Number 36, Fall 1991

LANGUAGE AND SOCIETY

Victor Goldbloom nommé commissaire aux langues

Victor Goldbloom succède à D'Iberville Fortier

Victor Goldbloom devient commissaire aux langues officielles

Ottawa nominates languages watchdog

Bilingualism back on track

Quebecker tapped for language post

MPs choose Goldbloom for languages post

Victor Goldbloom veut d'abord calmer les esprits au pays

Ottawa nominates languages watchdog

THE NEW COMMISSIONER

The Linguistic Minorities Reconsider Their Strategy

EYE ON IMMERSION
Second-Language Learning: When To Begin?

WINNIPEG: Has the Vision Blurred?

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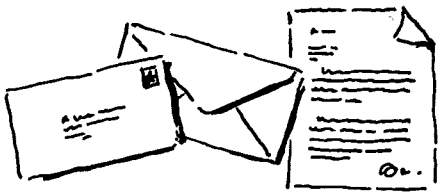

To D'Iberville Fortier

Just a few words from a reader in the West to thank you for your recent reflections on the national debate about official bilingualism.

Your critical analysis of the myths underlying certain aspects of this debate may be a source of inspiration to our federal and provincial politicians who may be seduced by rather simplistic remedies that are dangerous in the present context. You have correctly identified one of these "false solutions", namely, handing over to the provinces the responsibility for language and culture. In a number of provinces, and especially in the West, this might mean the disappearance of the linguistic protections granted to the official language minorities.

The competent authorities will have to recognize the danger of sacrificing a dualistic vision of Canada for a rather fragile political peace. Is it realistic to suppose that a country that can no longer defend fundamental linguistic rights will provide better protection for the other rights entrenched in the Charter?

I thank you for your inspirational words and congratulate you on your tangible contributions over the past seven years to the advancement of language rights throughout Canada.

Mary T. Moreau
Edmonton, Alberta

Writing about Minorities

I have just finished reading your very interesting account of the linguistic situation in Canada.

I am surprised, however, at your choice of Charles Barker as the author of a (good) analysis (a little outdated) of the situation of Francophone minorities. I react very badly to an article about us and our language, by an Anglophone, that speaks of "them" and "their language". With all due respect, there are some 15 French-speaking journalists who belong to our minority who could have done as well or better. The magazine that claims to defend our interests seems to be unaware of the very existence of the brilliant political analyst Jacqueline Mallet, the pride of the Fédération des Franco-Colombiens.

Naturally, I am pleased to read an article — rare in your publication — by my colleague from Prince Edward Island, Jacinthe Laforest. However, you will not succeed in convincing us of your interest in the thousands of Francophones who do not have the good fortune to live in Ontario or Quebec by publishing articles by an Anglophone colleague from Alberta.

When will we see an article from or about Saint Boniface or Whitehorse? When correspondence or a feature article signed *l'Eau vive* or (why not?) *Le Soleil de Colombie*?

N. Barbour
Vancouver

Social and Ethnic Tolerance

It was with consternation that I read the remarks of Mr. Ronald McLaren and Professor John E. Trent in *Language and Society* 35 (Summer 1991). Mr. McLaren, who describes himself as an "eighth generation Canadian of Scottish-French heritage", sees multiculturalism as a threat to the "bilingual duality" of Canada. Professor Trent evokes a so-called "Integration Principle" whereby new Canadians are expected to give up their linguistic heritage in the interests of the power struggle between English and French speakers.

Both writers seem to ignore the realities of contemporary Canada to which many people have contributed. What is wrong with admitting that English is the dominant language of the country while French should be cultivated as the second most important language and other languages spoken by millions of new Canadians (e.g., Italian in Toronto and Hamilton, German in the central provinces) be protected? *All* of these people have been settlers in the sense that they have built anew rather than fill niches that were there before they arrived. Canada should continue to be a model of social and ethnic tolerance rather than become embroiled in xenophobic proclamations of English against French and both against everyone else.

I enjoy reading *Language and Society* very much. It keeps me abreast of developments in vital issues of language in Canada.

Robert J. Di Pietro
Professor of Linguistics
University of Delaware
Newark, Delaware

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LANGUAGE AND SOCIETY

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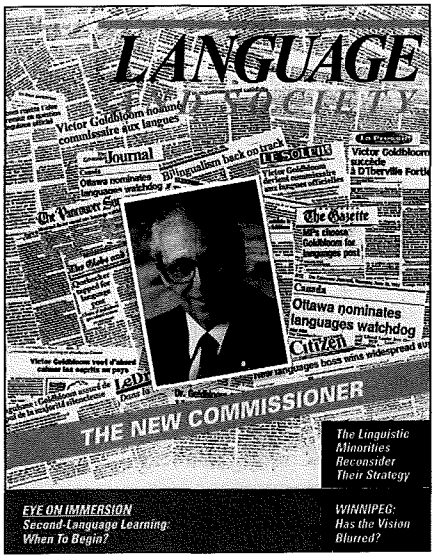

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The federal government chose Victor C. Goldbloom to ease tensions and encourage dialogue.

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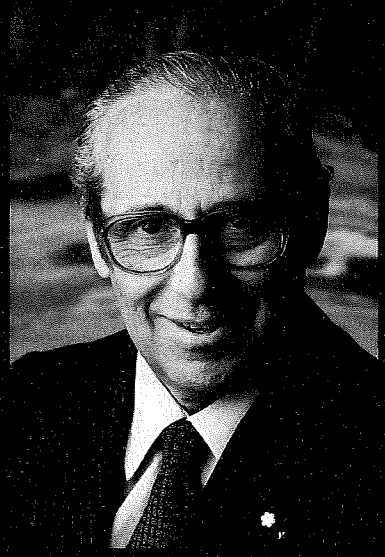
COMMISSIONER OF OFFICIAL LANGUAGES
COMMISSAIRE AUX LANGUES OFFICIELLES

The New Commissioner



A PATIENT BUILDER

Claude Savoie

One day, in northern Italy, a passerby stopped at a construction site. He asked one of the workmen, "What are you doing?" The workman replied without hesitation: "I'm laying a stone, covering it with mortar and laying another stone on top of it." A second workman's spontaneous answer to the same question was, "I'm erecting a cathedral."

Victor Goldbloom is a little like the second workman — a man who looks at the whole picture, a man of vision. He takes a comprehensive approach to the work that has to be done and everything he does is a step toward completing the job.

The life of the new Commissioner of Official Languages consists of a series of commitments in a variety of fields: pediatrics, university teaching, politics, the environment, race relations and interdenominational relations. Each of these commitments, however, is really just one step in the task of building human relations.

Medicine is a field that calls for attentiveness, precision and dedication. Victor Goldbloom practised as a pediatrician and taught pediatrics for many years before turning to public life. "You really don't just look after a child," he says. "You help him or her to grow healthy and to develop as a human being within a family."

Victor Goldbloom cultivates the art of explaining his hopes and convictions and sharing them with others. As President and Chief Executive Officer of the Canadian Council of Christians and Jews from 1979 to 1987 and President of the International Council of Christians and Jews from 1982 to 1990, he was able to put into practice Diderot's observation that "in order to be able to carry on a dialogue, you must listen to other people and commune with yourself often."

He became Quebec's first minister of the environment in 1970 and, in this capacity, was called on to build bridges and contribute to a sustained discussion likely to generate social action.

In recognition of his leadership qualities, the federal government has called on his services at the international level. He was chosen as a delegate to the United Nations Conference on the Environment in Stockholm in 1972, where he brought honour to Canada. As a result of that experience he represented Canada at the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements in Vancouver in 1976.

When I met the Commissioner a few days after his appointment so that I could gain a first impression for readers of *Language and Society*, I discovered a courteous man with a co-operative attitude, who likes to interact with people. You don't have a discussion with him — you chat.

In the person of Victor Goldbloom, the government of Canada chose experience in human and interpersonal relations. Prime Minister Brian Mulroney has acknowledged that the government was looking for a person with a special appreciation of the situation of linguistic minorities, a person with an innate understanding of the real issues. "Victor Goldbloom has a generous vision of the country, and that's important," he said.

Now, at a time when Canada is in the throes of a crisis of language policy and an emotional debate about the place of English and French, polarization is becoming more pronounced and regional divisions are surfacing. The debate about language policy is therefore part of the debate about constitutional policy.

Against this background, the mandate of the Commissioner of Official Languages is becoming increasingly sensitive. The government of Canada had to choose a Commissioner who could alleviate tensions, approach language issues objectively and positively, and at the same time channel emotions towards the quest for improved understanding. "I'm an optimist, and I'd like my optimism to be contagious — especially since pessimism usually brings about the bad result that is feared."

The "uncompromising integrity" of the new Commissioner has been applauded by one and all. Even the opponents of official bilingualism respect the man's intellectual honesty and recognize his courage, determination and experience in human relations.

A person of dedication and conviction, Dr. Goldbloom plans to give full rein to his role of ombudsman. "The statutes and regulations are there to be complied with and I am planning to protect the interests of minority communities diligently." While acknowledging the importance of the law, the Commissioner is convinced in particular of the need to educate people. "I'd like the prospects for minorities to improve because the majorities want them to."

The Commissioner, who is an opera singer and lover of great music, tries to find harmony even in political life. "You can't build a country when there is conflict. Someone has to take the sting out of confrontations and mollify feelings. I'll do all I can in this respect."

During his mandate, Dr. Goldbloom hopes to portray linguistic duality as a source of enrichment for Canada, to stimulate the desire for harmony and to rekindle the habit of mutual respect. "I know that inside most Canadians there's a positive attitude, and I hope to make it stronger." ■

A New Constitution: Is Language Central?

*Peter Cowan**

Is language potentially so volatile an issue — especially in English-speaking Canada — that it could undermine current constitutional reform efforts?

At a time when new constitutional negotiations are in the embryonic stage, no one wants any kind of political explosion.

However, some seasoned observers think that language will have to be addressed in the current round of constitutional negotiations. But they think that a few key issues should be settled first so that language does not halt progress at the outset.

There is an equally compelling argument that says language does not have to become an issue.

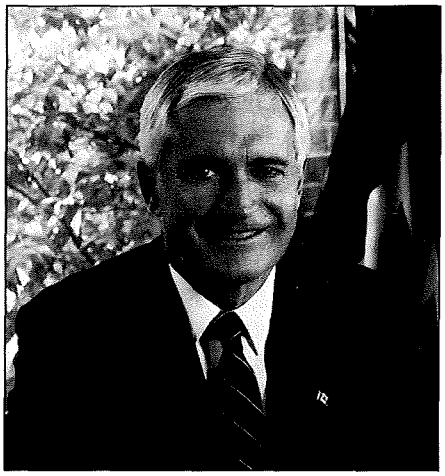
Passionate language

Former prime minister John Turner recognizes that language stirs passions but says it simply should be ignored in the current round.

Turner identifies four issues pertinent to the current round:

- maintaining a meaningful role for the federal government while eliminating duplication of services and other wasteful practices among the central and provincial governments;
- the "unique character or distinctness" of Quebec within Canada;
- Senate reform, which is a vital tool to ensuring greater influence for Western Canada in national decision-making;
- recognizing the "inherent constitutional rights of our aboriginal peoples."

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



John Turner

Turner points out that language guarantees are already contained in the Constitution. Thus, trying to modify existing rights would mean amending the Constitution in an especially emotional subject area, something Turner thinks would be "highly extreme in the current context."

Conceding that language will always be debated in Canada, Turner says: "It is the distinctness of Quebec within Confederation that is, I hope, the issue that has to be resolved and not language. Frankly, Quebec does not give too much notice to bilingualism across the rest of the country. They are concerned about maintaining Quebec as the foyer of a distinct French-speaking society. So there is no reason that language ought to be brought into this."

Constitutional reform

But the view that language could undermine constitutional reform is held by some Members of Parliament and political scientists. Among these are two key players from the Special Joint Parliamentary Committee on the Process for Amending the Constitution of Canada, widely known as the Beaudoin-Edwards committee.

Jim Edwards, Progressive Conservative MP for Edmonton Southwest, was co-chairman of the committee with Senator Gerald Beaudoin, a constitutional expert. Edwards says language must be high on the reform agenda, but not at the top of the list. He argues that language is so emotional it is a potential "deal-breaker". So, he suggests, there should be agreement on some other issues before language is tackled.

Lynn Hunter, New Democratic MP for Saanich-Gulf Islands, who believes that language has many people in Western Canada upset, says Edwards' approach is "a good strategic suggestion."

Laval University political scientist Vincent Lemieux believes governments, recognizing the volatility of language, have tried to push it to the back burner because the country is in "a very delicate period" as it tries to build a new constitutional consensus.

"At this time, I think that there is an attempt to cool off the language issue because it is obvious that if we had a new crisis in the area of language, it would risk bringing down the fragile structure that we are trying to put up," says Lemieux.

Lemieux's view is shared in Western Canada where Geoff Lambert, a political scientist at the University of Manitoba, warns that westerners are more concerned with such issues as Senate reform, division of powers and aboriginal rights.

Lambert, who was an ardent supporter of the defunct Meech Lake Accord, says that in the wake of the agreement's failure trying to expand bilingualism would be "provocative".

But Franco-Ontarian Jean-Robert Gauthier, the Liberal MP for Ottawa-Vanier and an advocate of rights for official language minorities, says language must be part of early constitutional talks to determine the kind of society Canadians want. He considers

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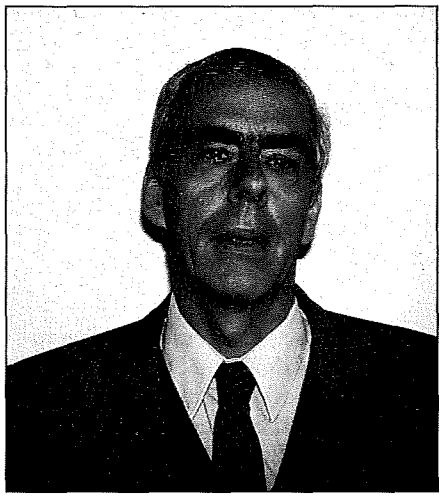

Vincent Lemieux

issues like division of powers the "plumbing" of constitutional reform.

"It is essential that we agree on a blueprint for our society that recognizes the collective rights of minorities, be they English-speaking in Quebec or French-speaking outside Quebec," says Gauthier.

Citizens' Forum

The passions aroused by official bilingualism are intense among some segments of English-speaking Canada and, although governments may not be talking it up, it tears at the national fabric.

Feelings about language were highlighted in the report of the Citizen's Forum on Canada's Future, which suggested an "independent review of the application of official language policy is badly needed with a view to ensuring that it is fair and sensible."

Bill 178

The report says that federal official language policy was a big concern for forum participants, "especially outside Quebec." It echoed a widely held conviction that official bilingualism is too costly and cites Bill 178, Quebec's controversial signage law, as symbolizing a rejection of two decades of official bilingualism. Bill 178 is also perceived as being inconsistent with respect for individual rights.

Turner says Bill 178 "contaminated" efforts to ensure acceptance of the Meech Lake Accord by hardening attitudes to the distinct society clause.

Hunter says the sign law is raised "constantly" by British Columbians, who think that they have been "generous and fair-minded" and wonder why Quebec cannot be the same. She thinks Bill 178 was "a political blunder."

Ronald Duhamel, Liberal MP for St. Boniface, a Franco-Manitoban who served on the Beaudoin-Edwards committee, says Bill 178 was " a very nasty piece of legislation" that allowed language hardliners to argue against extension of rights for French-speaking minorities.

Bilingualism's cost

Duhamel and Hunter both hear plenty of criticism about the cost of official bilingualism.

Hunter says there is a "perception" that too much is spent on official bilingualism. It is a perception that has helped the Reform Party attract voters in the West. And, she suggests, that may be why the government is trying to keep a low profile on language.

Either government must cut back on language spending or "do a good PR job" to explain why it is necessary, says Hunter.

Duhamel hears baseless claims that bilingualism costs billions annually. People who make such claims, he says, are worried about the deficit and their own economic security.

"I often meet people who say, 'If we didn't have this [bilingualism] all of a sudden our problems would be gone'," he says.

In his 1990 Annual Report former Commissioner of Official Languages D'Iberville Fortier estimated the real cost official language policy at $626 million annually, of which about $250 million goes to the provinces.

Official language minorities themselves feel threatened.

The Beaudoin-Edwards committee heard from representatives of English-speaking Quebecers and French-speaking Canadians outside Quebec who want their rights constitutionally strengthened.

