense. Who can doubt that in an era of global trade, our competitiveness will not be enhanced if we can draw upon the language skills as well as the cultural and social savvy of hundreds of thousands of polyglots? Paying lip-service to the development of such skills is not good enough. For example, even a few months ago who would have predicted that the Ukraine, with its population of some 51 million, might become a significant trade partner to Canada? Who would argue that linguistic and cultural affinities with it will not help open doors? In 1986, in Canada as a whole, the rate of English-French bilingualism was higher among Allophones than among Anglophones. In short, if two languages are good, three or four may be even better. ■

Note

1 Canada Employment and Immigration Advisory Council, "Immigrants and Language Training". Paper presented at the symposium for Immigrant Settlement and Intergration, Toronto, Ontario, May 28-29, 1990, p. 1.

2 Ibid. p. 23.

Improved in translation

That was the claim of the title of a November 7 *Winnipeg Free Press* editorial commenting on Senator Philippe Gigantes' participation in the GST filibuster. The senator read for several hours from his recent book *The Road Ahead*. The *Free Press* indicated that as a result of what it quotes government house leader Harvie Andre as describing as "irresponsible behaviour of the worst possible sort", the Senate record now contains a free translation of the book.

"It would, of course, be necessary to read the book itself to determine whether the senator is being responsible," the Winnipeg daily concludes. "If the book is worth reading, it might be one of the more sensible things to have been done during the Senate debate of the GST."

Bureaucrats beware

Jean-Claude Rondeau, head of Quebec's Office de la langue française, suggested in a speech that Bill 101 was pretty mild stuff compared to a 1790 law adopted soon after the outbreak of the French revolution whereby French bureaucrats could be sentenced to six months in jail for writing in any other language than French. (The Montreal *Gazette*, November 23.)

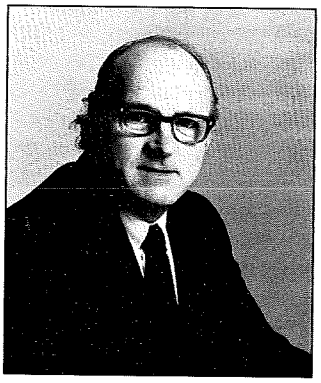
Who Is More Guilty, Politicians or the Media?

MICHEL ROY*

In normal times the language of the media is exaggerated, simplified and emotional. In a time of crisis, such as the one Canada is currently experiencing, whipped up by events, stimulated by excess, it is even less restrained than usual. The tone rises several notches, becoming emphatic and impassioned.

Information conveyed by television, radio and the press on the political, constitutional or linguistic debates shaking and dividing the nation does not present a faithful reflection of society. Canadians often see only the kind of exaggerated image revealed in an amusement park mirror.

"Canada must be radically reformed or it will fall apart, Mulroney warns." Such was the headline late in December in the Montreal *Gazette* over a report on the Prime Minister's press conference. To be sure,



***Michel Roy is a columnist for *Le Soleil* in Quebec City, *Le Droit* in Ottawa and *Le Quotidien* in Chicoutimi.**

Mr. Mulroney could not disavow this idea, which he did indeed express before the Parliamentary press corps, any more than he could the statement used by other newspapers in reporting the same press conference: "The alternative to a fundamentally reformed Canada is probably no Canada."

We often see only an exaggerated image.

Headlines like these have the effect of a body blow. And that is exactly the effect sought by the writer, whose primary aim is to draw attention, to attract readers and even to shock the sensibilities. It succeeds so well that many readers see it as a message of blame directed at English Canada: the head of government subtly reproaching it for guilty indifference towards a Quebec in turmoil. Another example: "'Wake up!' Benoît Bouchard tells western Canadians." Spread over five columns of Montreal's *La Presse*, this lapidary phrase was an accurate summary of the Minister's remarks in an interview with the *Winnipeg Free Press*. "If we feel that the door is closed," he told his interviewers in Winnipeg, "Quebec might choose sovereignty." This amounted to a kind of blackmail offensive to Manitobans, who were rather ill-disposed towards Quebec.

And yet Mr. Bouchard's apparent intention in this interview was to reassure, clarify and explain with the frankness of someone who hides nothing from the interviewer. His intentions were unassailable: as a Quebecer and a federal minister, he wished to save the country from breaking up. But his "Wake up!" addressed to Manitobans had the effect of a provocation.

The serious-minded *Globe and Mail* regularly publishes revealing evidence of the various points of view prevalent in English Canada. One such letter, well-written and apparently thoughtful, appeared the day after Christmas and severely criticized certain political figures in Quebec, notably Gil Rémillard, for not really understanding the political reality of English Canada and the nationalist sentiments prevalent in it. English Canada, the reader explained, would never agree to grant Quebec the near-sovereign status that these political figures (Mr. Rémillard and company) and their colleagues in the National Assembly are so actively and naively promoting among their electorate.

Headlined "Quebec hasn't awakened to the political reality of English Canada," the correspondent's letter no doubt expressed a point of view widely shared among elites in Ontario, an opinion to which reference was made at the hearings of the Bélanger-Campeau Commission by representatives of the Association des économistes du Québec, who warned Francophones against a tendency to believe that English Canada would respond with rational good will to any plan for secession by Quebec.

However, upon reading this interesting letter, an objection would occur to any moderately well-informed Quebecer, namely, that Mr. Rémillard, who must be regarded as the Quebec government's principal representative on the Bélanger-Campeau Commission, has never said that he would opt for Quebec's sovereignty and has not promoted it among his electors. Yet the well-informed reader from Ottawa attributes this sentiment to him in the *Globe and Mail*. Readers are allowed to write anything, without their errors of fact even being corrected. All opinions are allowable in letters-to-the-editor columns, but they should be based on verified facts.

With few exceptions (the *Globe and Mail* being one), the media report the crisis in Canada as if they were describing a football game, and many of those asked to analyse or comment on the issues do not take the trouble to gather full information before drawing their conclusions or

making a judgement. It is hardly surprising then that the reader suffers from some confusion in trying to understand the problem. Fortunately, the major dailies publish lengthy excerpts from important conferences or statements on the subject made by elected representatives. The interested reader therefore has access to basic documents and can place in their proper context the fragmentary statements and quotations used in headlines and reports.

Some think the media should be encouraged to show moderation and discrimination in handling information that can, and indeed does, become a source of disquiet, anxiety, prejudice, hostility and distrust — in short, all the ingredients that fan crises of this kind.

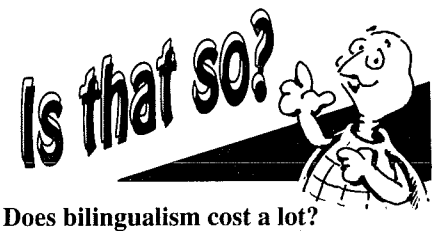
It is a great delusion to believe that wise heads and advocates of reconciliation can convince the media, in a Western society, to contribute, through their professional behaviour, to a better understanding of facts, opinions and intentions. The free press, in any democracy, is not a medium for solving social problems and constitutional crises. It is itself part of the problem.

When a crisis enters its acute phase, the media sometimes feel the need to become "serious" for a few days, or even weeks, in order to provide the public with better documented, more complete and less dramatic information. This is entirely their decision and it rarely stems from a concern on the part of management to gratify the public's right to be informed.

Political figures quickly learn to operate in this media world, whose rules and customs are nearly the same everywhere in the West. That is why the actors in a crisis — heads of government, minsters, spokespersons for institutions and large firms — increasingly know how to use techniques to attract the attention of the electronic and written media. In a word, politicians submit to the norms of the information media: short and pithy sentences, memorable phrases understandable to all. The time of social and political dissertations is past. In the United States, as in Canada, in England as in France. In any language. ■

(Our translation)

The time of social and political dissertations is past.



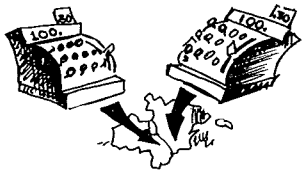
Does bilingualism cost a lot?

That's what we often hear, and it might seem reasonable to those who don't know the facts — a logical consequence of the rapid increase in the size of governments and their costs.

What is the reality?

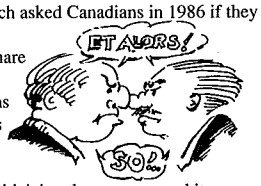
In fact, providing services to Canadians in their two official languages does not require an enormous budget. The federal government, which now offers quite acceptable services in English and in French, spends only one-third of one per cent of each dollar committed to its programs on their translation, on language training for its employees and on other expenses associated with the provision of bilingual services.

For example, if it costs a hundred dollars to offer a federal service in French in Chicoutimi, it doesn't cost an additional hundred dollars to provide the same service in English in St. Catharines. It doesn't even cost a dollar extra, only 30 cents.