Priorities

Sometimes when language seems to be furthest from people's minds, it may still colour attitudes.

Jim Edwards says that language is not less of an issue in the minds of many people, it is simply "overtaken in their constellation of priorities" by such matters as economic well-being. Occasionally, this can lead to a "perverse backlinkage" whereby those who fear economic insecurity may be angered by spending for such items as foreign aid or official language policy.

Geoff Lambert agrees that there is little focus on language rights because people are preoccupied with jobs and the Goods and Services Tax.

"But," he warns, "if the federal government tried to raise the profile of language, the passions would rise. I think that the best thing that the government can do is leave it alone and try and get some constitutional accommodations."

Compulsory bilingualism?

There is a view that more should be done to make people understand that bilingualism means institutional bilingualism.

Turner says it is important that the point be made that there is no requirement for "compulsory individual bilingualism." Turner — whose political career spans the period from the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and

Photo: F.R. Leclair, Ottawa

Jean-Robert Gauthier

Biculturalism to the present and who served in the governments that brought in and expanded bilingualism — says institutional bilingualism means simply that Canadians must be able to deal with the federal government in the official language of their choice and be able to work for it in English or French.

Gauthier says Canadians should stop thinking of Canada as a bilingual country and start thinking of it as one "with two official languages."

"It's important. It is necessary to distinguish between a bilingual country and one with two official languages. It's not the same thing. When people understand that, they accept it a little more readily," says Gauthier.

And although language is a problem, many Canadians are much more comfortable with official bilingualism than they were 10 years ago, according to Turner.

Language rights are constitutionally entrenched.

The cereal box syndrome

A similar view is held by Ross Reid, Progressive Conservative MP for St. John's East, who says that Canadians have outgrown "the cereal box syndrome".

Reid and Turner both cite the huge demand for immersion French among English-speaking Canadians as examples of good will.

Turner says that in his riding of Vancouver Quadra he sends out his quarterly mailing to constituents with everything in both languages and only hears complaints "from the odd kook".

Duhamel says many young people recognize that in an age of business globalization, bilingualism is an advantage while unilingualism "would limit our scope and our potential."

Maintaining rights

And while Duhamel recognizes that certain language rights are constitutionally entrenched, there is a danger that official language minorities could lose ground. He warns that if a program is removed or cancelled people rarely look beyond costs to the social and human ramifications.

In the end, says Duhamel, describing one of the central challenges of drafting a constitution, a country is built by "maintaining rights and building upon those rights." ■

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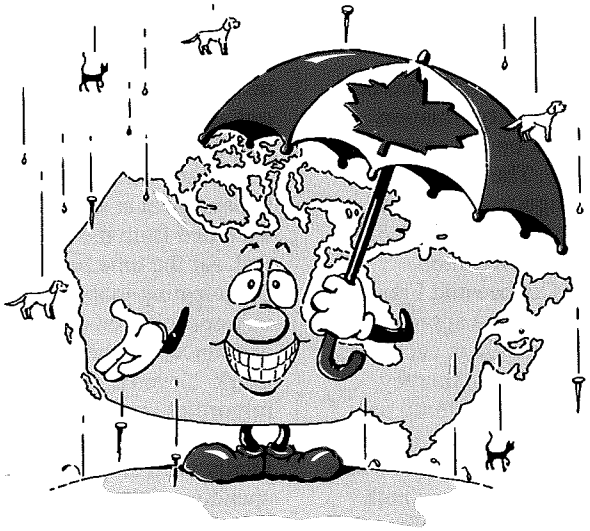

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The Linguistic Minorities Reconsider Their Strategy

*Brigitte Morissette**

Affirmation, partnership, participation: these are the words that sum up the prevailing mood of the linguistic minority communities, both the Francophone minority community in Canada and its Anglophone counterpart in Quebec. Having put behind them the failure of the Meech Lake Accord, which they had supported only reluctantly, the Francophone communities outside Quebec are regaining their self-confidence and are attempting to join forces to define a common position on the Constitution. Alliance Quebec, the voice of the Anglophone community in Quebec, reached an even greater awareness of the community's minority situation during its conference on the occasion of its 10th anniversary. The association spoke with more vigour, and, as one editorialist remarked, with a dash of pride and collective affirmation.

Anglophones in Quebec and Francophones outside Quebec — approximately one million people in each case — have even renewed ties, thereby affirming their common desire to participate in a future constitutional round. Amazing! This alliance obviously stems from an equal determination on both their parts to ensure that the rights of linguistic minority groups are written into the Constitution. Let's be honest: both communities have discovered that there are stumbling blocks — a situation to which Quebec is no stranger. Recent professions of faith in the federalist system by Francophone associations and the threat by Alliance Quebec to start its own quiet revolution seem to indicate bitterness and resentment about the indifference of the Quebec government. Both groups agree that the government is to be reproached for this attitude.

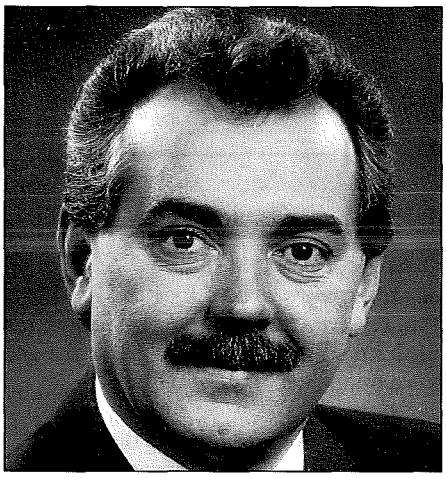
***Brigitte Morissette is a freelance journalist.**

There, however, ends the common ground between the Anglophones who, with wounded pride, are threatening to start a linguistic rebellion in Quebec and the new breed of Francophones outside Quebec who are proclaiming their faith in a centralized but renewed federalism. Franco-Canadians, by identifying themselves henceforth as the Fédération des communautés francophones et acadienne du Canada, are signalling less a state of mind than a new will to contemplate the future calmly and to prepare for it.

Francophones outside Quebec were greatly disappointed to discover that the report of the Bélanger-Campeau Commission, to which they had made numerous submissions, statements and recommendations, contained only 21 lines about them. Even greater was their disappointment at seeing themselves excluded from the Spicer Commission and, for the time being at least, from participating in the formal or parliamentary consultation on the Constitution, as announced by the Right Honourable Joe Clark. Nevertheless, Francophone minorities are making vigorous demands for the increased support that they so vitally need and the retention of federal spending authority. Their demands are based on the fear that the provinces will be less — or not at all — inclined to provide the same kind of funding for Francophone education and culture.

Constitutional debate: A new element

Shortly after the June convention of the Fédération des communautés francophones et acadienne du Canada, Raymond Bisson, its new president, stated that "people want to identify themselves by what they are, not by what they are not. Our new name stands for a profession of faith in decentralized federalism. Quebec has a place in our Fédération. By taking a new name we wish to convey the message that Acadians and Francophones in other regions can also play a leading role. My grandfather is buried in Manitoba and I am proud to be a Franco-Manitoban. This message also goes for Anglophones: yes, la francophonie is alive and well in Manitoba, and in other parts of Canada. We still believe, though, that close ties must be forged with Quebec.



Raymond Bisson

"There is a new element in the constitutional debate, an element of which this Franco-Manitoban is particularly well aware: the claims of the aboriginal people, with whom Francophones share the experience and the conditions that go hand in hand with membership in a minority community.

"The president of the Fédération told us that the lesson to be drawn from the failure of Meech Lake is that Canadians do not know each other very well. Because of this, there has been a total consensus that the status quo is collapsing, a belief which, in turn, has caused a general feeling of malaise. We must rebuild Confederation, and we want to participate directly and actively in this task. We have much to contribute."

The Francophone and Acadian communities began their reflections about the constitutional question in a study paper

— *Dessein 2000* — the objective of which was to strengthen la francophonie in Canada. The paper, which was the subject of detailed discussions, as seen in Ottawa at the Fédération's last convention in June, gave rise to a few key ideas. Among these were proposals that the communities take responsibility for their own development, that networks be created reflecting their language and culture, and that cultural, linguistic, educational and technical alliances be established at the national and international levels. In short, the goal is to harmonize linguistic duality and social pluralism.

Yvon Fontaine, chairman of the policy committee, summarized a few of the communities' main political demands: guaranteed representation in the Senate; a stronger presence in the House of Commons through some form of proportional representation; guaranteed consultation regarding any constitutional amendments; autonomy for aboriginal people and greater freedom of action for Francophone communities.

According to the spokesmen for one million Francophones, those who are responsible for Canadian duality in all parts of the country, neither a neutral nor a passive approach is acceptable today.

Ontario: Bilingualism must wait

The president of the Association canadienne-française de l'Ontario (ACFO), Jean Tanguay, welcomed the election of Premier Bob Rae, giving him high marks. Had the New Democratic Party not promoted official recognition of French in Ontario in the legislature? After the previous government adopted Bill 8 endorsing the bilingualization of public services in 22 regions with a high density of Francophones, this seemed to be a logical step towards bilingualism. Today, Tanguay, who is a professor and geographer, cannot find words strong enough to denounce what he calls the indifference of the government and some senior Ontario public servants.

The application of Bill 8 has not fully lived up to its promise. It does not appear to be a priority to establish an office for a language ombudsman, although this mechanism is essential. Progress in the field of education is slow. A number of French-language school boards have not yet been created and the framework has not yet been established. The creation of a network of colleges, which is essential if Franco-Ontarians are to be well served, has been unduly delayed.

In the wake of the success of the first college in the network, Cité collégiale in Ottawa, where enrolment has greatly surpassed the numbers forecast, ACFO became stronger in its determination to win for Franco-Ontarians the right to manage all their own educational institutions, from kindergarten to university. The association is seeking a commitment from the Ontario government to proceed in this direction.

The creation of the Silipo committee in the aftermath of Meech Lake has already resulted in some 600 briefs. One-third of them are from the Franco-Ontarian milieu, which is an indication of the deep-seated desire and the capacity of the Franco-Ontarian community to participate in federal restructuring.

At the Francophone Summit, which was held last June in Toronto, approximately 500 Franco-Ontarians and representatives of various governments demonstrated that la francophonie is alive and well.

Franco-Ontarians have developed a five-year action plan based on some 100 proposals. The plan is to be made public this fall.

Integration of the Atlantic Provinces

The Francophones of New Brunswick, who account for one-third of the province's population, have attained numerical stability. In the early 1960s students were still using English-language texts in schools administered in English by school boards that, with few exceptions, consisted of an Anglophone majority. Today the Acadians manage a complete educational system ranging from kindergarten to the deputy minister of education and including a network of colleges and universities. Their demolinguistic strength had something to do with this feat. After an endless number of translations the 250,000 Francophones of New Brunswick have published their own school and university texts in French. Some authors have even had the honour of having their work translated into English! The University of Moncton has had its own institute for common law in the French language for 10 years, the first university to have such a program.

The Société des Acadiens et Acadiennes du Nouveau-Brunswick is preparing to consult the population to find out

Roger Ouellette

which of the following options they prefer: annexation to Quebec, creation of an Acadian province, a dual administration, the status quo or community option. The last option consists of an intermediate level between the provincial and municipal governments, which would have authority in areas such as education and culture. It would be incorporated into the series of homogeneous institutions created in recent years and harmonize well with regionalization.

One-third of New Brunswick's ministers are Francophones, as are one-third of the members of the Legislative Assembly. Michel Bastarache, a constitutionalist who is today president and chief executive officer of Assomption Vie, nevertheless believes that the government still has an important task to carry out: the adoption of more equitable linguistic policies, particularly in the Public Service.

On another front, Professor Roger Ouellette, president of the Société nationale des Acadiens, has stated that economic integration represents a challenge for all the Acadians of the Maritimes. "The boundaries are crumbling before us," he says. "Let's take this opportunity to develop common economic strategies, as has already been done in the case of Tours Acadie in Prince Edward Island and the Centre du tourisme acadien in New Brunswick."

According to Professor Ouellette, Quebec's aspirations to sovereignty are a primary cause of concern, but they are also a challenge that must be met. There has been close co-operation between

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Robert Keaton

Quebecers and Acadians in the past, as exemplified by the classical colleges and the hospitals founded with the support of Quebec religious communities.

In midst of the acrimonious discussions that have sometimes taken place in New Brunswick in its march towards equality for the official languages, Francophones had another small victory this year in the form of an amendment ensuring that all government boards with quasi-judicial powers (permits, examinations and so forth) will include bilingual public servants.

New Brunswick's Acadians continue, however, to demand that Bill 88 be entrenched in the Constitution. This demand is being made with ever-greater intensity, as is their demand for the establishment of better and more complete bilingual medical services.

"We must urge the government of New Brunswick to institute more equitable linguistic policies," says Michel Bastarache. "However, we have accomplished the most important things."

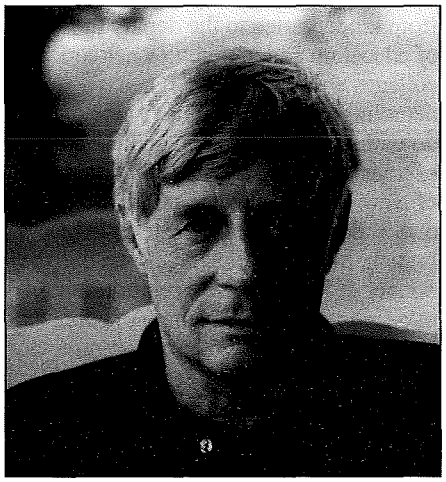
Alliance Quebec awakens

Improved access to the Public Service for Anglophones at both the federal and provincial levels is one of the demands expressed recently with new determination by Alliance Quebec. However, the primary concern of its president, re-elected last June, is the decline in the number of students in Anglophone schools in Quebec compared with the increased enrolment in Francophone schools. Robert Keaton believes that if the 14,000 children of immigrants who want to have their children educated in English were allowed to attend English schools only 1% of enrolment in French schools would be affected. Such a transfer would enable Anglophone institutions — based on Alliance Quebec calculations — to increase enrolment by 14%.

This proposal has elicited a strong reaction in Quebec. The Charter of the French Language (Bill 101), which was adopted in 1976, was intended specifically to restrict access to English schools for families who are not Anglophone. However, political and labour leaders, as well as Francophone editorialists, have been very receptive to the alarm sounded by the new chairman of Alliance Quebec's board of directors, Reed Scowan, regarding the loss of young Anglophone talent. Daniel Johnson, Minister Responsible for the Public Service, hastened to promise measures to keep English-speaking university graduates in Quebec, thereby checking an exodus that would be unfortunate for both Quebec City and Montreal.

However, Scowan, a former member of the National Assembly and the official representative of Quebec in London, shocked his former colleagues in the Quebec government — and reawakened fears of a new language war — when he called for the Anglophone community in Quebec to demand to be served in English and proposed the anglicization of immigrants. While the Francophone press concluded that Alliance Quebec had been radicalized, the association's titular president, Robert Keaton, restored stability by issuing a new appeal for dialogue and highlighting the need to rebuild the bridges between the communities. ■

(Our translation)



Reed Scowan

Preparing Children for Tomorrow's World Is Conference Focus

The 15th Annual Conference of Canadian Parents for French will be held October 17-19, 1991, at the Explorer Hotel in Yellowknife, Northwest Territories. The theme of the conference will be "Language: The Key to Understanding — Preparing Today's Child for Tomorrow's World". Keynote speaker will be the new Commissioner of Official Languages, Victor C. Goldbloom.

Pat Brehaut of Sherwood Park, Alberta, president of CPF, said, "Despite the continuing debates about official bilingualism, we hold firm to our belief that languages are a decided benefit for our children. French will always be a language of great value to our children in Canada, to say nothing of French as a world language. This conference is planned to help our members examine and support ways by which our children learn French."

Some 100 members are expected to attend the conference to discuss French language education subjects such as "Core and Immersion French Working Together"; "Involving Core French Students in Out-of-School French Events and Activities"; "French in Junior and Secondary School."

Canadian Parents for French is the 18,000 member network of volunteers situated all across Canada whose primary focus is to create and promote opportunities for young Canadians to learn and use French as a second language.

A Bijuridical and Bilingual Canada on the World Stage

*Anne-Marie Trahan**

These lines were written as I returned from a meeting of the legal co-operation steering committee of the Council of Europe. During this meeting, Professor Luigi Ferrari-Bravo, the head of the legal service in the Italian Foreign Ministry, to whom I had given copies of the vocabularies of common law property law in French and the dictionaries of private law published under the auspices of the National Program for the Integration of the Two Official Languages in the Administration of Justice, told me that these were unique, valuable and above all very useful works, and that only Canada could have produced them. Coming from such an authority in international law as Professor Ferrari-Bravo, this statement carried great weight. I therefore wanted to share with you the pride I felt in hearing it.