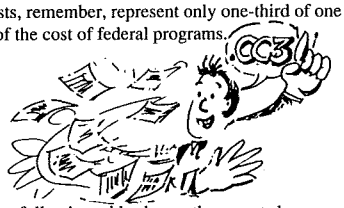


What do Canadians think?

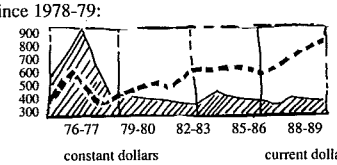
When Decima Research asked Canadians in 1986 if they thought these costs represented a major share of government expenditures, almost as many agreed (46%) as disagreed (48%).



Despite open letters criticizing the program and its "exorbitant cost", Decima researchers found that most Anglophones do not think it costs too much to provide federal government services in both official languages. These costs, remember, represent only one-third of one per cent of the cost of federal programs.



And, as the following table shows, these costs have gone down considerably when expressed in constant dollars, whose purchasing power has fallen by 38% since 1978-79:



Is it a good investment?

Let's not forget that almost half of the funds devoted to official languages are given to the provinces for education. As a result, two and a half million students, 250,000 of whom are enrolled in immersion courses, were able to learn English or French last year. To promote access by our young people to two international languages is more than a wise investment in the new generation: it is also a means of increasing our competitiveness in the international marketplace.

It's true that it would cost a little less to have only one language. But are we prepared to ignore the language spoken by a quarter of Canadians?

***Is that so?* is prepared by the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages, Ottawa, Canada K1A 0T8.**

Vision d'avenir: A Wide-Ranging Survey

*Gilles Laframboise**

Young Francophones outside Quebec fight the forces of assimilation that impinge on their language and culture.

The Fédération des jeunes Canadiens français is currently putting the finishing touches to Vision d'avenir [Vision of the Future], a wide-ranging research project on the assimilation of Francophones in minority communities.

Subsidized by the Department of the Secretary of State and Quebec's Secretariat for Canadian Intergovernmental Affairs, the study will result in the publication of four lengthy documents on the future of the French language and culture in Canada.

Matthieu Brennan

It took two years to define the scope of the study and almost as long to carry out this ambitious research project. "It originated at the end of the 1980s, at a time when all Francophones in a minority situation found it necessary to respond to the phenomenon of assimilation," says Matthieu Brennan, the co-ordinator of Vision d'avenir. "We wanted to collect our own data on assimilation, to do our own survey of the situation, without government bias and without having to justify programs."

***Gilles Laframboise is a freelance journalist.**

Twofold approach

From the outset, the project's directors refused to limit themselves to figures and statistics. According to Matthieu Brennan their approach instead combined scientific research and public action. Thus, at the same time as a team of researchers was analysing and dissecting the figures, the Commission nationale d'étude sur l'assimilation was holding hearings in all parts of Canada to take testimony and find solutions.

A total of 180 briefs was sent to the eight commissioners, who heard 160 presentations in 14 Canadian cities. These figures fully justify the exercise, Brennan pointed out, but they do conceal one disappointment: the lack of interest on the part of the provinces. "We had invited representatives of all the provinces to meet with us formally or informally," he says, "but the politicians, with one or two exceptions, declined our invitation." At the government level, only federal agencies sent observers to certain cities.

The commissioners are now summarizing the hearings, which ended early this winter. The recommendations in the final report will issue from their reflections and the reading of the research documents. This report should appear at the end of May.

Shocking figures

When making their recommendations the commissioners will not be able to ignore the first three documents prepared for them by the researchers. One of these presents the results of a broad survey of 8,500 young Quebecers and Francophones outside Quebec between the ages of 15 and 24. Participants were questioned for 45 minutes about their linguistic behaviour in daily life and their cultural and linguistic identity. This part of the study was carried out in collaboration with Quebec's Office de la langue française.

The document has not yet been made public, but there is every reason to believe it will arouse as much interest as the first two studies, "Le choc des nombres" [the shock of numbers] and "Le déclin d'une culture" [the decline of a culture]. When these were published in September 1990 some were shocked by what they regarded as their "alarmist" tone.

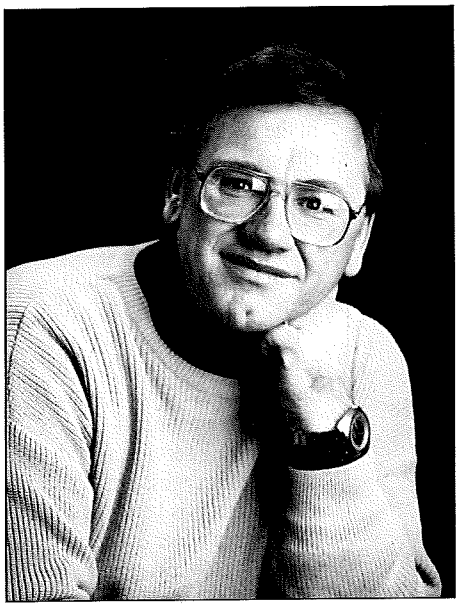
According to Roger Bernard, the research director for Vision d'avenir and a professor of sociology at the University of Ottawa, "Our aim was not to shock. We simply presented the assimilation process based on the statistics collected and analysed it."

"Our aim was not to shock."

"Cultural" bilingualism a threat

The first volume, "Le choc de nombres", contains 195 tables accompanied by an interpretation. It states that "in all the provinces except Quebec and British Columbia the percentage of Francophones in the province has declined constantly since 1951." The authors point out that the French mother tongue population outside Quebec constituted only 5% of the population in 1986, compared to 7.3% in 1951.

According to Bernard, three factors contributed to this decline: lower fertility rates, galloping assimilation, and international immigration, which adds to the weight of the Anglophone majority. More-



Roger Bernard

media, that is, of contemporary life." The French language is therefore dissociated from French culture and serves as a vehicle for English culture. Bernard therefore does not believe that the numbers and statistics are the ultimate indicators of the vitality of French culture, because the latter is also threatened by "cultural" bilingualism.

over, the research team noted, "The loss of French is particularly acute during the phase of life when people gradually move away from the original family environment, that is, starting at age 20. It is as young adults that Francophones in a minority situation abandon French. We must therefore intervene quickly as far as their adult behaviour is concerned if we do not want generational renewal to be completely eroded."

The second volume, "Le déclin d'une culture", describes the cultural values held in Francophone minority communities in Canada. Roger Bernard explains that "many Francophones outside Quebec consider bilingualism a cultural value that is part of their identity and integral to their personality. It is quite different with Quebecers, for whom bilingualism is not a so-called 'cultural' bilingualism, but an 'additive' bilingualism that is useful but does not threaten the position of French."

It follows, he said, that in many minority communities French remains confined "to sectors lacking in prestige — the private sphere — while English is the preferred language of business and the

Towards a better future

The project directors of Vision d'avenir will publish their final recommendations in a few months. However, certain broad themes are already evident, according to Brennan. We know, for example, that a number of recommendations will be made to the federal government.

"It seems clear to us that funding by the federal government is inadequate in its current form, that it must now do more by developing master plans," he explains. Such "action" plans, he says, will serve to focus the political will "in terms of the needs of the community and will ensure that every dollar spent in the community produces a dollar's worth of effect."

Based on the public hearings, it is also to be expected that the communities — and young people are part of them — will also make additional efforts and will develop hundreds of specific proposals for "solutions" to the problem of assimilation to supplement the increased support expected from the federal government.

Language and Society 35 will carry an analysis of the final report. ■

(Our translation)

The CBC: How Will It All End?

*Denis Alarie**

Springtime, a season of renewal and enthusiasm, is rarely a time of anxiety or confusion. Apparently things will be different this year. After Meech Lake, the Oka crisis, the introduction of the GST, and now recession, many Canadians feel the need to be reassured. The uncertainty over exactly what the results of the Bélanger-Campeau Commission will be has nothing particularly reassuring about it. With all this uncertainty over the country's future we need to cling to our symbols. However, many of them are no longer what they once were. Air Canada has been privatized, Via Rail no longer links Canada from sea to sea and, just recently, the CBC cuts have dealt a heavy blow.

Closed or significantly pared down were 11 regional stations in 10 communities; 160 broadcasts were taken off the air. More than 1,000 employees have lost their jobs. The Corporation, which had to "save" $108 million in order to balance its 1991 budget, was faced with a shortfall of $30 million in advertising revenue. This is attributed to the recession we are currently experiencing.

Most regrettable in all this is the fact that, in the words of Patrick Watson, the Chairman-designate of the Crown corporation's board of directors, "some communities have been forsaken." For them, these cuts are unquestionably a very difficult burden to bear. Communities like Corner Brook, Newfoundland, Windsor, Ontario, Matane and Sept-Îles, Quebec, are losing the only stations where they can get locally-produced news and broadcasts. Other cities and towns are losing popular broadcasts. On the

"Some communities have been forsaken."