Over the years, when I was in private practice as well as since I have been with the federal government, I have attended many international conferences, mainly in the field of law. I very quickly became aware how important it was to know both languages, and that to be a civil lawyer in a context of common law could be an asset. Since I have been with the Department of Justice, and especially since guiding the destinies of the Program for the Integration of the Two Official Languages, I have been aware in a very tangible way of the extraordinary role that Canada, as a bilingual and bijuridical country, can play on the world stage.

We are all aware of the respect enjoyed by our country nearly everywhere in the world. Those of us who have travelled, either for business or pleasure, can testify how faces light up and smiles appear when we tell people we are from Canada. In some countries, such as the Netherlands, people of a certain age recount, with emotion, their memories of the Canadian soldiers who liberated them at the end of the Second World War.

What may be less well known is the unique role that we play (and will, I hope, play even more in the future) in forums in which international instruments are developed, especially those in the area of private international law. In such bodies, discussions and confrontations take place not between countries of the North and the South, or formerly(!) those of East and West, but rather between countries with different systems of law: civil law, common law, even Islamic law in some cases. And, make no mistake, some of these discussions can be very lively — for example, those that took place on contract development (in written form in common law; orally in civil law) at the United Nations' diplomatic conference that adopted the Convention on Contracts for the International Sale of Goods in 1980, or those at the same conference on the payment of interest plus damages for failure to fulfil a contract.

In 1987, when I had been with the Department for over a year, I headed the Canadian delegation at the annual session of UNCITRAL (the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law), which had prepared the work of the diplomatic conference to which I referred above. On that occasion, as a Canadian jurist I was able to help resolve an impasse resulting from a problem of language and law. On my arrival the delegates were putting the finishing touches to more than 15 years of work in the area of international bills of exchange and international money orders. During all these years we had been represented by an eminent Toronto lawyer, Bradley Crawford, the great Canadian specialist in the law of bills of exchange. It was he who had revised Falconbridge's book, the bible on the subject. It was not for me to intervene in this area. Nevertheless, I had read the working documents — the French version, naturally. The concepts I had learned 20 years earlier quickly came back to me and I managed to understand everything. However, the whole concept of the guarantee — guarantee and aval — was not very clear to me. After Mr. Crawford explained the concept to me, I came to the conclusion that the terms used to date in the French version were not the right ones. Mr. Crawford said he agreed with me, but added that no one had yet been able to convince the French. After discussing the matter further with him, I intervened. This is how Mr. Crawford described my intervention, in October 1989, at the Department's seventh symposium on international law:

> There is one further wrinkle. In the Commission we call this the "Trahan amendment", because the discussions were going virtually nowhere until Anne-Marie Trahan leapt in the fray and began to lecture the whole assembled body of UNCITRAL delegates on the usage of French and English in Canada and how to say what you mean in both languages sequentially!
>
> The Trahan amendment distinguishes between forms of undertaking by third parties that may guarantee the instrument, but not as an aval — not as forcefully as an aval. There is a current practice in New York and elsewhere of marking instruments "guaranteed", "payment guaranteed", "collection guaranteed", and so on. Those words will not carry the full weight of the aval under the Convention. They are a guarantee, but there are more defences available to a person who puts those words on a bill. It is only where the word used is "aval", or where the aval is given by a Bank that you have the absolutely rock firm, hell or high water consequences of the aval

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***Anne-Marie Trahan is Associate Deputy Minister of the Civil Law Sector in the federal Department of Justice.**

under the Convention. That is the "Trahan amendment" which I think was very instrumental in getting the whole scheme approved.

The ability of Canadian delegates to take this kind of action is what prompted Eric Bergsten, the Secretary of UNCITRAL, to speak at the first congress of the Inter-American Association of Law Professors in 1989 of the role that certain countries such as Canada can play in the transposition of legal concepts.

One of the reasons we can play this role is that not only do we have civil law and common law, but we also practise them in two languages: in Quebec, the Civil Code was drafted in English from the outset, in 1866. There, civil law is taught in English and books on the subject are written in English. For nearly 20 years now we have practised common law in French in New Brunswick, Ontario and Manitoba. This is in addition to the entire body of federal law, most of the French version of which was revised in 1988. In Moncton and Ottawa common law is taught in French, and it is beginning to be written in French. Francophone jurists from common law provinces are forming provincial associations. They take part in activities of the international French-language legal community: the International Institute of Law of the French-speaking Countries (IDEF) and the Centre international de common law en français (CICLEF).

At a time when exchanges are becoming world-wide, when Canada is preparing to sign the Convention on Contracts for the International Sale of Goods and other international instruments designed to facilitate exchanges, we can be proud of the role we can play and the influence we can exert in this area. ■

(Our translation)

When complaints produce results

Photo: Canadian Parks Service

BANFF NATIONAL PARK

*Colette Duhaime**

Canadians who have complained about the lack of French in Banff National Park have not done so in vain.

Last summer a large electronic board was installed to indicate the toll booths where visitors can obtain bilingual service. In addition, bilingual signs are now to be found in most strategic locations along highways leading to the park and at major natural attractions such as lakes.

There are still, of course, some complaints, but since these improvements were made they are definitely fewer in number.

It took the arrival of a new park superintendent, Sandra Davis, for things to change significantly.

In 1988 the western regional office of the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages conducted a study that led to an action plan to correct the shortcomings. "With this study, we realized that the problems were systemic," says Deni Lorieau, the Commissioner's western representative, "and the proposed action plan was a most exhaustive one."

When she arrived, Sandra Davis read the report and decided to take the bull by the horns and provide better service to visitors. This involved not only installing bilingual signs but providing service in both official languages in places where complaints were most numerous: at the eastern entrance to the park, at Upper Hot Springs Pool and at the Banff information centre, which is managed by the Parks Service of Environment Canada.

A thorough analysis of the situation showed that it was not absolutely essential to hire new employees to solve the problem. A simple reorganization was all that was necessary, proof that where there's a will, there's a way. In fact, there are enough bilingual personnel employed in the park to staff the positions requiring knowledge of both languages.

The number of complaints involving the park has since diminished considerably and, although the problem of bilingual services in Banff National Park is not yet completely solved, it is easing.

This indicates to Deni Lorieau that it is always worthwhile complaining, especially if senior departmental officials are aware of problems and are trying to find solutions. ■

(Our translation)

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

Anglophone Customs Inspectors in Quebec: Automatic Bilingualism

There has been a spectacular turnaround in the past 20 years in the official languages situation in federal offices in Quebec. A survey conducted recently by the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages showed that the legislation it administers has eliminated the imbalance that existed between the use of English and French in the federal Public Service in Quebec. The investigators surveyed 28 groups consisting of 330 public servants from both linguistic communities.

Employees with a long history of service in the federal government can remember when English predominated to a large extent in offices in Quebec and at headquarters. Francophones even had to use English in their written work. Considerable progress has been made in the use of French since the early 1970s. This turnaround in the linguistic situation has changed the climate of work. The survey even shows that bilingual Anglophone employees, now accustomed to speaking French in everyday life, feel at ease in this new environment.

The case of the customs inspectors at Lacolle, a major border crossing on the Montreal-Plattsburg route, is an excellent example of this spectacular change and the linguistic harmony that now prevails.

No linguistic border

Lacolle, on a sunny Monday afternoon. At the start of summer the modest offices of Canada Customs are a beehive of activity: a line of cars parked under the inspection shed, a collection of heavy trucks in front of the import-export permit booth. A Quebec trucker has drawn the unlucky number: all the goods in his heavy trailer will be inspected. A rough day for the customs inspector who has to deal with such a big load.

Patricia Venneman has 10 years' experience and has seen a lot of things. It is difficult to tell whether the firmness in her voice betrays tension or simply determination. Both, most likely. Married to an Anglophone, the daughter of Dutch immigrants, she has no particular accent, either in English or in French. She says she wants to send her son to a Francophone school, despite her husband's preference for the English school in Clarenceville, where they live. The reason: to encourage him to learn the language of their surroundings, French, since they speak English at home.

Photo: Reflexion

Patricia is fully bilingual. She vigorously defends English-French bilingualism. She sees no future without the preservation of bilingualism in Canada.

"And if some traveller frustrated by your inspection insults you, in what language do you reply?" Briefly, flashing an angry look: "I make him stop!"

Laughter. That is a rare occurrence. One paramount rule seems to ensure the exemplary partnership that prevails between Anglophone and Francophone customs inspectors at this largest border post in Quebec: unfailing courtesy combined with respect for the other's distinctiveness.

The same rule seems to apply to Canadians returning from a quick cross-border trip. No one is fooled, however, especially not a customs inspector who is well aware that it is even possible to hide cigarettes in cereal boxes.

Four million travellers

Of the 80 posts (land and sea) and airports located in Quebec, the border crossing at Lacolle is undoubtedly the busiest, with its three ports of entry: nearly four million people crossed last year, using the autoroute or the two secondary roads (221 and 213), on foot or by car, truck or bus. A dozen of the approximately 60 inspectors at the autoroute post are Anglophones. This is exactly opposite to the situation found outside Quebec.

The case of David Beam, 42, a native of Niagara Falls, who is married to an English-speaking Italian from Montreal, is typical. They became acquainted in Cuba; she was a travel agent. When he was 20, David worked for Customs at

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the Ontario-U.S. border in order to pay for his university education. The first thing he did when he settled in Quebec was to attend an 18-week immersion course at Laval University in Quebec City.

Their daughter, who is six, goes to a French school in her neighbourhood in Candiac, a suburb of Montreal. The community is a veritable league of nations. At home, the family speaks English.

"The people who are most understanding of others are often those who started to learn a second language rather late," David Beam comments.

Of the 30 inspectors working in the vehicle section at Lacolle, 10 are Anglophones. While his colleague Patricia categorically refuses to talk about politics, David is eager to. One day when he was upset, or simply angry, he came close to making the final decision: to return to Ontario.

His colleagues were quick to react: "You should stay," they told him in no uncertain terms. Surprised by this show of friendship, he stayed.

"In my neighbourhood," David Beam says, "all the children learn the other's language. Everybody has the same house, drives the same car and works for the government. The only difference is language. It's a positive competition. In Quebec I also try to speak French when dealing with public services, except for transactions where you feel the need to speak as directly as possible."

But he also says: "I chose to live in Candiac [where the population is 40% Anglophone and 60% Francophone], in a multi-ethnic neighbourhood, because I no longer wanted to live in a closed community."

If David Beam had not chosen a career as a customs inspector, he might have been a psychologist. He confesses: "We do not necessarily speak French because we are in Quebec; it is the most efficient language for communication."

Living with stress

Before becoming customs inspectors candidates must undergo training at Rigaud. They also have to learn to develop a thick skin to withstand the anger of travellers who may have overstuffed their suitcases.

Instruction includes an official languages component and an immersion program in the other language, along with social and cultural activities on weekends in the Rigaud-Vaudreuil region. The professional and linguistic training provided even serves as a model for the European Economic Community, which has taken inspiration from it.

Team spirit and a sense of humour smooth the rough spots. "We get beyond social tensions, because of the tension of dealing with the public at border posts," another colleague of David's assured me.

Humour is a good antidote to stress and even more so for linguistic tensions. At Lacolle this recipe is followed by cheerfully exchanging epithets such as "Monsieur Frog" and "Mister Redneck!"

Benefiting from two cultures

Thomas Wielogorski, 37, a resident of Brossard, found a second country in Canada 10 years ago and, more recently, a second career in Lacolle. He was a travel agent in his native Poland. At Lacolle he gets constant practice in two of the five languages he speaks fluently, including Russian and German. He learned French in his native country, studied English at McGill and switches from one to the other without difficulty and not without pleasure. He settled in a suburb of Montreal in order to benefit from the mixture of the two national cultures.

"Here in Customs," he says, "you find every opinion in the political spectrum, even among Francophones. But we don't make too much of it. The stress resulting from the crowds has no effect on our linguistic attitudes. French dominates 95% of conversations. Bilingualism is taken for granted. It is not unusual for Americans, in order to be polite, to greet us with a few words in French. As for Quebec Anglophones, they often use French as they are accustomed to doing with other public services."

Aside from the cultural and psychological benefits, it should be noted that a bilingual customs position brings its incumbent a bonus of $800 a year.

There was a significant drop (15%) in the number of travellers returning to Canada across the U.S.-Canada border at Lacolle in 1989, attributable in large part to a decline in tourism. But since the introduction of free trade customs inspectors find that the time goes quickly.

"Bonjour", "Good afternoon" — bilingualism has become truly automatic. At times an Anglophone inspector at Lacolle even lends assistance to a unilingual Francophone colleague. Things have really changed when one becomes — to paraphrase a well-known expression — the Anglophone on duty! *B.M.*

(Our translation)

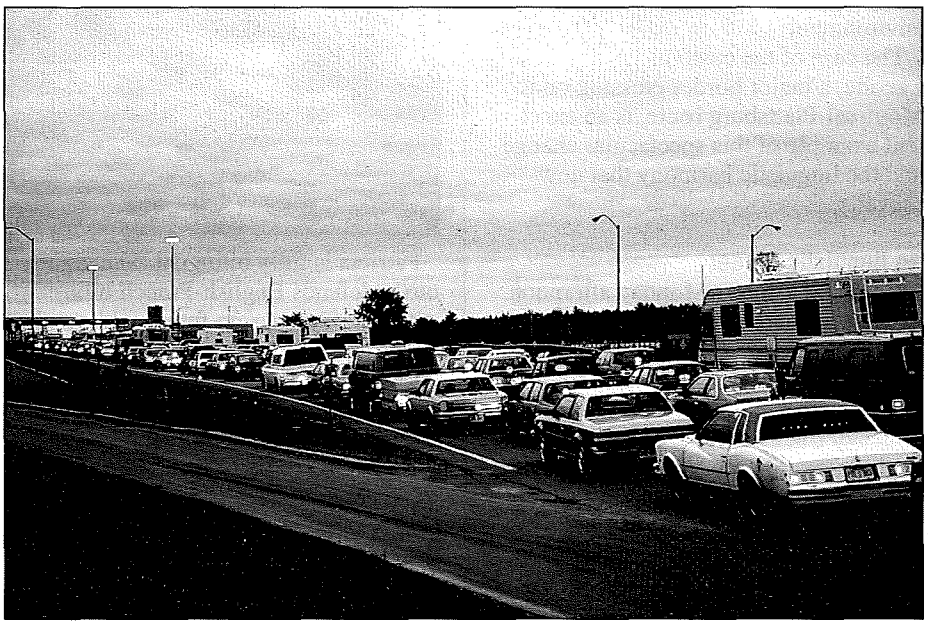


Photo: Reflexion

Media Voices: Part of the Problem, Part of the Solution

Tom Sloan

Like their symbiotic partners, the politicians, the information media are always fair game to observers of the passing scene, whether or not they themselves are part of it. Writing in the spring 1991 issue of *Language and Society*, for example, Michel Roy, himself a distinguished Quebec journalist for many years and now a constitutional adviser to the federal government, stated flatly that "the free press...is not a medium for solving social problems and constitutional crises. It is itself part of the problem."

This is a serious blanket charge by a thoughtful observer, based on his judgement that, as a rule, the media are simply not interested in informing the public in a serious way about the main issues affecting the unity, and the very survival, of the country. Roy concedes that the press occasionally performs a service in, for example, making available the complete texts of important documents. But, in general, he finds that the media, by trivializing and oversimplifying issues, do a disservice to the efforts to find solutions to difficult problems.

Do the media, and most particularly the Canadian media, currently operating in a situation of a potential national crisis, really deserve such a sweeping condemnation? Let us take a brief, necessarily cursory, look at their performance in dealing with two matters close to the heart of the national unity debate: the state of relations between Canada's two official language communities, including the whole issue of official language policies, and the constitutional future of the country. How do the English- and French-language media treat events that occur in the "other" part of the country? And how do they deal with the constitutional debate that sooner, rather than later, will affect us all?