English network, Toronto is losing "Monitor", Vancouver is losing "Down to Earth", and St. John's, "Land and Sea". The French network is losing, among others, "Génies en herbe", "SMAC", "Carnet des ondes" (Alberta), "Compte rendu" and "Ontarioscope" (Ontario), "Musicolore" and "Spect-Art" (New Brunswick).

Reactions

If the mandate so far of the CBC has been to promote national unity it can already be affirmed that the cuts have brought people together, if only in protest. In Calgary a crowd of over 1,500 demonstrated in mid-December. Among the protesters was Yves Chouinard,

⇨

***Denis Alarie is a freelance writer.**

Regional President of the Association canadienne-française de l'Alberta, accompanied by well-known local personalities, including Calgary Mayor Al Duerr and Chamber of Commerce President Harold Millican. Chouinard even received a warm ovation after his speech in French. This rally ended with "O Canada", sung with emotion.

In Prince Edward Island a group of demonstrators staged a mock funeral where they burned a video tape of the 1989 Acadian Games. A few demonstrators, chanting "Don't contribute to assimilation", later joined the Acadian demonstration in the streets of Moncton, where more than 700 were protesting against the cuts. Réal Gervais, President of the Société des Acadiens et Acadiennes du Nouveau-Brunswick, recently deplored the CBC decision not to broadcast the Acadian Games and expressed special concern over young people who, already living under the constant threat of assimilation, have now lost these programs.

The concerns expressed by Gervais apply to all Francophones outside Quebec because they have now lost the only programs centred on them. Unlike Quebecers they do not have access to other French stations and may now be more inclined to turn to the English networks.

In Ontario the Coalition pour la télévision française is circulating a province-wide petition. According to its President, Paul Lachance, Ontario's Francophones have become "wandering, forsaken Canadians who find themselves in the throes of Americanization and assimilation."

As for Quebec, which is seriously considering its constitutional future by way of the Bélanger-Campeau Commission, the cuts have worsened an already critical situation. Claire Hovington, Liberal MP for Matane, concluded before the Commission on December 19 that Quebec may be bearing the cost of the bilingualism policy in the western part of the country.

A force that unites and inspires

Most of the protests are against the loss of a voice that speaks of Canada, a mirror that reflects its image. The two CBC networks are seen as a force, an inspirational element, whose mission is to unite the country. Let us hope that the cuts will not create a rift between Anglophones and Francophones, or between minority communities and large centres, each accusing the other of being responsible for the cuts or at least of having suffered less from them. In this respect, the Coalition pour la défense des services français de Radio-Canada, consisting mainly of trade unions and labour confederations like the CNTU and the CEQ, plus other associations of journalists and television viewers, is questioning the viability of federalism for Francophones by comparing the budgets allocated to the two networks. It was recently stated before the Bélanger-Campeau Commission that the program "Le Point" had a budget of $3.24 million while its counterpart on the English network had $8 million.

Perhaps the cuts will even renew old rivalries between certain communities. In Calgary the six o'clock news and the late evening news will now be coming from Edmonton, its long-standing rival. In the West it was noted with disappointment that the news made no mention of the major demonstration of mid-December. Some concluded that it was probably because the four news items from Quebec absolutely must be heard that evening.

"Don't contribute to assimilation."

The Francophone communities outside Quebec will be served by a network whose broadcasts are first and foremost designed for Quebec audiences. Having lost their regional programs they find themselves faced with the alternative of either watching the English network or one that is totally alien to them. To make matters worse, Francophones outside Quebec are being told that it is because of them that certain Quebec communities suffered some losses. With these cuts, it is true that everyone is treated in the same way. However, it must be recognized that the Francophones outside Quebec are the ones who will suffer most.

Less is better

In the midst of all these lamentations a few brave souls are quietly expressing approval. Paul Rutherford, a University of Toronto historian, believes that the Crown corporation will emerge stronger now that it is abandoning its local and regional programming. In his opinion the CBC's mandate is to provide a national broadcasting service in both official languages. Mr. Watson affirms that it is better to do less than to water everything down. The *Ottawa Sun*'s Douglas Fisher points out that the two networks do not really serve to unify Canada but to plunge the two language groups into darkness. In his opinion the events surrounding the Meech Lake crisis are a good example. Interestingly, Bill C-40, now being debated in the Senate, would replace the traditional mandate of the CBC, which is to promote national unity, with a mandate to reflect the Canadian reality. What the minority communities will actually receive is a reflection of Montreal or Toronto.

How will it all end? In some families there will be major changes. The communities will have to get used to it because not only are the cuts permanent but there will likely be others in 1992-93 according to Gérard Veilleux, President of the Crown corporation. The CBC seems determined to make the best of the situation. However, our minority official language communities, and especially Francophones outside Quebec, have lost a tool essential to their development. To expose them to broadcasting that does not reflect the reality they experience is a serious mistake. Will the situation be corrected? Stay tuned. ■

(Our translation)

The Official Languages in Parliament

New Regulations under Scrutiny

André Creusot

Language and Society continues to follow the subject of the official languages regulations closely. The public knows very little about them and they deserve greater attention because once they are adopted they will have the force of law.

On November 8 the President of the Treasury Board, Gilles Loiselle, on behalf of the government, tabled the proposed draft regulations on communications with and services to the public (see the description of them in *Language and Society* 33). These regulations had long been awaited both by official language minority associations and federal agencies themselves; the lack of clear guidelines was leaving the latter in a state of uncertainty and inaction. The tabling of the draft came just a few days after the Commissioner had submitted a special report to Parliament concerning the absence of regulations.

The Standing Joint Committee on Official Languages, which is responsible for examining the regulations, first of all heard testimony from the new President of the Treasury Board, Gilles Loiselle, on December 4. He explained their principles, commented on the rules and illustrated some of their guidelines.

The Commissioner was invited to present his views on the following day. As he had already indicated, he was generally in agreement with the proposed draft, regarding it, on the whole, as fair, reasonable and likely to lead to systematic application of the provisions of the Act — provided that active offer was consistently practised; otherwise there could be no real linguistic choice for the minority clientele. In this context of general agreement, and in an effort to achieve greater fairness and provide more support to the minority communities, the Office of the Commissioner made a number of suggestions, the principal ones being:

- the criterion based on 5% of the population makes unwarranted distinctions between minority groups of equivalent importance; only criteria based on absolute numbers should be used;
- out of a similar concern for fairness, the rule of proportionality in large communities with more than 5,000 minority official language inhabitants should be re-examined, in consultation with minority associations, on a case-by-case basis in order to ensure compliance, in every office, with the provisions concerning significant demand;
- in large communities with less than 5,000 minority official language inhabitants, the range of key services should be broadened so as to include organizations of particular interest to the development of the minority communities;
- regarding service to the travelling public, the criteria for significant demand should take into account the large representation of foreigners and should identify New Brunswick, Quebec and Ontario by name;
- in order to meet the objectives of the regulations, the way services are organized should be determined in close consultation with the minority clientele.

In conjunction with these recommendations, the Committee was asked, with regard to the regulations themselves, to invite the Treasury Board to issue directives without delay in cases where the circumstances already permit and to invite the Governor in Council to table the rest of the regulations in the course of 1991.

Mr. Loiselle's statement that "we are not planning to propose regulations on these matters [language of work] in the near future because, in our view, they are not required," caused great dismay.

In this regard Mr. Fortier cited many reasons which, in his opinion, make regulations by the various competent authorities indispensable to the full implementation of the Act in the areas of equitable participation, language of work, judicial procedures, and health, safety and security. He recalled that, in 20 years, directives alone had not succeeded in achieving the objective of equality aimed at by the Act and that it was precisely for this reason that the legislator had provided in 1988 for comprehensive regulations to ensure compliance with the Act.

Minority community representatives take a stand

The Committee then heard testimony from representatives of the Canadians most affected by the proposed draft regulations, the minority associations: Alliance Quebec, the Association de la presse francophone, the Association of Quebec Regional Media and the Fédération des francophones hors Quebec.

These spokespersons were in general agreement with the government's proposal, but also concurred in most of the Commissioner's suggestions. In presenting their comments, they also pointed out that:

- the evaluation of "significant demand" based on the percentage of general demand or that of the population is a source of inequalities;
- the government should find a way to take into account the vitality of the minority communities as shown, for example, by the publication of weeklies whose importance cannot be measured by their circulation alone;
- demand cannot be assessed properly unless active offer of service has been made for a reasonable period of time.

Judging by the questions from its members, the Committee seemed satisfied with the similarity of views of the various associations and the quality of their proposals.

After the start of the new year the Committee plans to conclude its consultations by hearing testimony from the senior management of four large service organizations: Employment and Immigration, the RCMP, Canada Post and Transport Canada. It will most likely wish to invite several other groups and close by hearing from the President of the Treasury Board once again before submitting its report at the earliest possible date. ■

(Our translation)

Federal Institutions

Privatized Airports: Will They Concern Themselves with Language?

*Colette Duhaime**

Will the airports in Edmonton, Villeneuve, Montreal, Calgary, Vancouver and Hamilton remain bilingual once they are privatized? This is a question that increasingly concerns the Commissioner of Official Languages.

Airports, which are required to comply fully with the provisions of the Official Languages Act, generally provide acceptable bilingual service, despite many shortcomings involving pre-boarding security checks. The Office of the Commissioner is afraid, however, that privatization or, more properly, the transfer of airports, may hinder progress and lead to some backsliding.

This is why the Commissioner has repeatedly intervened to urge that the groups who will be responsible for managing these facilities be made subject to all the provisions of the Official Languages Act.

When Air Canada was privatized the Office of the Commissioner made the same recommendation and its advice was followed. This not only offered the many travellers who criss-cross Canada the opportunity to be served in the official language of their choice, but also promoted the equitable participation of members of both linguistic communities in the company's administration. In the view of the Office it would be logical for airports transferred to private interests also to be made subject to all the provisions of the Official Languages Act as regards airport administration, while services provided by third parties should be subject only to the provisions regarding service to the public.

The Commissioner is asking that the authority of the Act be recognized in legislation. This solution would protect Canadians from the vicissitudes of any future re-sale. In addition, it would assign the Commissioner of Official Languages the responsibility of ensuring respect for language rights and compliance with the Act in "privatized" airports as in the others. This legislative approach, which the Commissioner will advocate before the Parliamentary committee examining the bill, is the best way, in his view, of guaranteeing respect for the hard-won linguistic rights of Canadians.

Even then, it would be no surprise to find the groups responsible for managing privatized airports somewhat reluctant to follow the advice of the Commissioner as time goes on — not unlike Air Canada, which, however, is required to comply with the Official Languages Act in its entirety. ■

(Our translation)

William Turnbull

*** Colette Duhaime is a freelance journalist.**

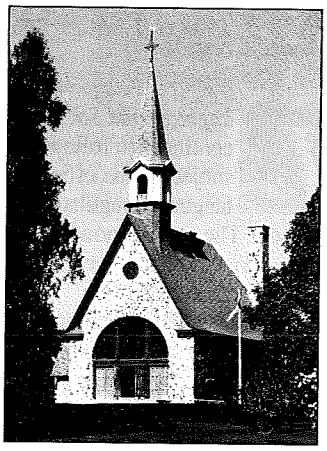
A Page of History, a Chapter of Bilingualism

*Sylvie Lépine**

For William Turnbull, the Atlantic Region Director General of the Canadian Parks Service, bilingualism is a priority. This is evident from a visit to one of the national historic parks or sites in the Atlantic provinces. From Grand Pré in Nova Scotia to Memramcook in New Brunswick, visitors are greeted in both of Canada's official languages.

Turnbull's determination was responsible for this. In the eight years he has filled his position he has set himself the objective of providing bilingual service at all the national historic parks and sites in the Atlantic provinces. To achieve this, he surrounded himself with hard-working colleagues who were equally concerned about the implementation of the Official Languages Act. Close co-operation and a will of iron was the recipe for success.

About six years ago Turnbull, with the assistance of his team, formed a committee with representatives from the Acadian community. "We established this committee in the hope of being able to meet the expectations of Acadians. We consult them in order to develop the historical aspect of the national historic parks and sites and to establish interpretation centres that meet their needs. And I must say that it is a success."



Grand Pré, Nova Scotia

The Lefebvre Monument is a good example of this communication between the Acadian community and the management of the Parks Service. Turnbull admits that he would like to do a little more. "Grand Pré National Park, which conjures up the era of the Acadian deportation, is not fully developed due to a lack of money. However, services are offered in both official languages, to the great delight of tourists." The superintendent of Grand Pré National Park is an Acadian who organizes activities in French designed for Acadians and other Francophones throughout the year. At Port Royal in southwestern Nova Scotia the interpretation officers welcome visitors in period costumes; an atmosphere is created, visitors have a magical time, and the use of French is highly appreciated.

Each park superintendent is responsible for the implementation of the Official Languages Act. "Since bilingualism is a priority for me, the superin-

Port Royal, Nova Scotia

tendents have to answer to me if the Act is not respected. Each summer, my assistant, who is fully bilingual, organizes visits without warning to all the parks in the Atlantic Region. She can also rectify certain situations if necessary," Turnbull commented with a smile. Obviously, an iron fist in a velvet glove produces positive results.

All the employees of the Canadian Parks Service must attend training courses in which they are made aware of the importance of providing service in both official languages. "We encourage them to learn French and our training is provided by a bilingual officer; I think that our employees understand the situation very well." Moreover, at the Halifax regional office the number of bilingual positions has doubled in three years. Of the 800 employees in the Atlantic provinces about 100 are Francophones and a large number are bilingual. Turnbull admits, however, that it is difficult to find Francophones for more specialized positions in a part of the country that is heavily Anglophone.

William Turnbull says he is satisfied with the signage: "All the signage concerned with the safety or security of our employees and visitors is bilingual. I would like to see all of it bilingual, but our budgets are too small. However, all the information brochures are published in both official languages. Little by little we will also make our signage fully bilingual."

As he prepares for a well-deserved retirement, William Turnbull hopes that his efforts to implement bilingualism will be pursued by his successor. The foundation is now firm, the message clear and bilingual. Port Royal, Beauséjour, Grand Pré and Memramcook — to mention just a few of the parks — offer a glimpse at the history of Canada in English and in French, to say nothing of courteous staff and magnificent scenery. ■

(Our translation)

***Sylvie Lépine is a journalist with the CBC in Halifax.**

Petro-Canada Should Continue To Be Subject to the Official Languages Act

Speaking in November to members of the House of Commons committee responsible for examining the bill to privatize Petro-Canada, D'Iberville Fortier said, "Bill C-84, intended to begin the process of privatizing Petro-Canada, should contain a provision making the privatized corporation subject to the whole of the Official Languages Act, as was the case with the recent Act to privatize Air Canada."

The Commissioner was particularly concerned about the fact that the bill requires Petro-Canada to guarantee only the right of the public to communicate with it and to obtain services from it in either official language at its head office and at its other outlets, but from the latter only if the company considers the demand for services in the language of the minority to be "significant".

PETRO-CANADA

"As the sole arbiter of its obligations concerning service in both languages, the Corporation will in this respect become both judge and judged," Fortier pointed out, while giving a rather positive outline of Petro-Canada's achievements in the past few years in the area of language.

"While, since its creation in 1976, Petro-Canada, as a federal Crown corporation, has been required to comply with the Official Languages Act, the prospect of its privatization raises questions about its future status in this regard," Fortier noted. He went on to say that, despite notable progress in the area of bilingualism, there were still certain problems within the Corporation. "Even today there still persist differences of opinion about such elementary questions as the use of an accent in French in the word 'Petro' in the Corporation's name," the Commissioner observed.

However, he hastened to add that, with regard to official languages programs, Petro-Canada is currently ahead of several other large oil companies. According to Fortier, these efforts in the area of official languages have even had an influence on its competitors, who have shown more openness to bilingualism in the past few years.

"We may seriously question whether, when privatized and freed from the obligations of the Official Languages Act, Petro-Canada will remain prepared to show all due determination to improve the situation in this regard. Will we now witness a regression?" the Commissioner asked the members of the committee, whom he invited to study a series of proposals aimed at maintaining the gains.

Arguing that to maintain these gains the privatized Corporation should be subject to the whole Official Languages Act, Fortier specified that if this was not the government's intention it should at least make the Corporation subject to all the parts of the Act concerning communications with and services to the public.

"To do otherwise would be to set a dangerous precedent that would gradually be applied to other national institutions and little by little restrict the area of application of the Official Languages Act to a smaller number of institutions," he concluded.

The bill was passed by the House of Commons last December. Unfortunately, it does not take into account the Commissioner's intervention. At the time of writing the bill is at second reading stage in the Senate and has been referred to the energy committee. *C. D.*

(Our translation)

Defending the Future: The Year 1990 at the Office of the Commissioner

In official languages, as in wines, there are vintage years. While it may still be too early to decant 1990, we can already state that it will prove memorable from the vantage point of the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages. It was a year spent almost entirely on the barricades in defense of the objectives of language reform.

Federal performance

As the year began the finishing touches were applied to the Commissioner's Annual Report to Parliament for 1989. It revealed that 80% of federal institutions had taken only feeble notice of the new requirements of the Official Languages Act of 1988. Its tabling in April allowed the Commissioner to deliver his message about the need for reform in a press conference and 36 separate interviews.