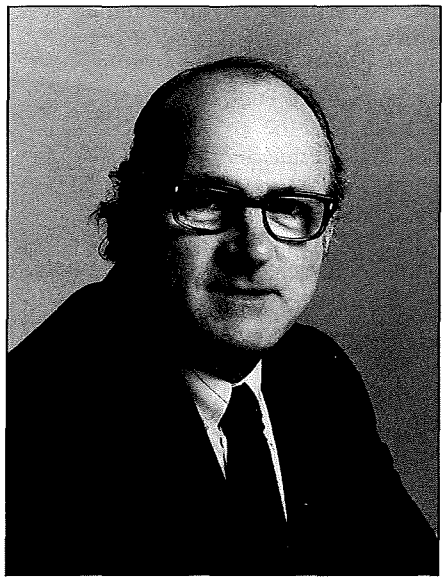
In a brief article we cannot of course do full justice to the subject; but we can sketch the outlines of the situation and consider at least a few examples that come to view in the various media, each of which forms, in a non-political way, its own distinct society.

Television and radio

The main characteristic of television is irresistible imagery combined with passing immediacy. This suggests that, while the immediate effect of an image may be strong and even devastating, the lasting effects should be less than traumatic. Thus the booing of the national anthem at a Montreal sporting event or the trampling of the Quebec flag by half-a-dozen Anglophones in Brockville, Ontario, could normally be expected to stir up an immediate reaction but make only moderate waves in the long run.

What happened, however, in the case of the Brockville incident, was a reminder that television is nothing if not flexible and yet another indication of the enormous power of the medium when it is used as something more than a simple surveyor of single events. Instead, Brockville was treated by some TV decision-makers as an event of major symbolic importance. The few seconds of tape were broadcast time and time again in the following weeks and months, with the clear message that the flag insult was an expression of the real feeling of English-speaking Canadians towards Quebec and Quebecers. The result was, whether intended or not, to increase linguistic and political tensions. It was not Brockville's finest hour; nor was it that of television as a source of balanced news.

In radio it is the hot-line show that is the fulcrum of the discussion of those



Michel Roy

national issues that cry out for a dialogue between English- and French-speaking Canadians. Unfortunately, few and far between have been discussions bringing together, in a bilingual format, members of both communities. All too frequent, on both sides of the divide, are emotional discussions, often on inflammatory topics, involving listeners from only one language group but dealing with concerns vital to the relations between them. Regardless of the intentions of the hosts or producers such shows are a recipe for the spread of misunderstanding and worse. They serve as an ideal forum for bigots, whether English- or French-speaking. In such instances, Michel Roy has understated the case. The medium is not only part of the problem; it is at the core of it.

But there is another side to the story, most specifically through serious television programming such as "The Journal", "Le Point" and "W5". These and a few others have regularly

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Do the media trivialize issues?

provided opportunities for an intelligent and sympathetic presentation to Canadians not only of the issues but also of the feelings, aspirations and beliefs of their fellow country-men of the other language group. And, while even here the danger of bias and thoughtlessness is never absent, it is attenuated by the very nature of the operation.

An example of both the opportunities and the perils of such programming was provided by an episode of CTV's "W5" that dealt with a dispute in St. Paul, Alberta, over the policy of a Francophone school limiting its pupils' contacts with English-speaking children to help ensure they maintained their grasp of their mother tongue. It was a delicate subject, one debated emotionally in the community as was, for that matter, the very existence of an exclusively French school; and it was reasonably sensitively handled, although the program host's scepticism towards the school's policy came through clearly. It was a story of conflict rather than consensus. But it neither trivialized nor sensationalized the situation, and as such it contributed to understanding if nothing else.

Newspapers

In looking at the printed press the distinction must be made between the expression of opinions in columns and editorials and regular news coverage. How an event is covered, or whether it is covered at all, can be as important as any opinions expressed about it.

In the Quebec/Rest of Canada equation there is what seems an inevitable imbalance in news coverage. For so long a focal point of linguistic and constitutional disputes, Quebec has been a magnet for the English-language media, which have covered the province, and particularly Montreal and Quebec City, extensively for several decades. Partly because of its very size and diffuseness English-speaking Canada has received relatively little coverage from the Quebec Francophone media — except, of course, for events that directly impinge on the major issues, such as Brockville or the movement towards English unilingualism by Sault Ste. Marie and some other Ontario municipalities. No French-language daily has a full-time correspondent anywhere in English-speaking Canada outside Ottawa.

In the press of both languages, partly because of the way in which news is defined, it is the "bad" news about the other community that tends to be stressed. Sometimes it can be tendentious. A 1988 headline over a story about a tavern brawl in *Le Journal de Montréal* read "Beaten up by Anglophones". English-language tabloids reciprocate by sometimes giving enormous play to negative stories from Quebec, such as booing of the anthem or the burning of the Maple Leaf flag in nationalist demonstrations.

Beyond stories about people, those that could have a political slant are also susceptible to differing treatment. A Canadian Press story in the spring of 1991 quoting an international survey that concluded that Canada might be considered the second-best country in the world in which to live from the standpoint of several factors, including social welfare, crime rates and education, received prominent play in the Anglophone press and was all but ignored by the French-language media.

Robin Philpot

An event that ended by sparking linguistic fires although it was inherently about something else entirely was the summer 1990 confrontation between the Mohawk Warriors and the civil and military authorities in Oka, Quebec. The Anglophone media's coverage of the affair prompted bitter recriminations from some Quebecers, who alleged there was strong pro-Warrior and anti-Quebec bias among English-speaking reporters and editors alike. A book, published in French by an English-speaking Quebecer, Robin Philpot, stated flatly that the objective of a number of English-speaking politicians, aided and abetted by almost the whole Anglophone press, was to denigrate the government and people of Quebec. The honourable exception was the Montreal *Gazette*.

The book's title, *Oka: Dernier alibi du Canada anglais*, summed up the thesis. The goal, Philpot wrote, was to portray Quebec as a racist society, a sort of "Alabama north", using deliberate distortions that painted the Warriors as

heroes fighting oppression and the Sûreté du Québec, the Quebec provincial police, as little better than racist goons: "...if you want to get a favorable press in Canada, you have to do two things: Take up arms, and point them at Quebec."

Despite the occasional sniping between the English- and French-language media, it would be wrong to conclude that linguistic lines necessarily define or coincide with the sharply differing responses to the issues.

Within Francophone Quebec, while columnists and editorialists are all highly supportive of their society's aspirations, there are also wide differences of opinion, sometimes within the same paper, between nationalist hardliners and those more willing to accept compromise in both the constitutional and linguistic fields.

And, while writers for all English-language papers defend federalism, there are considerable differences as to how far the constitutional demands of Quebec should be accommodated. When it comes to official language policies the differences become a chasm; there are no neutrals. On the one side are those who regularly denounce federal language policies as unrealistic, unnecessary and cowardly appeasement of Quebec. The leaders in this camp are the magazine *Alberta Report* and the Sun chain of newspapers. On the other side are most of the larger newspapers in major cities across the country and many others which, while often harshly critical of the policies of the Quebec and federal governments, give full support to the principle of two official languages in Canada.

The newspaper equivalent of the radio hotline is, of course, the letters-to-the-editor section, where vituperation is, if not the rule, far from the exception. A Quebec City reader writes an enraged letter to *Le Soleil* about the presence of English on a sign outside a chicken restaurant. An enraged New Brunswicker writes the Saint John *Telegraph-Journal* that the French language has no place in Canada and is destroying the country. These are part of the periodic outbreaks of blind fury that occasionally erupt in both official languages. There is no evidence to support charges that some papers actively encourage such flurries; rather, they seem to reflect the moodiness of the country.

An encouraging trend in several major papers has involved initiatives to present opinions from "the other side". Some papers regularly carry translations of editorials. Others open their columns directly to leading journalists. The *Globe and Mail*'s Jeffrey Simpson writes a weekly column for *Le Devoir*. Lysiane Gagnon of *La Presse* does the same in the *Globe and Mail*. An interesting recent development is a weekly letter on current issues, written alternatively by *Toronto Star* editor John Honderich and his counterpart at *La Presse*, Alain Dubuc, published simultaneously by both papers every Saturday.

The uses of power

In the light — or shadow — of all these conflicting signals, what can we say about the role of the media in Canada today? That the information media exert power and influence is undeniable. The obvious question is, how do they use that power?

As our brief overview may suggest, there is no simple answer. Clearly the media, whether publicly or privately owned, have their own interests and priorities, financial and otherwise. This does not however absolve them from their responsibilities — something they implicitly acknowledge by the very act of disseminating what purports to be accurate news and reasoned opinions.

But responsibility to what and to whom? To the truth? To society? To the country? To a political ideal?

In the case that concerns us there is good reason to argue that the commitment must be to truth and to society in its broadest definition. There is certainly no contradiction between the two, as there might well be if we included "national unity" or a political goal, both of which are ambiguous and potentially divisive.

The commitment, it is argued, should be both to reflecting accurately the reality of our society and to advancing understanding among its citizens to help them make rational decisions about their collective future. Regardless of what happens in the constitutional sphere, after all, we shall continue to share the northern part of a continent.

In all this there is no doubt, as Michel Roy contends, that the media can be and often are part of the problem. They have the power to deepen divisions and exacerbate situations as well as to moderate them. And clearly irresponsibility and even cynical manipulation are not absent from the Canadian media scene. But the record is far from totally negative. To any one who has, on a daily basis, perused articles from the daily and weekly press on the subjects of language and related issues over the past several years the record is, at worst, checkered and, at best, reasonably bright. The media, after all, cannot be blamed for reporting negative events; they too are part of our social reality. But what is striking is that a clear, if not overwhelming, majority of Canadian editorialists and columnists appear to be more prone to trying to bridge gaps rather than to deepening them, to explaining situations rather than egregiously oversimplifying them. The problem is not one of good will; it is one of communication. Some efforts are, quite naturally, more successful than others; and even when they succeed brilliantly, how many Canadians read them?

Irresistible imagery, passing immediacy.

There are certainly people who have every right to be angered by some aspects of media coverage. Journalistic shortcomings exist; they can be serious in their consequences; and they are extremely visible when they occur. The reality is that the media in Canada, as in every democratic society, form a diverse group with many voices, some of them strident, some of them nasty and some of them stupid. But there are far more than enough of the opposite kind to prevent Canadians from lumping them all together and stoning them all for their alleged sins in helping create our present perilous national situation. Indeed, some of the media voices may well end by being part of the solution. ■

The Constitution and Language Policy

The chairman of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Official languages discusses the issues.

If Jim Edwards could stamp a warning on the language issue, it would read: "Fragile — Handle with Care".

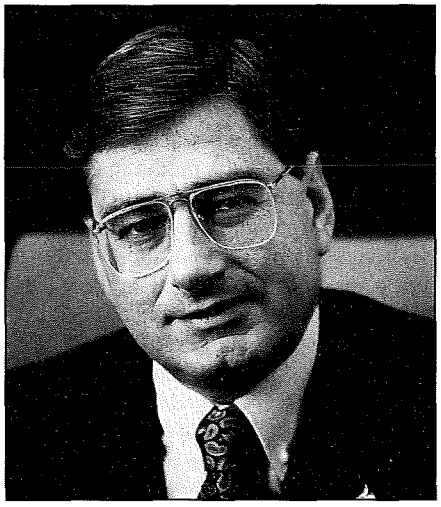
Edwards, chairman of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Official Languages, says Canadians must not put language among the very first items on the agenda as they begin a make-or-break effort at constitutional reform because the issue is too emotionally loaded.

Edwards became a national figure in late June when the Joint Parliamentary Committee on the Amending Formula reported. He was co-chairman of that committee along with constitutional expert Senator Gérald Beaudoin.

Short timetables, short fuses

Looking at the tight timetable for constitutional reform set by Quebec's plan to hold a referendum on its political future in 1992, Edwards said in an interview with *Language and Society*: "The thing that troubles me is that because we have such short fuses, such short timetables on many of the constitutional agenda items, I would hope that we wouldn't rush precipitously one way or the other on language policy. It's an issue that could be a deal-breaker with a new Confederation. I'm not sure it could be a deal-maker."

Edwards says that language should come up only after a few other items are settled. "There has to be an establishment of good will before we get to language. I think that if we started with language, it has so many irksome aspects in so many parts of the country that we might not get beyond it. So I think that it would be wise to leave it down the list a bit."



Jim Edwards

Territoriality?

Edwards thinks that, despite all the strains caused by language policy, Canada still offers a more "humane" approach to official language policy than other countries, such as Belgium or Switzerland, where only the majority language of a given region has official status in that region.

But he concedes that the language debate may eventually deal with the choice between Canada's approach to language or the system of territorially-defined language rights favoured by bilingual and multilingual European countries.

Official languages has become an exclusive responsibility of the House of Commons.

He is reluctant to discuss Canada's system versus a territorially-defined system because he is not sure that the country is moving towards a European approach. He says the issue must be examined by the joint Parliamentary Committee to seek Canadians' reactions to draft constitutional reform proposals from the government in the fall.

Official languages policy used to be overseen by a standing joint committee of Parliament but, following an overhaul of committee operations, official languages became an exclusive Commons responsibility.

A predisposition to bilingualism

Edwards is cautious about the direction the language debate might take as he moves into the chair of a new committee. He is a strong advocate of bilingualism. When the Beaudoin-Edwards Committee suggested a method for amending the Constitution it picked three areas that would require unanimity among governments prior to any change — the monarchy, the proprietary rights of provinces and language policy.

Edwards, first elected to the Commons in 1984, spent nearly three decades as a broadcaster and broadcast executive in Edmonton.

He learned French as an MP going through what he calls "Masse Immersion" — serving Marcel Masse as parliamentary secretary when Masse was Minister of Communications from 1985 to 1986 and when Masse returned to the portfolio from 1989 to 1991. Masse is now Minister of Defence.

"It was a marvelous learning experience," says Edwards about working with the senior Quebec minister.

Edwards attributes much of his predisposition to learning French to his grandfather who moved to Alberta in 1906 to practise law. In those years

Edmonton had a fairly sizable French-speaking population. Edwards' grandfather, who spoke a number of languages, including French, would deal with his French-speaking clientele in French.

Attitudes and absurdities

Looking at the modern Canada, Edwards sees a generational difference in attitudes to language.

"I think that most young people are pretty much open on the subject of language. Many of the older people tend to be threatened by the implications of another language or upset by what they see as inequities," says Edwards.

He would like to see the new committee "correct intentional absurdities and injustices in the administration of language laws."

"I think that the concept is correct, the concept of official languages, and I support it, but there are absurdities in the administration of any law or regulation. I would just like to find them and eliminate them if possible," says Edwards, who explains that he has no specific problem in mind.

"I just think that people might feel more comfortable about language policy if they saw it being administered in a common sense way." *P.C.*

"La différence" again

According to a 1990 study referred to by Robert McKenzie (*Toronto Star*) only 50% of natives living in Ontario in their own reserves or communities still speak their traditional language, while in Quebec 91% of natives still speak the tongue of their ancestors.

Press Review

The Spicer Report

Tom Sloan

Eagerly awaited in much of English-speaking Canada, if less so in Quebec, the report of the Citizens' Forum on Canada's Future, chaired by Keith Spicer, appeared just in time for Canada Day 1991, to something less than unanimous, enthusiastic acclamations. Certainly, the reaction was more positive in English-speaking Canada than it was in Quebec, but there too the cheering was less than full-throated.

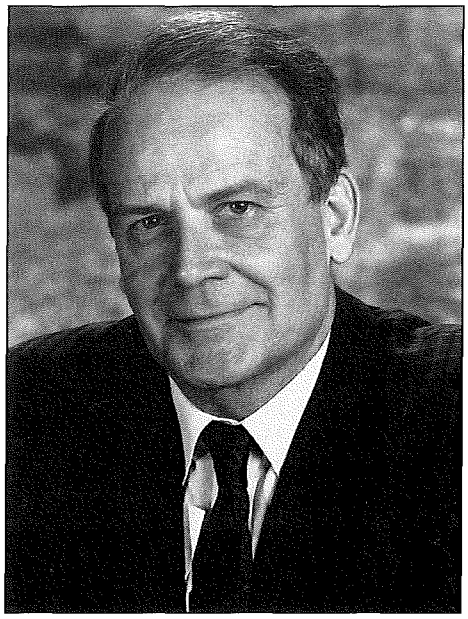
Shameless waste...

The sharpest, most all-encompassing, if not the most incisive denunciation came in a lengthy editorial in Montreal's *Le Devoir* from the pen of its publisher, Lise Bissonnette. The report was an exercise in "intellectual indigence" without redeeming qualities. "Because Canada is haunted by the fear of collapse, the spectacular failure of the Citizens' Forum is already the object of a difficult rehabilitation. It is quite useful, they say, a snapshot of the situation. Yes, but on condition you don't sell the house to pay for a poor quality camera and a photographer who has nothing better to do than to put himself in the centre of the picture....The shameless waste this experiment entailed...removes any claim of moral authority."


LE DEVOIR

Deux Québécois sur trois
la perte d'ancienneté prévu

Bissonnette warned Canadians to beware "the romantic adventure of a constituent assembly", the possibility of which the report refused to dismiss. "Nothing will more effectively block a settlement of the Quebec-Canada crisis than this illusion to which so many Canadians are now clinging and which has been sponsored by those who opposed the Meech Lake Accord while seeking an elegant pretext not to appear too hostile to Quebec. They have taken refuge in criticism of the 'process' and of closed-door meetings and they will henceforth have to live with the weight of false popular participation."


Keith Spicer

There was another flagrant failure in the report as well. While "English Canada has finally decided, 30 years after the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism that it is not out of line for people to insist on speaking French in North America...the reality of the Francophone community outside Quebec is obliterated by a wall of silence."


MARDI

LeDroit

chasse à l'homme fait deux morts à Rockland

maire Lalonde

An even angrier attack on the Forum's perceived indifference to the Francophone minorities came from *Le Droit* of Ottawa. "In the report of the Citizens' Forum...the hypocrisy of English Canada concerning the French-speaking community outside Quebec has reached new heights," wrote editorialist Pierre Allard. "It is inadmissible that the injustices committed since Confederation against the French-Canadian and Acadian communities living outside Quebec 'homeland' are simply ignored." The only references to these minorities came from Francophones themselves, Allard said. "Our Anglophone compatriots nevertheless find it appropriate to shed tears for the native peoples....But when they also take it upon themselves to go after Bill 178 and to defend

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Anglo-Quebecers, the most spoiled community in Canada... it becomes almost indecent."

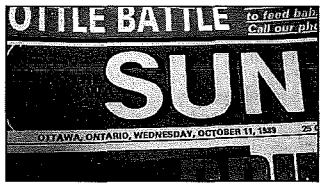
In another editorial in the same paper André Préfontaine took after Keith Spicer for being overly facile and illogical in his criticisms of politicians in general and Prime Minister Brian Mulroney in particular. "The Forum chairman would have contributed more to reducing the tensions that exist in the country by trying to put the contempt that Canadians have for their politicians and their prime minister in a fairer perspective." They are not solely to blame for the present situation, *Le Droit* affirmed.

Equally dismissive of the whole operation was *Le Soleil* of Quebec City. What did we find in the report? asked editorial page editor J-Jacques Samson. "Essentially a catalogue of emotional testimony... and an unacceptable trivialization of the 'case' of Quebec." Samson was particularly incensed by a proposal in the report for a trade-off involving an acceptance on the part of English-speaking Canadians of Quebec's determination to preserve its language and culture and a softening of Quebec's law forbidding exterior English-language commercial signs. "Can we find a more eloquent example of the ignorance of the majority of commissioners of the real expectations of Quebecers in the fields of social affairs, agriculture, regional development, energy, trade and commerce, research and development of natural resources?"

Also irritating to Samson was the "lyricism" of the Forum chairman. "Canada is in crisis. The house is ablaze and the fire chief is on the scene singing a hymn to joy. If, in November 1990, Brian Mulroney expected from this commission suggestions for a new path towards a renewal of federalism, eight months later Keith Spicer handed him an empty tool box."

Absence of hope...

One of the few Quebec editorialists who did not dismiss the report itself out of hand was Roch Bilodeau of Sherbrooke's *La Tribune*. Even he saw little positive emerging from a document he described as "a sad and demoralizing portrait. But there is still worse: the absence of hope....The Citizens' Forum proposes nothing concrete for solving our problems, at least nothing that seems up to the task. Nevertheless, he saw a tiny measure of utility in the operation, "for remedies are always easier to find with the help of a diagnosis, a picture of the situation. It could provide a real vision of a country to be rebuilt by political leaders who could impose respect by their ideas and their imagination. But where are they?"



The tone, if neither the words nor the language were the same, was similar in the editorial offices of the *Ottawa Sun*: "Canadians have spoken. Is anyone listening? Not likely."

If anyone was, it was not the Montreal *Gazette*. It could have been worse, the *Gazette* conceded — but not much. "As an exercise in public consultation, the Forum had some value." In addition, the "inspirational element" was not without importance. Beyond that, however, the *Gazette* was almost as harsh in its judgement as most Francophone editors. The report "is not much to show for eight months of public consultations and $23 million in public funds." The paper found it full of generalities and essentially "shallow". The *Gazette* agreed with other Quebec dailies that it failed to address the needs of the province. "The report is almost ludicrously timid and oblique on the key questions of constitutional recognition of Quebec as a distinct society and the decentralizing of powers to the provinces." Because of this and other failings "this expensive report is not going to be of much use in the coming constitutional debate. Too bad. But it could have been worse. It could have been a complete instead of a partial fiasco."

The absence of concrete proposals was a common editorial theme but it was not necessarily seen as the Forum's fault. "There is no shortage of opinions in the report," said the *Winnipeg Free Press*. "What it does not offer is any clear or precise guidance about the form and substance of constitutional reform in Canada. That result was not to be expected from a group which was given a mandate to listen to Canadians but no precise mandate to do anything in particular about what it heard." The Forum was essentially a "sideshow", the paper suggested. Now is the time for the political leaders to shoulder their own responsibilities.

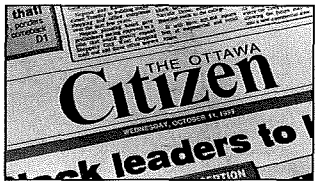
Or positive experience?

Despite the absence of specifics many editors saw the Spicer commission and the report it produced as having been a positive experience. To the *London Free Press* "...it has been a sound exercise in promoting greater national self-awareness. The Forum can hardly be blamed if, despite its best efforts, a mutually satisfactory constitutional settlement remains virtually as remote as ever." For its part, the *Hamilton Spectator* also had some positive things to say. "It was a rocky road...but the final report was worth the effort....In its own way, the Spicer commission has helped to bring the country closer together. Appealing to the higher values of Canadians, the Citizens' Forum offered a model for the benefits of mutual discussion as opposed to intolerance in resolving our differences."

The Saint John *Telegraph-Journal*, too, had kind words. "What emerges in the report is a sense of caring...about the future of the country and about the concerns expressed by its citizens. With all its faults, the report should not be ignored. And its fundamental belief that dialogue and compromise can resolve Canada's constitutional problems may well end up being the road we will have to follow."

Perhaps the closest thing to unabashed enthusiasm came from the *Toronto Star*, which described the Spicer conclusions as "nothing less than a credit to the nation." The commissioners "found a common sense of values amongst Canadians and produced a consensus of their own that all Canadians

can identify with. It is not a perfect document, but it is a well founded and reflective package....For all the flak they endured, and their own internal spats, the commissioners deserve praise for giving vent to the feelings of many Canadians while remaining true to themselves."


THE OTTAWA
Citizen
leaders to

For the *Ottawa Citizen* the prime virtue of the Spicer report was the challenge it posed, not only to the politicians but to individual Canadians to re-examine their own biases and assumptions and to be prepared to change the most difficult thing of all, their minds. The report, said the *Citizen*, was written "with honesty, directness and flair.... Spicer listened to Canadians; now we should listen to him."


Calgary Herald
's final
is hit

The *Calgary Herald* had its own unique perspective on the report, glimpsing a potential danger, not in the document itself, but in the use to which it might be put by government. It could well, the *Herald* argued, become an excuse for henceforth ignoring non-politicians in the constitutional debate. "The danger is that, from now on, Spicer's name will be invoked to ward off any challenges to future constitutional deliberations, no matter how secretive, elitist or manipulative they happen to be....It would help if politicians...showed they were capable of listening to, and acting on, the voices of Canadians. Spicer could be the start of that process but, more than likely, it will be used to circumvent it."


The Financial Post
Dylex puts U.S. unit into Chapter 11 bankruptcy

To the *Financial Post* of Toronto, however, the Forum served a useful purpose, regardless of how it is used in the future. "Ultimately, the value of the commission was psychotherapy. For four months, Spicer and his group travelled the country and listened to the people....As a balm and a bandage, the commission was indispensable. That the people were heard was more important than what they said....Having emptied their souls, Canadians may now be ready to discuss real change. English Canadians need to understand Quebec's threats, and Quebecers to understand the need for an agenda larger than their own. If the Spicer commission has helped us to move the debate along, it can be called a modest success."

It was in psychotherapy that Pierre Gravel of *La Presse* also saw the main, if not only, contribution of the Forum. As far as Quebecers were concerned, he wrote, "From the start it was an exercise as useless as it was expensive....It is only insofar as it revealed the mood of English Canada that the report is of any interest to Quebecers. They discovered, without surprise, that among ordinary citizens there is a total absence of homogeneity of opinions about them." As for its therapeutic value, it was "an exercise essentially based on providing an outlet for bad tempers and preparing minds for the changes that are required."


La Presse
Cinq nouveaux députe

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The Edmonton Journal
s kill dozens in Soviet ethnic
oops airlifted to besieged southern republic of Azerbaijan

Official languages

The report's specific recommendation dealing with official languages policies won general agreement among editorialists that an independent new look at some of the practical aspects of that policy could do no harm as long as the basic principle remained intact. Typical was the response of the *Edmonton Journal*: "The principle that Canadians should have access to government services in the language of their choice is valid, but some of the decisions flowing from official bilingualism are contentious and anger people." Bilingualism must be an instrument of unity and harmony, rather than discord and dissension, as it sometimes in practice is, the paper affirmed.

Multiculturalism

In the area of multiculturalism there was some editorial disagreement concerning the Forum's suggestion that programs should be scaled back and essentially limited to immigration services, anti-racism activities and promotion of equality.

The only criticism in the *London Free Press* was that the recommendation didn't go far enough. "The entire multiculturalism department should be abolished."

On the other side was the Montreal *Gazette*. "Beware of the voices that call, ever so patriotically, for a homogenized Canada....It is an impossible dream, and even if it were possible it should be resisted by every government. There can be no Canadian unity without diversity. It is a great pity the commissioners...failed to express that truism with sufficient force....Bilingualism and multiculturalism...are the true Canadian identity."

In its summing up of the whole operation Toronto's *Globe and Mail* found encouragement in the report's conclusion that there is a "willingness to talk, to try to reach an accommodation....So there's hope, sort of. And there is a good guide in this report for Constitutional Affairs Minister Joe Clark, whose task it is to find a constitutional package that will satisfy people who want very different things.


CANADA'S NATIONAL NEWSPAPER
The Globe and Mail
ukes Tories over GST a
aker demands respect for traditions

Knowing where they stand should make it easier for him to define a federal position. It will not make it easy." ■

Letters

(from page 2)

Equal Time

I am writing to you with regard to Gretta Chambers' article "Quebec: The Equality Party's Position" which appeared in the Summer 1991 issue of *Language and Society*. Ms Chambers' harsh and often tendentious criticisms of the Equality Party's constitutional and linguistic positions merit a far more detailed response than is possible in this letter, especially since the party's stance (which Ms Chambers describes as having an "Alice in Wonderland quality") lies far closer to traditional, even bi-partisan, federal positions than do her own. Is it a sign of the times that minority views like Ms Chambers' are given prominence in federal government publications while those of vast numbers of Canadians are dismissed as "divisive"? Canadians did say to Keith Spicer that they want to see the interests of their country put ahead of those of their region, that they want to see equal rights of citizenship all across the land, and influential international journals such as *The Economist* have reached the lamentable conclusion that "It seems unlikely that Canada's future is going to be as a country with a strong national purpose....No politician now on the Canadian scene seems interested in strengthening the centre." Perhaps it is time for *Language and Society* to begin reflecting the views of Canadians living in Quebec who see things the way their compatriots in other regions do and who worry about the future in the same way people living outside their national boundaries do.

Gretta Chambers claims that at its policy convention on March 17 the Equality Party came out "strongly in favour of the *status quo ante* the Quiet Revolution." This is broad and inaccurate criticism. It would be far fairer to say the Equality Party came out in favour of steering the province of Quebec back towards the mainstream of Canadians' genuine political traditions, traditions which encompass a marked preference for individual rights over collective "societal projects" and the maintenance of meaningful federal powers in the country, traditions upset not by the Quiet Revolution but by recent and successive nationalist governments in Quebec. That those rights mentioned above include linguistic rights, a well-known species of human rights, to paraphrase the justices of the Supreme Court, should be a matter of rejoicing for Ms Chambers (and for the editors of *Language and Society*), not a matter for regret.

However, to compound this reader's distress with incredulity, Ms Chambers proceeds to characterize such measures as "repealing the notwithstanding clause" or giving all Canadians "freedom of choice in the language of their children's schooling" as implicitly more controversial than, say, giving Quebec exclusive jurisdiction over family law and income security (neither of which, for the record, the Equality Party has agreed to). Outside the tight circles of the new Family Compact in this country, the Canadian political élite, is there really anyone in favour of the notwithstanding clause or of continuing to deprive fellow citizens of their basic freedoms?

Certainly not among English-speaking Canadians in Quebec. In a recent *La Presse*/CROP poll (April 28, 1991), 90% of Anglophones "disagreed" with "the fact that French is the only official language of Quebec"; 89% "disagreed" with "the fact that French is the only language of school instruction for children of immigrants in Quebec"; and, of course, 93% "disagreed" with "the policy of the Government of Quebec concerning the language of commercial signs", one that would be rendered unconstitutional with the repeal of the notwithstanding clause. Yet Ms Chambers maintains that "the meaning and message of the Equality Party...have, today, little relevance to the thinking of troubled Anglophones searching for ways of reconciling the 'distinct society' in which they live with the wider country of which they are a part."

Just who is out of step here? As Lewis Carroll might have put it, "What harried rabbit has Ms Chambers followed?"

Keith Henderson
Chairman
The Committee on the Constitution of Canada
The Equality Party
Montreal

Is There a Future for Francophones on the Prairies?

*Charles F. Johnston**

The question of the survival of Francophone communities on the Prairies, following the rejection of the Meech Lake Accord, is today posed with new urgency and poignancy. What will be the impact of new constitutional negotiations on the future of Francophones in Saskatchewan and Alberta, presently clinging so precariously to their language and culture?

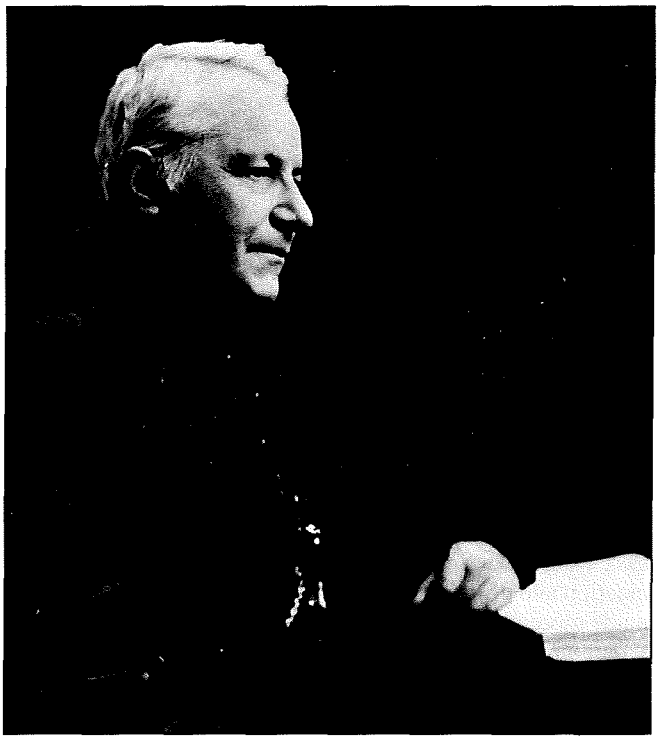
As a former Montrealer who has spent approximately 20 years in each of those provinces I have found myself increasingly drawn to support western Francophones in their struggle for survival. When I first moved to Western Canada I was struck by the number of French place names scattered across the Prairies, calling to mind the early explorers and the Métis and the later French and Belgian settlers — names now often anglicised in pronunciation: Batoche, Fond-du-Lac, Qu'Appelle, Grande Prairie, Lac la Biche, Île-à-la-Crosse, Trochu, La Loche, Pouce Coupé (pronounced "Puss Coopy"), Bienfait (pronounced "Bean Fate"), and so on.