The Commissioner and his staff were forced to divert a significant portion of 1990 to efforts designed to pester and prod the government into action in addition to processing 2,690 complaints from the public, conducting 10 audits of federal institutions and five follow-ups and developing positions and policies on an array of problems. His Complaints and Audits Branch prepared three special reports to the Governor in Council on active offer, use of the minority language media and the application of Section 91 of the Act dealing with objective linguistic criteria for staffing positions.

On September 15, the second anniversary of the new Act, the Commissioner noted in a press release that little substantial progress had been made. He announced that our Office's first application had been filed with the Federal Court; it concerned Air Canada's failure to use the French-language minority press systematically. For its part, the Policy Branch played a key role in October in preparing the Commissioner's special report to Parliament on the need for draft regulations on communications and services (see *Language and Society* 33, p. 7). The draft regulations were tabled on November 8. Each of the initiatives brought with it new opportunities to communicate information through the media about the vital importance of language duality.

Language tensions

The mid-winter flurry of petitions in support of unilingualism for some Ontario municipalities presented a different type of challenge to our Office. In more than 30 interviews the Commissioner sought to limit the damage done to relations between English-speakers and French-speakers and to set the record straight on factual matters. Also, the Spring 1990 editorial of *Language and Society* — "Who's Afraid of the Big Bad Wolf?" — was released early. It was widely quoted or reproduced in the press because of the insight it afforded on the nature of the English-only movement. In a debate in the House of Commons on a resolution reaffirming support for language duality during this crisis, the Prime Minister, commenting on the Commissioner's role, stated that he was a "dispassionate, sensitive and objective observer of linguistic matters in this country."

The debate surrounding the Meech Lake Accord brought with it the requirement to point out the very real advantages of Canada's language policy. Editorials in *Language and Society*, and speeches and interviews, explored and developed the theme of language duality in Canada's past and future. These texts were echoed in 23 newspapers with a total circulation of some three million copies. During the year the Commissioner delivered 26 speeches and gave 113 interviews.

Parliamentary committees

The Commissioner regularly appears before Parliamentary committees to provide advice and comment on the impact of new legislation on the status of the official languages. Besides appearing regularly before the Standing Joint Committee on Official Languages on draft regulations and other issues, in 1990 the Commissioner:

- submitted a brief to the Commons committee considering the government's revised broadcasting legislation;
- appeared before the Royal Commission on Electoral Reform;
- appeared before the Charest Committee on the companion resolution to the Meech Lake Accord;
- appeared before the legislative committee examining a bill to privatize Petro-Canada.

Ad mare usque ad mare

The defence of language reform was centred in Ottawa this year but it was also pursued in every region of Canada. Our regional personnel made presentations at a wide variety of events, meeting with over 20,000 members of the general public, students, public servants and members of associations and other groups to explain the intent of the Official Languages Act. Meanwhile, our Communications Branch distributed a wide range of information material to these audiences.

The Commissioner supported these endeavours by visiting all the provinces and territories. He met with leaders of minority associations and parents' groups, often at the time of their annual meetings, as well as with provincial and territorial authorities to discuss the application of Section 23 of the Charter and other issues of concern. He also spoke to the regional directors of key federal institutions and was interviewed by the local press.

(continued on page 35)

The Commissioner's Annual Report 1990

We are experiencing a period that is disturbing in some respects, but one that offers many challenges. The Annual Report 1990, which is scheduled to be tabled in Parliament on April 9, will have novel elements: a descriptive title, well-researched constitutional proposals and a retrospective survey of the progress that has been made, the lessons of the past and precepts for the future.

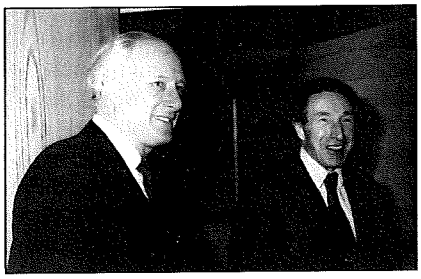
The Morley Project

Applying the Official Languages Act

Pierre Simard

The provision of bilingual services to the public will never be perfect everywhere in Canada. It is always comforting to find, however, that some managers of federal agencies are making efforts to comply with the Official Languages Act and to disseminate its spirit. This is precisely what David Morley, Executive Director of the Canada Employment and Immigration Commission (CEIC) for the Ontario region, is attempting to do.

In 1982 the Treasury Board declared bilingual federal offices in Toronto that provide services to the public. Since then the quality of service has improved greatly. But the Treasury Board's action was not solely responsible for the progress that has been made. The good will of employees has been very important. David Morley is one manager who understands that effectiveness goes beyond the strict limits of administrative obligations. Aware that the active offer of bilingual service is a necessary precondition to service itself, Morley applied the golden rule of the business world and asked: "What are the needs of CEIC clients?"



David Morley and D'Iberville Fortier

This led him to seek the co-operation of our Office in quickly finding means to improve the quality of bilingual services provided to CEIC clients in his province. Quite simply, he decided to take action. He set up a working group whose careful attention, combined with intense consultation within and without the CEIC, produced a report containing, among others, these recommendations for action:

1. preparation of a bilingual service code to set out clearly, for all levels of service, the applicable guidelines and principles of the Official Languages Act and the exact level of bilingual service that each office of the CEIC should be able to offer its clients;

2. holding of information sessions to inform employees of the nature, intent and requirements of the Official Languages Act as they affect the provision of services;

3. a review of bilingual positions and their designated level of linguistic competence in order to rationalize resources to ensure that they truly meet the needs of the clients;

4. creation of a bilingual team in offices with significant demand, mainly in the areas of employment and unemployment insurance; such positions would be directly involved in the provision of service to the public.

Reports are sometimes crammed with good intentions whose implementation may be slow in coming. The intention of the person who orders a study is not the only factor that determines its influence. Aside from objectives, it is necessary to explain to one's employees the intention to change things for the common good and to communicate one's enthusiasm to them.

The authors of a good report note the progress made by an organisation and propose ways of improving its operation within a reasonable period of time. David Morley gave himself a year to effect a change for the better for his staff and their clients. In submitting his report to the Commissioner when he visited Toronto, Morley indicated his desire to work with the staff of OCOL's Ontario regional office. The Commissioner said that he was impressed by the scope and results of the consultations that preceded preparation of the report. Forty-three recommendations arose from proposals made by the employees of various CEIC offices.

Among the important recommendations included in the report was evaluation of the demand for bilingual services, in strict accordance with the spirit and requirements of the 1988 Official Languages Act. Since no one may disregard the Act, it was also recommended that a "code of bilingual services" be developed, adapted to the needs of each office and available in written form to everyone. Managers would be responsible for the provision of the bilingual services referred to in their code.

The Ontario region could have adopted as much of a wait-and-see attitude as others have. Fortunately, aware of the needs of its clientele for bilingual services, David Morley proposed in November 1989 that the question of the quality and availability of the bilingual services offered by the CEIC in Ontario be looked into. Other aspects, such as the staffing process, language training and opportunities for advancement were also examined, as was the impact on staff of the requirement to offer bilingual services to clients.

In addition to taking action on the recommendations made in the report, the CEIC will have to implement future regulations under the Act, only the draft of which has as yet been made public, and that only recently. Nevertheless, it is desirable that managers aware of the importance of linguistic duality show leadership without delay in instilling in government employees the spirit of justice and accountability required to provide bilingual services. Some of the recommendations of the report may, in certain respects, go beyond what is strictly required by the regulations. No matter; the draft regulations are clear: their requirements constitute the rule, but not necessarily the ideal or the best service to clients, which is the objective proposed by Public Service 2000. Such open-mindedness will contribute to the satisfaction of citizens and thus to good administration. ■

(Our translation)

Regional News

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Newfoundland

Radio-Labrador received its licence from the CRTC after three years of work. This French-language community radio station will serve western Labrador and should be on the air in the fall of 1991 with 42 hours of programming a week.

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Prince Edward Island

Summerside Hospital is advertising its first bilingual positions. Of the patients at this hospital, 8.6% are Francophones. A government survey showed that there was a real need for hospital services in French in Charlottetown and Souris.

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Nova Scotia

Université Sainte-Anne is meeting a real need; it has 334 full-time and 1,000 part-time students. As for the Collège de l'Acadie, another step towards its opening has been taken with the appointment by the government of Rhéal Samson as its president.

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New Brunswick

The Lefebvre Monument theatre has received a contribution of $200,000 from Marcel Masse, the federal Minister of Communications. This theatre, dedicated to the survival of the Acadians, will soon host numerous cultural activities.

Moncton is publishing a history, in both official languages for the first time, to mark its 100th anniversary.

Moncton is less generous in terms of municipal services even though 35% of the population is Francophone. Its first language policy, considered unsatisfactory by many, did not allow Francophones to make presentations to the municipal council in French.

Two study commissions are attempting to redefine Acadia in the post-Meech era: the task force on the future of the Acadian community and the New Brunswick Commission on Canadian Federalism.