It is a reminder that in 1877 an amendment to Section 110 of the North-West Territories Act declared that "Either the English or the French language may be used by any person in the debates of the said Council and in the proceedings before the courts...and the ordinances of the said Council shall be printed in both these languages." This was a recognition of the high proportion of Francophones in the population of the Territories at that time. For example, in 1885 the Edmonton area was 60% French-Canadian and French-speaking Métis.

***Charles F. Johnston is professor emeritus of church history at the United Church's St. Andrew's College in Saskatoon.**

That this was so was principally due to the work of missionary priests who from the 1840s had worked among the Métis to strengthen their French and Catholic heritage. Until their leadership role was taken over by a lay elite it was the clergy and the teaching and medical ministries of male and female orders which did most to preserve the French language and culture against the eroding forces surrounding them.

Alberta and Saskatchewan, carved out of the Territories, came into existence in 1905. Section 110 of the North-West Territories Act, establishing the use of both languages, although not specifically a part of the constitutions of the new provinces, as a similar article had been in that of Manitoba, was nonetheless carried over from the Territories into the provincial codes of law.



Father Albert Lacombe, o.m.i.
Photo: Fonds Association canadienne-française de l'Ontario. Centre for Research on French Canadian Culture, Ottawa University

Meanwhile, the settlement of the Prairies had gone on apace. Included among the diverse peoples who travelled west to take up land were a number of French-speaking settlers, in addition to the Francophone Métis communities already in existence. Many of them came as the result of the efforts of colonizing missionary-priests, like Fathers Lacombe, Vegreville, Morin, Giroux, Bonny, Falher, Gravel, and others whose names live on in the towns they founded. It is interesting that some of these largely Québécois pioneers came by way of the northern United States. Upward of a million Quebecers made their way southward in search of work in the 19th and early 20th centuries. The colonizing priests had more success with the more recently arrived and less well established among these immigrants who then followed them to the sites that became Vegreville, Beaumont and Plamondon. "Of the 620 French-speaking families brought in the 1890s to Edmonton and the eight French settlements in the surrounding area, over half came from the United States, and only one-fifth from Quebec."* The clergy of Quebec at that time were more interested in encouraging settlement north of the St. Lawrence Valley than into the West. Nevertheless, other Quebecers were to follow in the

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*Downtown Peace River, Alberta (*circa *1930)*
Photo: Fonds Séraphin-Marion. Centre for Research on French Canadian Culture, Ottawa University

period before the First World War and in later waves, eventually including workers in the tar sands at Fort McMurray in the 1970s.

In Alberta Francophone settlement has been concentrated in the area around Edmonton and to the north and northeast, whereas in Saskatchewan communication and co-operation have been made more difficult by the 150-mile gap separating the small communities in the north from those in the south of the province. These Francophone minorities in both provinces, present in the early decades of their history, have been drastically reduced by the incessant pressures to assimilate.

Thus, in Saskatchewan, in round numbers, of 66,000 citizens of Francophone origin 30,000 can still speak French but only 22,000 continue to identify themselves as Francophones. In Alberta in 1986 there were 62,000 Francophones (the fourth largest provincial total, after Quebec, Ontario, and New Brunswick), yet some 200,000 Albertans are said to have Francophone roots. In both provinces the rate of assimilation has thus become nearly a catastrophic 70%.

Nonetheless, there is among these people a continuing vitality and a dogged determination to provide the means to survive. In Saskatchewan the Association culturelle franco-canadienne de la Saskatchewan, founded in 1912, and in Alberta the Association canadienne-française de l'Alberta, founded in 1926, were both initially established to strive to obtain an education in French for Francophone children. Subsequently, each has inspired and supported other institutions with specific educational and cultural aims: in Saskatchewan the Commission des écoles fransaskoises, the Conseil de la coopération (a grouping of caisses populaires), the Association jeunesse fransaskoise, the Commission culturelle fransaskoise, the Fédération des aînés, the Fédération des femmes canadiennes françaises; in Alberta the Fédération des parents francophones, the Francophonie jeunesse de l'Alberta, and so on. Both have supported newspapers: in Saskatchewan, *Le Patriote de l'Ouest* (1912), replaced in 1972 by *L'Eau vive*; in Alberta, *La Survivance* (1928), now re-named *Le Franco*.

A French radio station, founded in Edmonton in 1948, stirred up a storm in the Alberta legislature. "French is going to pollute the air of Alberta!" one MLA declared. In Saskatchewan local stations in Saskatoon and Gravelbourg, financed by Francophones, went on the air in 1952. In both provinces these stations became part of the Radio-Canada network in 1972. A national French television network followed, this time with much less public opposition.

The Quiet Revolution in Quebec and the work of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism brought about a softening of attitudes in the West with respect to French-language instruction. In 1964 the Alberta School Act was changed to permit the use of French as well as English as a language of instruction for the first nine grades, and in 1968 through grade 12. In designated bilingual schools this could be up to 50% of class time. Such designated schools appeared in Saskatchewan after the 1967 Education Act amendments; after 1978 up to 80% French instruction was allowed in immersion schools (Type A). The same provision was made in Alberta in 1976.

But immersion schools, however desirable for those learning French as a second language, have proved a stumbling block and a source of frustration for Francophone students, as well as being a channel for assimilation. As an alternative, French schools have been established for Francophone students in

Saskatchewan; however, the dozen or so French schools are in different school districts and under majority Anglophone control. There are at present three French schools in Alberta, only one with a majority Francophone school board.

Both provincial associations have used the courts to try to win recognition of the right to a French education for children of Francophone parents and the right to administer such schools. In 1988 the Court of Queen's Bench in Saskatchewan ruled that under Section 23 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms the right of Francophones to control their schools was implicit.

In August 1989 the government of Saskatchewan agreed to the implementation of this ruling, but it has since postponed the necessary legislation.

A similar case in Alberta was appealed to the Supreme Court of Canada, which ruled in 1990 in favour of participation by Francophones, in varying degrees in proportion to their numbers, in the administration of schools serving their children.

Even more potentially far-reaching was the Mercure case. In 1980 Father André Mercure of North Battleford, Saskatchewan, refused to pay a traffic ticket printed in English only, on the ground that the North-West Territories Act required laws to be published in French, the use of French in the courts and documentation in French. The case went to the Saskatchewan Court of Appeal and beyond that to the Supreme Court of Canada. Father Mercure died in 1986 without having seen justice rendered but the Association culturelle carried on the case.

Finally, in 1988, the Supreme Court ruled that "it follows that s. 110 continues in effect for that purpose and that the statutes of Saskatchewan must be enacted, printed, and published in English and French and that both languages may be used in the Saskatchewan courts." However, the Court also ruled that since Section 110 had not been specifically included in the constitution of Saskatchewan its government had the option either of accepting the necessity of translating its past and future laws into French or of passing a bilingual act declaring all laws enacted in English only to be valid. To the disappointment of Saskatchewan Francophones and their friends and supporters, and despite its quite recent approval of the Meech Lake Accord, which called for the preservation of minority rights, with Bill 2 the government of Saskatchewan chose the latter course.

Since Alberta was similarly affected by the Supreme Court ruling in the Mercure case the government of Alberta, although also a signatory to the Meech Lake Accord, passed Bill 60 with the same effect as Saskatchewan's Bill 2.

There was, however, a difference in the approaches of the two provinces. Whereas in Alberta no readiness was shown to make concessions in linguistic matters, Premier Grant Devine attempted to reassure Francophones inside and outside the province by declaring that Saskatchewan was moving towards bilingualism with all possible speed and by promising that the government would in due course translate laws that were deemed to be of particular importance to Francophones.

This rather more open attitude was further expressed in Saskatchewan's willingness to enter into an agreement with the federal government in 1989. By its terms, Saskatchewan would receive substantial federal grants to assist in the translation of laws and to make possible the establishment of a Language Institute at the University of Regina. Federal money would also be provided to help in the re-building of the only French high school in Saskatchewan, Collège Mathieu in Gravelbourg, and for Francophone community development. ■

* Donald B. Smith, *A History of French Speaking Albertans*. Unpublished thesis prepared for the Department of History, University of Calgary, 1984, p. 9.

First chapel built by Father Lacombe (St. Albert, Alberta)
Photo: Fonds Association canadienne-française de l'Ontario. Centre for Research on French Canadian Culture, Ottawa University

Bilingual is better

The Saskatoon *Star-Phoenix* reported on the merits of Saskatchewan's only Ukrainian immersion school, St. Goretti. It quoted Modest Hnatick, St. Goretti principal: "Our bilingual students are grammatically more astute than unilingual learners because they have gone through grammar construction and terminology in English and Ukranian. Those in the bilingual stream are more advanced in language learning skills than students in the English stream because they develop an ear for language nuances."

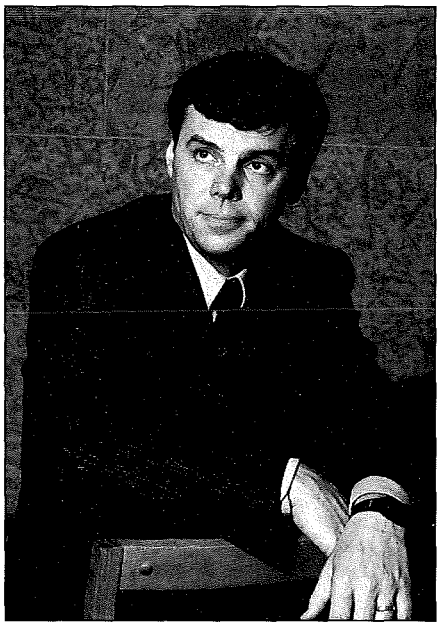
WINNIPEG
Has the Vision Blurred?

Tom Sloan

One of the challenges confronting Winnipeg is development of warmer, more equitable relations between the two official language communities.

Once it was known as the Bull's Eye of the Dominion because of its geographical position in the centre of what was the Dominion of Canada. More recently its sobriquet became the Gateway to the West, a description that remains accurate despite the fact that for the past few years, and temporarily its citizens hope, it has had a team in the eastern division of the Canadian Football League.

Whatever its nickname, Winnipeg plays and has played a significant role in the history and the economic and political life of Canada. It has also been and remains a vital crossroads for Canadians of many different origins and cultures. The first Europeans to visit the area were French explorers, followed by coureurs de bois and fur traders. They were followed by more settlers of French, British, Ukrainian, German, Icelandic and other stocks. Together they created the cosmopolitan city of almost 600,000 Canadians who call Winnipeg their home. Today, as in several other parts of the country, one of the issues facing Winnipeggers is the challenge to develop the most just and cordial possible relations between the two official language communities of Canada — English and French.



Greg Selinger

Considering his name, Greg Selinger might seem an unlikely spokesman for the French-speaking community of Winnipeg. But he is in fact the uncontested representative on city council of the Francophone population of over 30,000 — a little more than 5% of the total but twice as large proportionately as the Francophone minority in Edmonton.

Selinger is an English-speaking professor of community development who speaks better than passable French and who defeated a long-time French-speaking incumbent in the Taché ward. Taché includes the former city of St. Boniface, now a part of Winnipeg but still proud of more than 200 years of history as the principal centre of French language and culture in western Canada.

Selinger, who became one of Winnipeg's 39 councillors only in 1989, takes seriously his role as representative of the French-speaking community, not only in his own ward but also in the city as a whole. Because of what Winnipeg is, it is a challenging job.

Winnipeg is unique in at least three ways.

Among the largest Canadian municipalities it is alone in being one integrated city rather than a metropolitan region incorporating several separate municipalities.

Among western cities it has the largest and most historically established Francophone population.

Among all Canadian cities it is the only one that, in its very Act of Incorporation, is obliged by provincial law to provide services, albeit to a limited extent, in both of Canada's official languages.

This obligation dates back to 1971, when a dozen municipalities were folded into one city. Among them was St. Boniface, a largely French-speaking enclave that was, to put it mildly, reluctant to lose its identity in an overwhelmingly Anglophone conglomeration.

Bilingual services

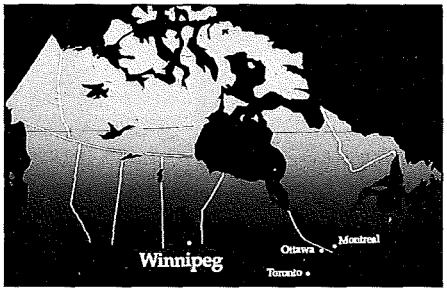
It was to help overcome that reluctance that the province made two concessions, writing them into the City of Winnipeg Act. One was that, in what was termed "Historic St. Boniface", including neighbouring St. Vital, essential services should be provided in both English and French. Secondly, the law provided that bilingual services be available at city hall and in the central offices of all municipal departments.

That was and is the law. What is the reality in Winnipeg today?

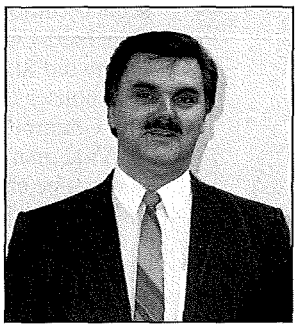
According to interested observers, particularly in the Francophone community, while the record is far from utterly black, it is spotty.

To the principal Francophone organization, the Société franco-manitobaine, while the law itself was a long step forward in all too many instances it has become, in practice, a dead letter.

In a 45-page brief presented in 1990 to a joint provincial-municipal committee looking at the language aspects of



the law, the SFM claimed that even in St. Boniface bilingualism has been blurred almost to the vanishing point. The SFM put the blame on the absence of a real will to act on the part of successive city administrations. "Francophone citizens have received many expressions of good will and proposals for reform. But no real measures have been taken to change the situation."



Edmond LaBossière

Richard Frost

The SFM brief called for a series of reforms, both to the law itself and to the way it is administered, including an expansion of the geographical area where the use of French is supposedly assured. The main problem with the section of the law dealing with language "resides in the fact that it has no teeth." The brief urged the appointment of an ombudsman to ensure enforcement of the language provisions.

The need for change is emphasized by SFM's Edmond LaBossière. "There must be improvements both in the law and in the services provided." Even in St. Boniface, he points out with the aid of photographs, road signs remain either in English or in bad French. Many city documents that should legally be bilingual are still in English only. "There has to be a comprehensive plan," he insists.

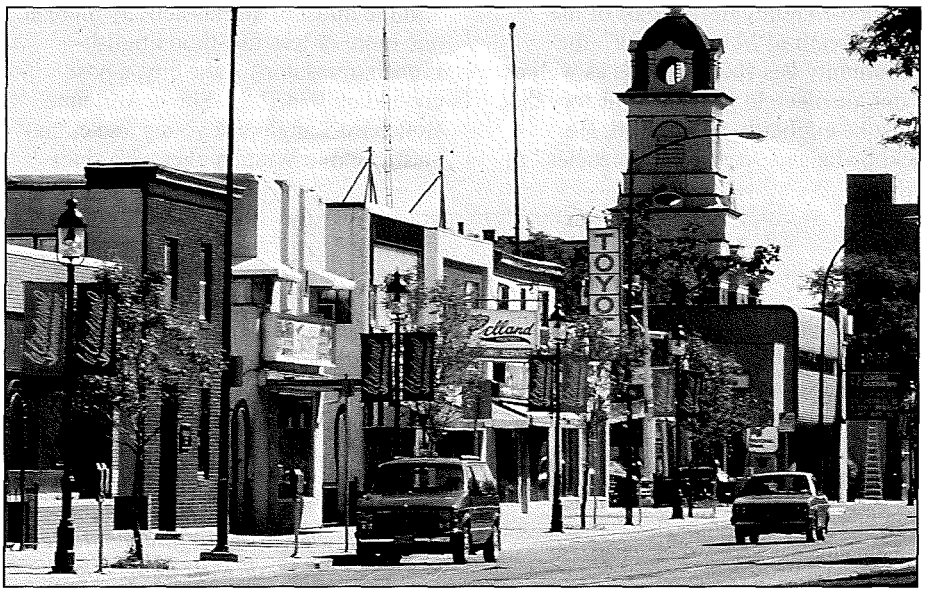
Greg Selinger agrees that the situation is unsatisfactory. "There is a good deal of ambivalence" in the 1971 law and also in its impact. He too notes that St. Boniface has had to struggle to get French-language services in most areas, including the most crucial. The local police station has been trying to reintroduce bilingual operations. "The capacity was lost because no one was pushing for it." But that has now changed. The indifference has disappeared.

Terry Moore, an editorialist specializing in city politics on the *Winnipeg Free Press*, concurs that the language provisions of the law have been inadequately observed. But, like Selinger, he puts a share of the blame on those who drafted the law. "It's simply too vague in many respects." The paper's position is clear. "We have argued that the priority should be on satisfying people's real needs, not just the legal obligations." One example of needs actually being met concerns the public transportation system. Ten years ago, Moore recalls, the French safety instructions in the city buses were incomprehensible. Today they are in literate, understandable language — one small but significant improvement in terms of everyday life.

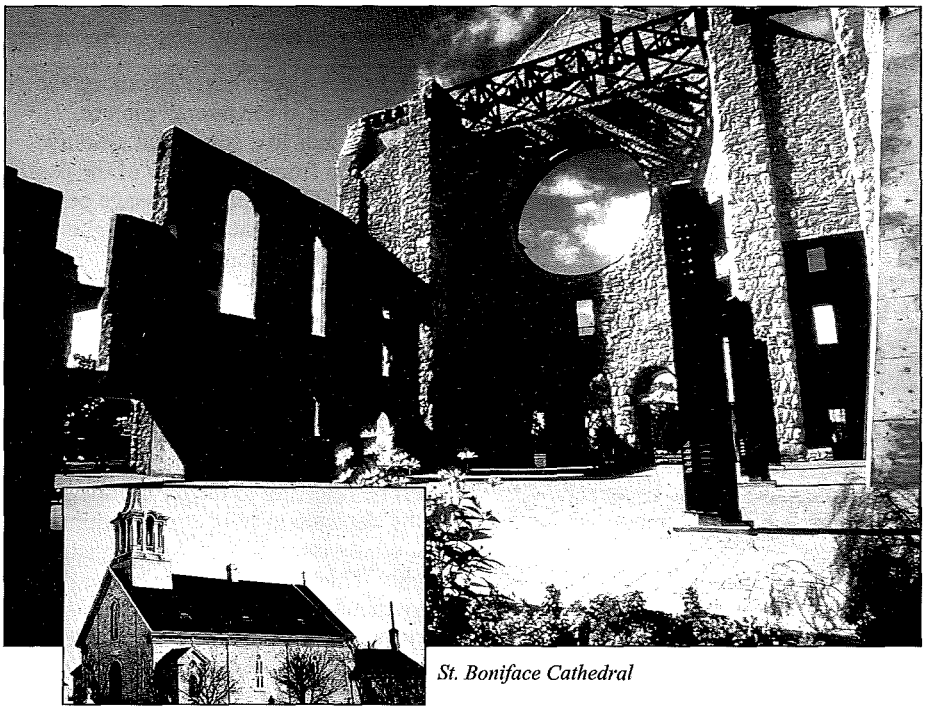
There have been other advances, too. But, looking at the overall picture, Moore comes to a somewhat gloomy conclusion from the history of the past 20 years. "The implicit message coming from the city is that language rights just aren't all that important."

Winnipeg's top civil servant, Chief Commissioner Richard Frost, acknowledges that, despite the law, problems remain to be solved. One difficulty involves attitudes. "There is a history of some fractiousness in Winnipeg," he cautions. Among other things, he could well be referring to the city council's 1984 decision to hold a referendum on the whole issue of minority language rights. This was in reaction to the then provincial government's efforts to expand those rights for the Francophone population following a Supreme Court of Canada ruling that the province had in fact run roughshod over them for much of the past century.

Also citing current financial constraints, which demand "a balanced judgment on costs", Commissioner Frost nevertheless is convinced that progress has been and will continue to be made. "Our strategy is a quiet one. We intend to make gradual moves in areas that will have the biggest impact on services." All city departments have been asked to submit their own specific proposals for action. "We have made a commitment to a general plan. Now we ⇨



Provencher Boulevard



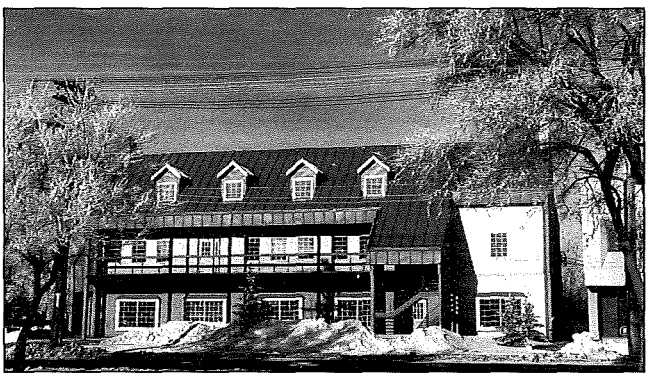
St. Boniface Cathedral

are pulling together a logical sequence." The joint committee is in place. But Frost expresses the hope that the province will not have to be unduly involved and that the issue will not become politicized.

It can be presumed that Premier Gary Filmon heartily shares that wish. But it is also true that he has come out unequivocally in support of the essential demands of the representatives of the French-speaking community. Speaking to the annual meeting of the SFM at the end of 1989, he insisted that, while "Franco-Manitobans are part of the main stream of Manitoba life", the community has special needs as well as a unique place in provincial history that must be explicitly recognized. He acknowledged "certain deficiencies" in the Act of Incorporation and promised they would be corrected — a promise he repeated to SFM members in 1990.

In the meantime the city can point to at least a few gestures indicating that good will is present in increasing measure. French-language tours of city hall were begun last year, increasing numbers of city documents are becoming available in both languages and, most symbolic of all, for the first time in history the city's 1989 Annual Report was published in a bilingual format.

In the midst of all this activity there is one more or less full-time English-French translator for the city, a post created only in 1981. She is Adrienne Bouchard-Langlois, a young and enthusiastic native Winnipegger who since 1984 has combined the functions of translator and information officer in the City Clerk's department. Among other achievements during her six-year tenure, she has compiled an impressive 120-page bilingual lexicon, the *City of Winnipeg Terminology/Terminologie de la ville de Winnipeg*, which went into its second edition last year. Appropriately, Bouchard-Langlois' office is in the ornate old St. Boniface city hall, which now houses the offices of the Community Committee of the St. Boniface-St. Vital quarter. Unofficially, it could perhaps be called the Francophone headquarters for the whole city. To provide a dose of reality, however, it also contains the offices of the city's Recreation Department where, as Greg Selinger among others notes, adequate bilingual capacity is still far from being achieved.

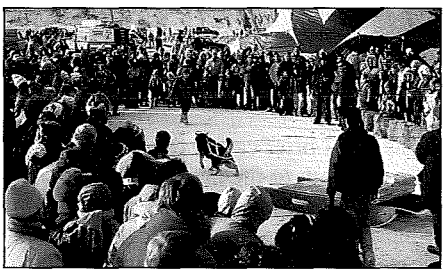


Maison franco-manitbaine

St. Boniface

Around the old city hall lies what is still the centre of Francophone life in the city and, to a considerable extent, for the whole province. This is so despite the fact that only about one-third of the 35,000 residents of the area are Francophone. Here, the Francophone population is most concentrated and the Francophone presence is palpable. St. Boniface is home to not only the relics — such as the tomb of 19th-century Métis leader Louis Riel — but also to the living institutions of the Francophone community, including the head offices of a dozen Francophone organizations.

An institution that has been threatening to turn into a relic as far as Francophones are concerned is the St. Boniface General Hospital. Founded in 1871 by the Grey Nuns, it was for a long time an essentially French-language institution. Then, as the Francophone population gradually shrank in relative terms, its character changed, a change hastened by its incorporation into the teaching system of the University of Manitoba Faculty of Medicine. While the institution remained officially bilingual, its medical staff became overwhelmingly English-speaking, as did, to a somewhat lesser extent, its patient base.



Festival du Voyageur

In recent years, however, along with a reawakening of Francophone awareness, some efforts have been made to strengthen what had become a precarious bilingual vocation. Some training in French for the medical and, in particular, the nursing staff is now under consideration. In addition, in the near future French-speaking patients could be receiving a greater proportion of services in their own language. An official languages office has been set up, providing a new fillip to the process.

A few minutes' walk from the hospital is the Collège universitaire de St. Boniface which, in association with the University of Manitoba, offers post-secondary courses at both the college and the university level, the only strictly Francophone institution in western Canada to offer a university degree. A future priority could well be the training of a new generation of French-speaking nurses for the nearby hospital.

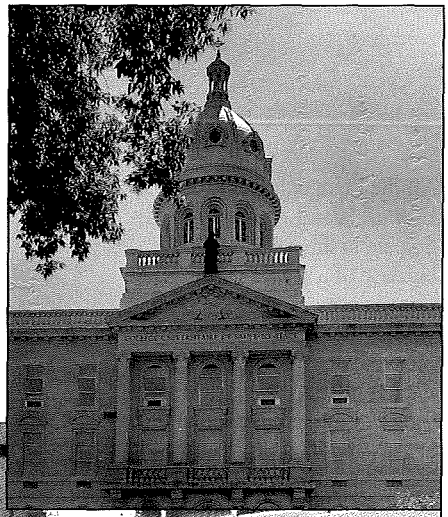
St. Boniface General Hospital

Across the street is the St. Boniface Cathedral, the seat of the Archbishop and a centre of religious activity for the Francophone population. Also in the neighbourhood are the St. Boniface Museum and the completely bilingual community library.

A few blocks north is the Maison franco-manitobaine, constructed in the 19th-century Quebec style and housing the headquarters of several Francophone organizations, including the SFM, the weekly newspaper *La Liberté* and the provincial youth association, the Conseil jeunesse provincial. Beside the Maison is a credit union and, almost directly across the street, the Centre culturel franco-manitobain, a building impressive in its architecture and also in the variety of activities to which it is home. These include Le Cercle Molière, which claims to be Canada's oldest French-language theatre company, and an internationally acclaimed dance troupe, Les Danseurs de la Rivière Rouge.

In addition to a theatre, the building also contains a large hall for social events and a popular restaurant.

The centre was created with the help of the federal and provincial governments in 1972. It is now a provincial Crown corporation, with much of the funding provided by the province,



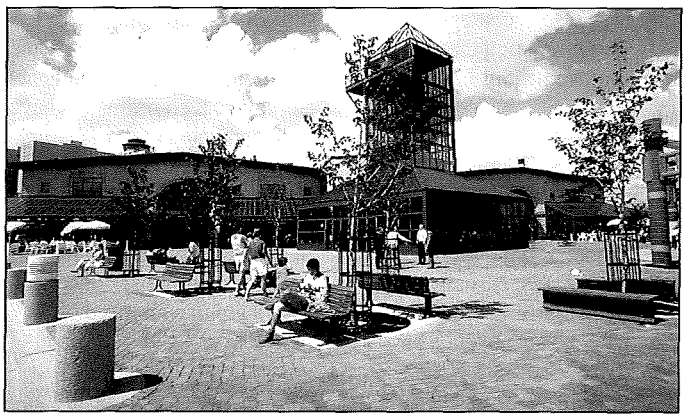
Collège universitaire de St. Boniface

Winnipeg City Hall

a reflection of the spirit of co-operation that increasingly exists between the community and the provincial government.

St. Boniface is, in short, both a part of Winnipeg and also something quite distinct. It is both a bastion of French and a place of linguistic harmony, with its own unique flavour. Its restaurants, not surprisingly with a certain French flair, are among the best in the city. It is the centre of every aspect of Francophone life and culture, including the annual Festival du Voyageur, one of Canada's major winter festivals. It is not itself a city any longer, but it has its own community spirit and identity, in no way hostile to the larger entity that surrounds it, but distinctively itself.

In the meantime, that larger entity, Winnipeg continues to try to come to a just and reasonable accommodation with its official language minority, not only in St. Boniface, but throughout the whole city. There are at least some signs the effort may not be in vain. ■



The Forks Market

REGIONAL ROUNDUP

NEWS FROM THE REGIONAL OFFICES

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

All the Francophones of Prince Edward Island were able to participate in this year's census because of a special Statistics Canada project to help people who cannot read or write complete the questionnaire. Because the province's Acadians are well aware of the importance of the census and its impact on the availability of federal services in French, all of them were determined to "count themselves in".

Provincial public servants occupying bilingual positions now have access to a guide to writing and editing which was launched at a training day at which the guest of honour, Premier Ghiz, gave a speech completely in French. It is hoped that this training session will henceforth take place once a year.

NEW BRUNSWICK

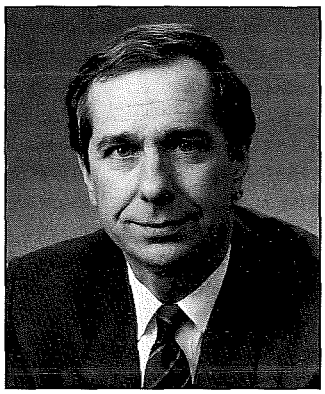
The Semaine provinciale du français was a huge success again this year, with all schools at every level participating. The private sector and the CBC were noticeably present throughout the week. The objective is to encourage activities promoting the use and improvement of French in education.

The CBC has responded to the lobbying activities of the Société des Jeux d'Acadie with a commitment to produce three hours of programs on the Acadian Games. Also, the Centre du tourisme acadien has just been set up and a new weekly newspaper, *L'Action régionale*, made its début in the Grand-Sault region.

QUEBEC

The publication of a study on the use of French as the language of work in Montreal carried out by the Conseil de la langue française gave rise to a controversy regarding government support for francization. The study indicated that there had been only a slight increase in the use of French as the language of work.

As to the underrepresentation of Anglophones in the provincial Public Service, Daniel Johnson, President of the Treasury Board, has announced concrete measures to rectify the situation. As well, Anglophone employment co-ordinators have been appointed to the Treasury Board and the Office des ressources humaines. A similar imbalance has also been noted in federal institutions in the Eastern Townships. Concertaction, a group comprised of representatives of the federal government, the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages, minority educational



Daniel Johnson

institutions and the minority official language association, has proposed innovative solutions, including a professional development program involving Anglophone participation.

Quebec has stated that it recognizes the importance of the province's Anglophone community and that it intends to deal with the issue of the underrepresentation of Anglophones in the Public Service. It is also committed to improving the services provided to the English-speaking community as a whole. In line with this commitment, Gérald Tremblay, Minister of Industry, Commerce and Technology, stated at an Alliance Quebec conference that Anglophone Quebecers are an essential part of Quebec society.

Michel Pagé, Minister of Education, has announced the creation of a task force that will focus on the special problems of Anglophone schools. Since 1976 enrolment in Anglophone schools has decreased by more than 57%. The task force will try to find a solution to this decline and to the exodus of Anglophone graduates to other provinces.

Judge Benjamin Greenberg allowed the deputy Crown attorney to use French in pleadings at the trial of the three Mohawk warriors, which was conducted in English. Counsel for the defence opposed this ruling and demanded the right to appeal. In Manitoba politicians, the *Winnipeg Free Press* and the Société franco-manitobain also denounced Judge Greenberg's ruling.

ONTARIO

The Etobicoke School Board planned to cancel its early immersion classes this year. However, several parents, representing approximately 1,200 students, were against the decision and successfully mobilized public opinion in the course of a few weeks. As a result, the Board decided to put the plan in abeyance. Another victory for support for bilingualism....

Our linguistic duality cannot be taken lightly. It deserves our undivided attention. This, at least, is what Judge Hector Soublière tried to convey when he acquitted an individual in Ottawa on the basis of several infringements of language rights. Judge Soublière maintained that, although the accused can state their prefer-

ence as to the language to be used at their trial, too often the notes, counts and even indictments are in English only. Other judges may follow suit, which will no doubt encourage the Attorney General of Ontario to take appropriate action.

Manitoba

Franco-Manitoban dynamism is having an ever-greater impact, as demonstrated by the success of the "Les petites oreilles". Although this children's program is entirely a Franco-Manitoban production it already has a pan-Canadian flavour. The program, which is broadcast in Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Ontario and British Columbia, has rapidly become very popular. Beginning in September, it will also be seen in Alberta. On behalf of the production team, René Fontaine received an award from the president of the CBC. Hats off to each and every one involved!

The community has been able to continue to make progress as a result of the federal-community agreement. At the second public meeting the Provincial Planning and Priorities Committee submitted five priorities for the first year of the agreement. The agreement has still not been signed in spite of the efforts of the Franco-Manitoban community, which met with more than 500 leaders, organized 45 meetings in all parts of the province and held co-ordination meetings with provincial organizations to ensure that its message reached the government. The five priorities are:

- establishment of a network of community development officers
- implementation of a training plan for each priority activity area
- organization of offices
- creation of a network linking all provincial communities and organizations
- establishment of a provincial economic development office.