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Quebec

According to a report published by Canadian Parents for French, Anglophones enrolled in French as a second language (FSL) courses do not learn French well enough to enable them to function in Quebec's official language. The government has therefore decided to grant $2.3 million to FSL programs in order to improve them. Alliance Quebec said it was pleased to see the government taking an interest in FSL instruction in English-language schools. It should be noted that the Department of Education is also going to review the French program in primary and secondary schools because of the poor linguistic performance of students.

Montreal recently issued new guidelines clarifying its language policy in order to obtain its certificate of francisation. These guidelines provide for the publication of information in English and in French, but in separate versions. Such bilingual information will be distributed only in the Notre Dame de Grâce and Côte des Neiges neighbourhoods.

The Gaspé is an area of Quebec where English-language cultural events are rare indeed. A special grant will enable the Committee for Anglophone Social Action to promote cultural activities in some of the smaller communities scattered along the Baie des Chaleurs. An animator has been hired to help local citizens organize events and administer funds.

Huddled along the north shore of the Gulf of Saint Lawrence 15 small English-speaking fishing villages are striving to overcome weather, lack of roads and a strong sense of isolation to form the Coaster's Association. The founding meeting was held February 15 to 17 in Harrington Harbour and included participants from Blanc-Sablon to Natashquan. The concerns of the group include basics such as the need for roads and access to health and social services in their language. A special development grant from the Secretary of State enabled the group to hire its first staff member to organize the event.

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Ontario

The Centre médico-social communautaire de Toronto held its first annual general meeting in October 1990. This Centre now has a team of 20 persons and has served 1,224 people. The Ministry of Health carried out a round of visits in five large cities last fall to encourage students and professionals in the health field to work in the regions. To this end, the Ministry is offering a tax-free bonus of $10,000 a year for the first four years.

Francophones may soon be able to attend two new community colleges if the recommendations of the north and southwest-central committees for the creation of two colleges by September 1992 are followed. The Minister of Colleges and Universities, Richard Allen, pointed out that Francophones should be able to receive first-rate instruction in their own language.

As well, the Association canadienne-française de l'Ontario has published a report claiming that a French-language university in Ontario would be viable, considering that 15,000 Franco-Ontarians are attending university.

In Cornwall another step has been taken toward the creation of a wholly French-language school board: the first French-language public elementary school will open its doors in September 1991. This school will accept pupils from kindergarten to grade 3.

Sault Ste. Marie will host the first congress of the Confederation of Regions party in May. More than 400 delegates are expected to attend.

Hamilton plans to establish a subcommittee on English-language services. Any group with at least 2,500 members will enjoy the same privilege. The motion, presented by the Alliance for the Preservation of English

in Canada, passed easily and without commotion. The municipal council had approved the establishment of a French-language services committee for the Francophone population the previous month.

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Manitoba

An exhibition organized by the Francophone Chambre de commerce de Saint-Boniface attracted nearly 400 business people and 62 exhibitors. The Office of the Commissioner was represented and distributed various publications.

For the second year, Premier Gary Filmon gave a speech to the annual meeting of the Société franco-manitobaine. He announced three initiatives designed to expand French-language services: the establishment of a task force on the French pre-school program, which is to submit its recommendations in April; the creation of a new position in the French-Language Services Secretariat; and the formation of an advisory committee on French-language health services. The committee will advise the government on implementation of the recommendations contained in the Gauthier report, which was made public at the meeting.

A new era may be about to dawn at the municipal level. At the annual meeting of the Union of Manitoba Municipalities the delegates rejected a motion asking that publications (even those of the federal government) distributed in Manitoba be in English only.

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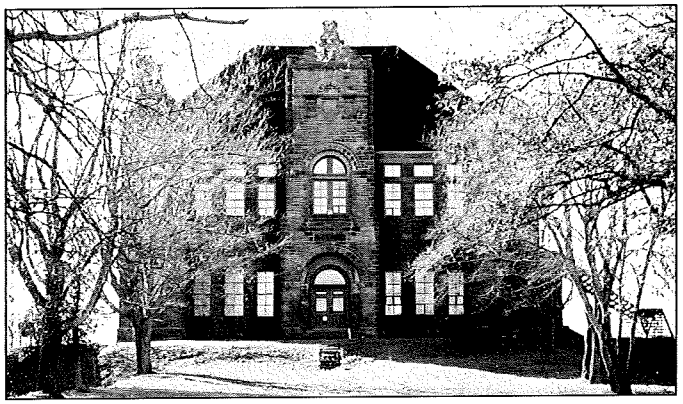
Saskatchewan

An interim committee of school commissioners is examining the possibility of forming a provincial association. The province has 10 school boards to which Francophones are elected. Seven communities have asked to manage their own schools. The implementation committee proposes that a timetable be drawn up, that a new Education Act be adopted by the end of March 1991 and that school board elections take place in May of this year.



Lefebvre Monument

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Alberta

At its annual round table the Association canadienne-française de l'Alberta (ACFA) was given a mandate to negotiate, in co-operation with the Fédération des parents franco-albertains and the Francophonie jeunesse de l'Alberta, a federal-community agreement with the Secretary of State. Two new organizations were created: the Association des juristes de langue française de l'Alberta and the Fédération des aînés francophones.

ACFA has created the Eugène Trottier prize. The first recipient was Robert Robert, who has distinguished himself by his work in bringing together the Francophone and Ukrainian communities in Vegreville and by the restoration of the town cemetery.

The Edmonton Catholic school board has approved the opening of a third French-language school. Students in grades 1 and 2 of the Maurice Lavallée School will move to this new school in southeastern Edmonton. It should be noted that the Alberta Teachers' Association asked again last fall that a task force be established to advise the Minister of Education on the development of a policy recognizing the rights and needs of Franco-Albertans.

The Department of the Secretary of State has indicated that it will assist in funding the first school and community centre in western Canada, to be established in Calgary.

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British Columbia

Employment and Immigration Canada has announced the appointment of a person responsible for French-language activities and labour market analysis for Francophones in British Columbia.

In the municipal elections for school board members APEC representatives were not supported by the public. Not only were they not elected, they saw the election of the first Francophone, Nicole Hennessey, to the Nanaimo school board, where APEC had proposed to eliminate the immersion program.

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Northwest Territories

The coming into force of the provisions of the Official Languages Act concerning the translation of legislation passed in English has been postponed to April 1, 1991. ■

Defending the Future

(continued from page 32)

Everywhere he went in 1990 the Commissioner delivered messages with a common thread: "Linguistic Duality After Meech: Consensus, Continuity and Common Sense" was the title of an address at McGill University and "The Nineties: A Time for Faith and Continued Progress" that of a speech to the annual conference in Halifax of Canadian Parents for French. At the Institut France-Amérique in Paris the Commissioner spoke on "The Recognition of Language Duality: A Trans-Canadian Bridge" and at the general meeting of the Association canadienne-française de l'Ontario on "La communauté franco-ontarienne : progrès, obstacles et vouloir-vivre!"

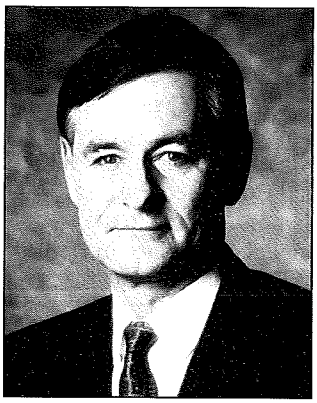
The reasons for faith and confidence in Canada's future in these troubled times are drawn from Canada's incomplete but impressive achievements in the area of official languages. This is one of the great things we have done together. ■

The Linguistic Challenge Facing the Ontario Government

*Benoît Legault**

During the 1990 summer election campaign in Ontario the New Democratic Party said yes to all the demands of the Association canadienne-française de l'Ontario (ACFO). These demands were contained in a questionnaire given to the leaders of the three principal political parties in Ontario. Among other things, the NDP committed itself, if elected, to declaring Ontario officially bilingual.

The surprise of the century in Ontario politics occurred on



Gilles Pouliot

September 6, 1990, with the victory of the New Democrats, who, with 38% of the vote, defeated the Liberals.

Elections come and go, but promises remain, promises difficult to fulfil in the midst of a recession, during an anti-Francophone backlash and at a time when Quebec wishes to redefine its position in the Canadian political landscape.

Gilles Pouliot, Ontario's Minister responsible for Francophone Affairs, nevertheless, did not disavow the NDP election promises when he took up his portfolio. "It is our program; now we must draw up a timetable for it," he said.

Franco-Ontarian militants expect much from this government. So far they have seen some follow-ups on initiatives of the Liberals in education. Among these were procedures to create French-language school boards in the counties of Simcoe (the Penetanguishene area on Georgian Bay) and Prescott-Russell (in eastern Ontario) as well as the real possibility of establishing French-language community colleges in northern and southern Ontario, in addition to the Cité collégiale that already exists in the eastern part of the province. Further, the NDP government might establish an advisory commission to examine all aspects of the creation of a French-language university.

The new Ontario government also intends to innovate in an area particularly dear to it — social services. Gilles Pouliot says, "daycare centres are the first crucial institution linguistically for young Franco-Ontarians. It would be necessary almost to double the number of French-language daycare centres to make them proportional to the French population of Ontario (5%)." Pouliot also said that "special attention will be paid to the illiterate, who are virtually excluded from manpower retraining programs." It is common knowledge that the rate of illiteracy is much higher among Francophones than among other Ontarians.

The French Language Services Act, which came into force on November 19, 1989, guarantees the right to receive services in French from the provincial government in designated regions where Francophones represent at least 10% of the population and in all urban centres with more than 5,000 Francophones.

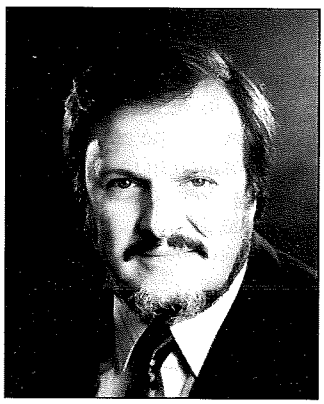
During the election campaign the New Democratic Party maintained that services in French should be provided at all times in every medical emergency room in the province. The NDP also came out in favour of a larger number of designated regions.

Gilles Pouliot said again and again that the French Language Services Act would only be strengthened by the new Ontario government: "Our promises to Francophones were not popular with Anglophones during the election campaign. That did not prevent us from making them. Traditionally, the NDP is a party of principles." Nevertheless, Pouliot did not deny that budget cuts might delay certain improvements in services for Francophones.

His Liberal predecessor, Charles Beer, does not hesitate to say "the NDP government will have to pursue our program of expanding French-language services in the areas of health and community services. It's not very 'sexy' but it's necessary."

Thirty years of study and work in the field of Ontario-Quebec relations enable Charles Beer to make a well-informed prediction about the future of French in Ontario: "Ontario's intention to provide bilingual services is a policy that has been unwavering for 25 years. It will always be in the interest of Quebec and Ontario to ensure that there is a place for the other's language."

For some years the government of Ontario has been making up for lost time in providing services in French, to the extent that its Office of



Rémy Beauregard

Francophone Affairs, which is responsible for the implementation of the French Language Services Act, does not hesitate to promote services in French even before the demand for them becomes evident.

The Executive Director of the Office, Rémy Beauregard, explains: "Francophones are not always aware that services in French are available. We try to provide first-rate services in their language so that it becomes quite natural for Francophones to use them." ■

(Our translation)

***Benoît Legault is the Ontario legislative contributor to *La Presse* (Montreal), *Le Droit* (Ottawa-Hull), *L'Express* (Toronto) and the Agence de presse francophone.**

Being Better Neighbours

ACFA's View of Relations between Canada's Communities

Francophones have lived in Alberta for over 200 years and have contributed to the development of their province and thereby enriched its heritage. According to the Association canadienne-française de l'Alberta (ACFA), every community, particularly now, has a responsibility to contribute to the development not only of its home province but also of Canada as a whole. Against this background, in December it presented its policy on community relations, Pour mieux vivre ensemble [Being Better Neighbours], an outline of which follows.

Canada is made up of three national communities: the aboriginal community, the Anglophone community and the Francophone community. In addition, there are groups of diverse ethnocultural origins that take their place within one of the national communities while retaining the right to preserve their own culture. It is essential to support these ethnocultural groups and thereby enrich the country as a whole.

Pour mieux vivre ensemble is thus intended to define the position of the Franco-Albertan community and its partners within the province and within Canada. The Association also hopes to develop a link between the three national communities and the ethnocultural groups. These groups and communities, taking responsibility for one another's welfare, must achieve mutual understanding if the Canadian social experiment is to succeed.

This will be possible if three categories of rights are recognized: historic rights linked to the contribution made by a people to the development of a country, the moral rights of individuals to associate in communities and pursue their cultural and linguistic development and, constitutional rights. Historic rights and moral rights may become constitutional rights if Canadians so desire.

The existence of multiculturalism within the three national communities should be preserved, taking into account the particular needs of each of them. This requires that the federal and provincial governments provide tangible support for the development of ethnocultural groups, inform new arrivals of the existence of such groups, foster their legitimacy in the eyes of the general population and combat any form of racism directed against them. This reminder to the governments lies at the heart of the policy.

Aboriginal peoples

Governments should promote the development of the various aboriginal communities and acknowledge their moral and historic rights. The aboriginal peoples should enjoy the constitutional right to education in their own languages and governance of their schools. It is a matter of granting them the autonomy they need to ensure the development of their community.

Anglophones and Francophones

Anglophones and Francophones constitute two pluralistic communities consisting of multicultural groups of various origins. These groups have a moral right to receive government support to encourage the transmission of their language and culture of origin to succeeding generations and to promote their full participation in the life of their province as members of the English-speaking or French-speaking national community.

ACFA policy on intercommunity relations provides that:

- ACFA itself must conduct its relations with French-speaking multicultural groups in such a way as to respect their diversity and the contribution they make.
- The government of Alberta must also recognize French-speaking ethnocultural groups and allow them to benefit from the same opportunities as their English-speaking counterparts.
- Francophones in Alberta should be entitled to legal guarantees of services and other government support with the aim of facilitating the development of the Francophone community and encouraging its full participation in the life of the province.
- In addition to informing them of the bilingual character of Canada, the federal and provincial governments should provide immigrants with second-language courses in English and French to enable them to become part of the linguistic community of their choice.
- Each ethnocultural group deserves the support of Francophones in the interest of promoting the concept of a pluralistic society where citizens can participate in the national communities while rejecting the exclusivity that stems from languages and cultures of other origins.

A national vision

At a time when Canada is seriously rethinking itself, ACFA offers a new national vision. By pointing out what the three major national communities have in common it seeks to strengthen the links between them. The Fédération des francophones hors Québec has already expressed interest in presenting this policy, which is novel in several respects, to its member associations in order to stimulate reflection about a new blueprint for society anchored in Canadian reality. *D. A.*

(Our translation)

French Second-Language Enrolments Continue to Climb

Estimates of French second-language enrolments for 1990-91, prepared by Statistics Canada for the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages, show an increase in both core French and immersion enrolments. Figures show French immersion enrolment at 288,000 students, up 8% from last year.

Angéline Martel

Coming Soon

Official Language Minority Education Rights in Canada: From Instruction to Management

Jean-Claude Le Blanc

Since April 17, 1982, Section 23 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms has guaranteed the parents of official language minorities, where numbers warrant, the right to have their children taught in their own language, at the elementary and secondary levels, in facilities provided out of public funds. The Office of the Commissioner has become increasingly concerned, as have many others, about the erosion of one of the essential underpinnings of Canadian linguistic duality due to the slow progress in implementing this guarantee. The Supreme Court of Canada ruled in 1984 that implementation of Section 23 required the adoption of uniform corrective measures designed to remedy the defects of the regimes in force, which the framers of the Constitution manifestly regarded as inadequate at the time the Charter was enacted.

Noting the large number of cases being brought before the courts and viewing their repercussions as needlessly costly in social terms, the Office of the Commissioner wished to promote a complementary and more fruitful approach. It should be noted that the Commissioner's interest in the matter is no recent phenomenon, that he appeared before the legislative committee responsible for making proposals on the wording of Section 23 and that his expertise was acknowledged in many courts, including the Supreme Court. It seemed to us that, sooner or later, most authorities would inevitably have to develop, in consultation with the parties concerned, a provincial or territorial plan to implement these "uniform corrective measures".

Exchanges of views between the principal parties concerned and successive Commissioners during their travels around the country — notably with the ministers of education of most of the provinces and territories and most of the premiers — confirmed in our eyes the need to undertake a general study of the scope of Section 23 and the problems associated with its implementation in Canada. The Office of the Commissioner wished to fill in the gaps resulting from the essentially fragmentary nature of the information and analyses available, to make accessible to all interested parties (provincial and local school officials, parents and minority groups, judges and counsel, researchers and other groups) a set of data and analyses that would facilitate the implementation of the constitutional provisions.

In view of her training, multidisciplinary expertise and marked interest in these problems, we entrusted the direction of this study to Angéline Martel three years ago. We asked her to elucidate the meaning and scope of Section 23; with the assistance of constitutional experts who would do an analysis of the jurisprudence, to describe the current situation with respect to minority education in each jurisdiction; and to identify the elements essential to minority school administration, as well as the various methods of exercising it. The study provides information to guide the activities of those working in this complex and vital area.

We very much hope that the publication of the resulting work will contribute to a more informed exercise of education rights by official language minorities everywhere in Canada.

This reference work, whose initial distribution will necessarily be limited, will be available soon.

For further information, please contact our Communications Branch at (613) 995-0649. ■

(Our translation)

A French Work Environment Checks Assimilation in New Brunswick

*Martin Pitre**

According to economist André Leclerc, evidence shows that the opportunity to work in one's own language is one of the cornerstones of linguistic development. While small and medium-sized Acadian firms tend to operate internally in French, the situation is quite different in large companies controlled by foreign capital, or even by Quebec capital.

The development of primary resources in New Brunswick is carried out by multinationals whose management positions are filled by Anglophones. Whether at Stone-Consolidated, Fraser, Noranda or even SMI, which is owned by Quebec interests, there is little guarantee of being able to work in French.

Were it not for the recent emergence of Acadian economic power concentrated in the small and medium-sized business sector, added to the strength of the Mouvement coopératif acadien and of the federal Public Service, the French-language labour market would amount to little.

The opportunity for an Acadian to obtain professional training in one of the province's many community colleges has opened the way to the creation of a Francophone labour force, as has the fact that hundreds of graduates emerge each year from the University of Moncton armed with a bachelor's or master's degree.

"But we have no Lavalin in Acadia," says André Leclerc, who has for years analysed the economic growth of the region, which is concentrated in sectors he describes as not very dynamic.

The recent announcement of the establishment of two large firms in Moncton on the basis of its linguistic potential, and the subsequent development of a language policy in the city, which was a hotbed of intolerance to bilingualism in the 1970s, has prompted a recognition of the value of linguistic duality in New Brunswick.

In fact, says sociologist and consultant Pierre Poulin, there is good reason to believe that the opportunity to work in French checks assimilation. Dieppe, a suburb of Moncton where many Acadians who work for the CBC, Assumption Insurance or the University of Moncton live, has an assimilation rate of less than 9%. Ensconced in an Anglophone environment, Dieppe differs in its assimilation rate from Caraquet, the cultural capital of Acadia, which is nestled in a practically unilingual Francophone Acadian peninsula and yet has an assimilation rate of around 2.4%. If Caraquet is not doing too badly on the whole, it compares unfavourably with Beresford and Petit-Rocher in the Chaleur region, where the assimilation rate is to the advantage of Acadians. These municipalities near Bathurst, the centre for provincial and federal services, can rely on a large number of public servants able to work in the language of their choice. These figures, Poulin noted, take into account transfers from mother tongue to home language.

In analysing data from the Loyalist stronghold of Saint John, an industrial centre where there is little opportunity to work in French, Poulin found that the assimilation rate is higher among young men than among young women.

The Director General of the Société des Acadiens et Acadiennes du Nouveau-Brunswick, Norbert Roy, advocates legislation to protect the right of association and arbitration in French. Having rejected bilingualism in favour of the principle of dualism (parallel institutions in each language), SAANB relies on Bill 88, which guarantees the equality of the province's two language communities. The provisions of this Act ensure the right to institutions on the basis of mutual respect for language.

"What is certain is that Acadian economic organizations, like the co-operatives, open up the possibility of working in the language of one's choice. Such organizations have a spin-off effect because they show that it is possible to do it," Roy says.

Pierre Poulin, however, is less optimistic as regards small and medium-sized Acadian businesses, especially if they have to deal with Fredericton, where the language of business is English.

"When we speak of small and medium-sized firms owned by Francophones, my study on technicians (architects, engineers) shows that 70% of them work in English. When the province asks for bids for contracts, it is always in English. I know of firms of Francophone architects who say they prefer to hire Anglophone graduates. I remember having a discussion with Premier Frank McKenna, who said to me, 'You are the only one who is fighting,' showing me a letter his office had received from a municipality in the Acadian peninsula that was in English only," Poulin says.

The Director General of the Conseil économique du New Brunswick (CENB) is critical of the provincial government, which, in his view, shows disdain for the Francophone market. It is the exception rather than the rule to find an Acadian employee in the Department of Commerce and Technology in Fredericton.

The provincial government, along with the Quebec and federal governments, works within the international Francophone community, but to a lesser extent than its partners. A study commissioned by the province from the prestigious New York communications firm of Lippincott & Margulies, moreover, places little emphasis on what, in Francophone circles in Fredericton, is regarded as a resource to be developed. The province's natural market, it believes, is New England.

The Director General of CENB, however, says, "I am convinced that it is in New Brunswick's interest to sell its linguistic duality more aggressively."

But, as Pierre Poulin notes, English is the language used in doing business with Fredericton. He points out that, in any event, the business world is not nationalistic, even in Quebec where it took its time in coming to support the independence movement. ■

(Our translation)

***Martin Pitre is a journalist with *L'Acadie Nouvelle*.**

Bilingualism in the Private and Voluntary Sectors

The Department of the Secretary of State is in partnership with non-governmental organizations to enable Canadians to participate in their own official language.

While the whole concept of two official languages, English and French, as an essential aspect of Canadian reality relates mainly to the services and institutions of the federal government, the recognition, use and learning of the two languages must obviously go beyond federal government operations if it is to have any concrete meaning in the daily lives of Canadians. Representatives of the non-governmental sectors of Canadian economic and social life clearly have a role to play. Their enthusiastic and willing involvement is essential if real progress is to be made.

The 1988 Official Languages Act provided an impetus. It gave a specific mandate to the Secretary of State to work, through its Promotion of Official Languages Branch, with the private and voluntary sectors. From the start the idea of a partnership between the government and the non-governmental sector, including a sharing of the costs involved, was warmly welcomed by the latter.

Thus there has been growing interest in the use of the two official languages by large numbers of national, provincial and regional associations and business and professional organizations as well as by a wide variety of voluntary associations across the country. The goal has been to encourage them to provide services in both English and French to their own membership and to the public.

The business of language

A key date in the process of forging an effective partnership between the public and private sectors was October 5, 1988. This marked the start, in Hull, Quebec, of a two-day colloquium — "The Language of Business and the Business of Language" — sponsored jointly by the Secretary of State, the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages and the Canadian Society of Association Executives (CSAE). The Hull meeting followed the publication earlier in the year of a report by a CSAE task force on official languages.

These two events were significant for at least two reasons. They demonstrated the willingness of the private and voluntary sectors to become involved and they resulted in specific suggestions for government action. The essential recommendation, quickly accepted by the government, was for an expansion of the activities of the Secretary of State aimed at encouraging by all possible means, financial or other, the use of both languages in the private and voluntary sectors.

Funding

In terms of direct financing, the programs are of two sorts: aid for specific projects and aid for the implementation of long-term plans. The total annual budget for both is slightly more than $2 million.

In the area of specific projects the size of individual grants varies considerably, depending on the role and the particular needs of the organization. Two of the largest grants in 1990, for $30,000 each, were given for the provision of bilingual services at Montreal's World Film Festival and to support the activities of Arts and the City, an association working with municipalities across the country to develop arts and culture at the local level.

By far the largest number of grants are for much smaller amounts. In total, some 300 organizations share $1 million annually for the provision of documents in English and French and for simultaneous interpretation services at seminars, annual meetings and international gatherings taking place in Canada. The names of groups voluntarily participating in this kind of program read like a survey of Canadian cultural, social and economic life: The Canadian Bar Association, the Welding Institute of Canada, the Alliance of Canadian Travel Associations and the Professional Art Dealers Association of Canada, to name but a few. The Secretary of State has also allotted $1 million to various organizations for long-term projects.

Groups involved in education, health, charity, the arts and culture account for more than half of the funding for long-term programs. Among them in the past few years have been Oxfam Quebec, the Canadian Diabetes Association and the Canadian Wood Council. As well, National Voluntary Organizations is currently completing a general study on the most appropriate methods for the improvement of bilingual services among its 130 member associations.

Financial aid is vital, but it is limited by budgetary constraints and it is far from the only way the government can help. Beyond direct funding, the Secretary of State makes available its own considerable expertise, principally through a small group of official languages consultants who are ready and able to advise and assist non-governmental organizations to identify their needs, plan various activities and develop their own long-term programs.

Other services

The department also provides a considerable range of services, including glossaries of specialized vocabularies, a computerized bilingual data bank and a free phone-in service for terminology, proper names and grammatical queries. It can help direct interested groups to other departments and agencies, such as the Treasury Board and the Public Service Commission, which produce booklets and video tapes on topics ranging from how to chair a bilingual meeting to suggestions on bilingual telephone etiquette.

The Secretary of State is, of course, just one player in the official languages field; but it is an important player, and one with increasingly close relations with the private and voluntary sectors. It is encouraging to note, branch officials say, that despite recent claims of a backlash there has been, in the past few years, a steady increase in requests for all sorts of aid from groups wanting to increase their capacity to operate in both English and French. *T. S.*