Saskatchewan

Dialogue between the official language communities is sometimes multi-faceted. Worthy of special note in this regard was a symposium on mixed marriages that was held in Saskatchewan. This event, which was the brainchild of the Service fransaskois d'éducation des adultes, brought together some 40 individuals for a weekend to examine what it is like to live as a bicultural couple. This personal approach could well have an impact when the proceedings of the symposium are published and circulated in the communities. Who knows whether this kind of dialogue will expand and provide food for thought at the national level? It will be interesting to watch developments....

Alberta

Alberta's Constitutional Reform Task Force has held its public hearings. More than half the participants took the opportunity to reiterate their support for official bilingualism. Also, the hearings demonstrated that opposition to bilingualism is based on a poor understanding of the application of the Official Languages Act in the country. The Association canadienne-française de l'Alberta made a submission that included the recommendation that certain aboriginal rights be retained and stated the importance of arriving at constitutional guarantees, in Quebec and in all the other parts of the country, regarding minority language rights.

With respect to education, the Alberta government clearly stated in its Throne Speech that it would not table legislation by virtue of which Franco-Albertans could manage their schools in the near future. This decision was a source of concern to parents at Cold Lake, who were denied the establishment of a homogeneous French-language school at Medley. Francophone students will attend a school with three educational programs.

British Columbia

Revenue Canada has just published a document regarding the language training and follow-up program for employees in bilingual positions. The program promotes the use of French in the work environment. The guide will be distributed to various other departments so that they may use it as a model.

Northwest Territories

Will Francophones and aboriginal people join forces in their common causes? It seems that this may be possible. At least that was the impression at the end of a meeting of Bill Erasmus, Chief of the Dene nation, and Marlene Steppan, Chair of the Fédération des francophones des Territoires and Director of the Fédération des francophones hors Québec (now the Fédération des communautés francophones et acadiennes du Canada). A co-operative effort might well lead to progress on certain issues, including the federal-territorial agreements on languages. The meeting's participants expressed their satisfaction at this rapprochement.

After 11 years of struggle the radio and television services of Radio-Canada will be available in Yellowknife. Beginning in September 1991 Radio-Canada will broadcast its programs from Montreal.

Yukon

Radio-Canada will also be available in the Yukon from January 1992. The Association franco-yukonnaise wanted to receive the signal of Vancouver's French radio station, but this was not possible. Programs will be transmitted by satellite from Montreal with a time lag of three hours. ■

The Chronicle Telegraph: Quebec City's English Newspaper

*Dorothy Guinan**

Many people are unaware Quebec City has an English newspaper.

In fact, the *Quebec Chronicle Telegraph* claims to be the oldest newspaper in North America, 227 years old. Some people snub this claim to fame, as the present-day newspaper is a result of a series of merges throughout the years.

The weekly, now owned by Quebec City lawyer David L. Cannon, is put out by volunteers, except for one full-time office person. "My intention, when I helped purchase the paper 10 years ago, was to keep it going....I keep it going financially, but the only reason why it is here today is because of committed people," said Cannon.

In 1989 the newspaper broke even. This was an improvement from previous years, when it lost money. Its circulation is now 3,000; in the past it had soared as high as 11,000 and dropped as low as 300.

The secret to survival for Quebec City's only English newspaper is simple: hard work, and a daily flip through local newspapers to find out who is breaking the federal government's Official Languages Act.

Calls for tender, notices of land expropriation and CRTC hearings, as well as services offered by federal departments, by law must be published in both official languages in independent media where it exists. The law applies to federal services in areas categorized as regions of significant demand. Quebec City falls into this category.

Forty per cent of the *Quebec Chronicle Telegraph*'s advertising comes from federal government departments and Crown corporations. Most advertise without being coaxed but those that don't are reported to Canada's Commissioner of Official Languages by Karen Macdonald, the newspaper's managing editor. "It's important we remain vigilant about this policy. Increasing the number of complaints from Quebec City is how we register our community as concerned. It also works," said Macdonald.

Most of the institutions reported follow the Commissioner's advice and advertise in the newspaper.

The newspaper has three regular volunteer workers and about 12 occasional writers who each publish five to 10 articles a year.

Macdonald, a volunteer, spends 12-16 hours a week helping put together the paper in addition to her job as host of "Inside Quebec", a news program on CKMI, the city's English-language TV station. "I think it's important this paper stay alive. It's the only tangible evidence of an English community in Quebec City. People can actually pick it up and take it home with them," said Macdonald.

Karen Macdonald

Since the early 1980s the *Quebec Chronicle Telegraph* hasn't had a formal editorial position. Macdonald said the newspaper's role is strictly to inform Anglophones about issues concerning the English community. The English-speaking population of Quebec City is 10,750.

Bill 142, Quebec's law ensuring health and social services to Anglophones, is among subjects closely followed by the newspaper. It also serves as a community bulletin board, informing readers about cultural and social events.

For the past few years the newspaper has also served as a tourist guide in the summer and, occasionally, as a ski guide in the winter.

Until 1971 the *Quebec Chronicle Telegraph* published daily.

The newspaper spoke out politically as a daily and for the following 10 years. It endorsed the vision of a bilingual and bicultural Canada studied by the Royal Commission of Bilingualism and Biculturalism in the 1960s. The paper also warned of the dangers of independence surrounding the 1980 Quebec referendum. Yet it was not necessarily a defender of the federal system and it repeated the need for constitutional reform on several occasions.

Frank Howard, now a columnist for the *Ottawa Citizen*, worked for the newspaper from 1955 until 1957. At that time about 15 people worked for the *Chronicle Telegraph*, with five city reporters, two sports reporters, a women's issues reporter, and correspondents from the National Assembly, city hall and the courthouse. "The newspaper had many good journalists, but couldn't keep them because it didn't pay very much," recalled Howard. Richard Gwyn of the *Toronto Star* and John Gray of the *Globe and Mail* are two of many *Quebec Chronicle Telegraph* alumni.

Macdonald admitted the newspaper has never been a successful weekly nor has she illusions of it returning to the days when it was a thriving daily. "I believe there is a place for a bigger, more complete English weekly in Quebec City. There are a lot more than 3,000 Anglophones living here," she said. ■

***Dorothy Guinan is a freelance writer and a political researcher for the Montreal *Gazette*.**

LANGUAGE AND SOCIETY

Receives Award of Excellence

Language and Society was honoured at the 1990 Excel awards, sponsored by the International Association of Business Communicators (IABC), Capital Chapter.

The editorial "Who's Afraid of the Big Bad Wolf?" (Number 30, Spring 1990) received the Award of Excellence (first prize) in the editorial category.

Here's what some of the judges had to say:

"Well-written item on a sensitive subject...".

"A difficult task approached with sophistication and imagination.... Compelling facts were presented in an interesting way and cogent, balanced arguments ended with a call to respond to the concerns of the fair-minded. The resulting response in the media was impressive...".

"Your objectives are well defined and methods of tracking results thorough. Overall package presentation excellent...".

The editorial was judged not only for content and style but also as a total communications vehicle. It was reproduced as an op-ed in dailies with a total circulation of over 1.2 million.

The IABC represents 12,000 communications practitioners in 40 countries, including 1,400 Canadians.

A Gem of Acadian and Canadian Heritage

Muriel Roy

In the picturesque Memramcook Valley, a few kilometres southeast of Moncton, New Brunswick, a magnificent building dominates the hill overlooking the village of Saint-Joseph. This imposing structure, built of stone cut from nearby quarries, is known as the Monument Lefebvre. For more than a quarter of a century it has been the subject of many different plans and schemes. It is among the most important of Acadian heritage buildings, perhaps the single most important.

The monument, designed by architect G. C. Dumaresq, who also drew up the plans for the Legislative Assembly of New Brunswick, was built at the end of the last century in memory of Father Camille Lefebvre. A member of the Congregation of the Holy Cross, Father Lefebvre came from Quebec in 1864 to found Collège Saint-Joseph, the first institution of higher learning for Acadians. On his death in 1895 the alumni and friends of the Collège wanted to honour this eminent educator whose work had made such a contribution to the betterment of the Acadian people.

Since 1963 Collège Saint-Joseph, a component of the new Université de Moncton, as well as the physical plant in Memramcook, including the Monument Lefebvre, have belonged to the province. The former college was converted into an adult training institute and the monument was sometimes used for cultural activities or meetings. As time went on maintenance of the monument Lefebvre proved costly and it was left in a state of neglect.

In 1978, however, the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada recommended that the survival of the Acadian people be recognized as a fact of national historical importance. The Monument Lefebvre was chosen to house the interpretation centre. The Canadian Parks Service occupied the ground floor but use of the auditorium was banned by the province for safety reasons.

The Monument Lefebvre became the property of the federal government after pressure from the Acadian community for the building's complete restoration. It is classified as a historic monument because of its heritage character. A restoration project was undertaken in 1984 and work was to be completed the following spring. However, the election of a new government in September 1984 interrupted the project and it was not until the spring of 1989, after constant lobbying by Acadian groups, that the project was resumed.

Once restored, the Monument Lefebvre, with its interpretation centre on the "Acadian odyssey" and its magnificent auditorium fully equipped to present stage shows, will once again be able to play its original role as a meeting place for Acadians and become a real centre of cultural development for artists, musicians and performers from New Brunswick and elsewhere. It will once again become a preferred venue for the artistic events for which it was once famous.

(Our translation)

Second-Language Learning: When To Begin?

TOM SLOAN

It is an important question; it is a contentious question that sometimes divides educators searching for the answer; and it is the question that was put one day last February to a panel of experts gathered together for the occasion in the National Capital Region by *Language and Society*.

The question: What is the best age to start a child on the process of learning a second language? The discussion was lively; and if the conclusions drawn were somewhat ambiguous that was undoubtedly because all the panelists explicitly recognized that there were valid points to be made on both sides of the argument as to preferability of an earlier or a later start.

The four participants in the discussion were all specialists in the field of second-language education. They were Gilles Bibeau of the Faculty of Educational Sciences of the University of Montreal, Richard Clément of the School of Psychology of the University of Ottawa, Birgit Harley of the Modern Language Centre of the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education and Marjorie Wesche of the Second Language Institute of the University of Ottawa. The moderator was Raymond LeBlanc, Director of the Second Language Institute of the University of Ottawa, who introduced the discussion by noting that whether it was a matter of the regular core curriculum or French immersion, several different solutions have been proposed and practised across the country.

Left to right: Gilles Bibeau, Marjorie Whesche, Raymond Leblanc, Birgit Harley and Richard Clément

The younger, the better?

As the discussion progressed, it was clear that the case for "the younger, the better" rested to a large extent on the malleability of the youngest children, on their ability to pick up essentials of another language, including the accent, almost as easily as they pick up their own. They can adapt easily to new sound systems and even to some extent to new grammatical structures.

There was also the question of attitudes to consider. The youngest children accept the learning of a second language as something quite normal in the educational process — a natural part of schooling. They do not feel it as in any sense an imposition as some older pupils might. From another angle, early intercultural contact in the form of exposure to teachers from the second-language group is an effective way of helping develop positive social attitudes in the long term. Still another advantage was seen in the head start offered to the early beginners.

There remained, however, some ambivalence among panel members, who generally agreed that the absence of an early start was in no sense a disaster. "It is important to note that a second language can be learned at any age," said Birgit Harley, who nevertheless observed that, while late starters might catch up with the others, it was rare for them to go ahead.

Richard Clément saw advantages in both approaches. "Perhaps, before puberty, children can master certain grammatical structures and better master the accent, but children who learn after puberty are going to acquire more complex structures more quickly."

Marjorie Wesche took another tack: "I believe if younger starters were pushed all the way through they would retain the advantage in certain areas, such as face-to-face communication and fluency."

As for Gilles Bibeau: "In general, I think there are certainly advantages in starting early. But these are not so overwhelming as to force a school board or a government to conclude that to start young is always the better alternative."

More specifically, in the Canadian context panelists expressed concern about the ability of children belonging to a minority language group, with a still uncertain grasp of their own language and constantly exposed to the language of the majority, to handle too early an introduction to the second language. There was agreement, particularly in the case of French-speaking children, that the priority must go to the solid acquisition of their mother tongue.

One distinction between early and late starters, with special though not exclusive application to immersion programs, involves the degree of motivation needed. Late starters, usually near to or at the beginning of their secondary school years, needed a higher than average motivation to cope with the challenge of a new language. A later start was, therefore, seen as more appropriate to academic high achievers intending to continue on to post-secondary education than to those who do not intend to do so. Conversely, an early start was seen as an opportunity for an early successful school experience for the less academically gifted.

Whenever the exposure to the second language begins, the panelists emphatically agreed, it must not come in the form of dribs and drabs. Twenty minutes a day, for example, was generally seen as quite useless. At some point, especially in French the two Anglophone panelists agreed, there must be intensive exposure to the realities of the language.

The crucial question put by the moderator brought out the shades of thinking of the panelists. "In ideal conditions, at what age would you send your children to study the other language?"

From Richard Clément: "Within a context of the mastery of the first language, but only in that context, I would say 'early'."

In the case of immersion courses, Birgit Harley favoured early entry, provided important negative social factors, such as depriving a child of normal neighbourhood social contacts, did not intervene.

Don't start too quickly was the advice of Gilles Bibeau. Recent studies in Quebec have shown that most secondary school graduates still have large gaps in the knowledge of their own language. Too early a start in learning English as a second language would simply exacerbate the situation, he suggested.

As for Marjorie Wesche: "Where it's possible to establish an early immersion program with native-speaker models and plenty of activity-based learning, this is a good formula for members of the majority language group, whose language is not at risk." If all else is equal, choose the early route, she advised.

Summing up, moderator Raymond LeBlanc invoked the complexity of the question — a complexity mirrored in the discussion. "If there is an enormous amount of research, and this research is often contradictory in its results, it is often because the variables that have been taken into account are not the same in the various pieces of research that have been done." His remarks echoed those made by all participants at one time or another during the exchange of opinions: much research has been done, but much more needs to be done. ■

Immersion in Retrospect

JEAN MACISAAC

French immersion programs celebrated their 25th anniversary in 1990. What had started off as a pilot project proposed by a small group of parents at St. Lambert Elementary School in Montreal has now become an integral part of every province's educational system. In 1970-71 there were virtually no French immersion students outside Quebec; by 1990-91 an estimated 288,000 elementary and secondary students were enrolled in immersion programs. Fuelling this phenomenal growth has been the desire on the part of English-speaking parents to provide better opportunities for their children than they had had to learn Canada's other official language. Rather than learn French as a subject immersion students would have a chance to learn in French by studying mathematics, history and so on in that language.

French immersion spread quickly from its tenuous beginnings in 1965. Impressed with results of the initial experiments and convinced of the benefits of bilingualism, particularly in the Canadian context, parents everywhere began to lobby their local school boards to introduce immersion programs. Together, parents, teachers, school trustees and department of education officials transformed language teaching in Canada. These programs became so popular that, in some cases, parents camped out in sleeping bags the night before school registration to make sure of places for their children in limited immersion classes.

Parents' efforts were aided considerably by the birth and development of Canadian Parents for French, a grass-roots organization dedicated to increasing opportunities for children to learn French as a second language. This group, now numbering some 18,000 members, began in 1977 after 35 parents attended a "Parent's conference on French and exchange opportunities" convened by Keith Spicer, the first Commissioner of Official Languages. Since then, Canadian Parents for French volunteers

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have put in countless hours of work, engaged in tasks ranging from baking cakes to raise money to buy French books to delivering briefs before school boards, all in aid of promoting quality French-language instruction in English schools.

Although education is a provincial responsibility, the federal government in co-operation with provincial governments and their institutions provides support to second official language programs, including French immersion programs. In 1989-90 the total contribution to second-language instruction under the Official Languages in Education Program was over $81 million. The contribution per immersion student (full-time equivalent) was $168 at the elementary level and $261 at the secondary level.

Successes

During the last 15 years enrolment in French immersion programs has increased by over 1500% (see graph). Participation rates vary from region to region. Figures in some areas are quite extraordinary: in the Baldwin Cartier School Commission in the West Island of Montreal 96% of kindergarten students are enrolled in the immersion stream; in the Carleton School Board in the Ottawa area the rate is over 50%.

Results

Unlike regular French programs of the past which graduated students who could not speak French (sometimes after nine years of studying the language) French immersion programs are producing functionally bilingual graduates. A study published in 1990 by researchers at the University of Ottawa traced 103 recent graduates of immersion programs entering the universities of Ottawa, Carleton, Queen's and McGill.

The study found that these graduates in first-year university studies have high levels of functional ability. The students do not have any great anxiety about using French; on the contrary, they report a strong desire to use and to continue learning the language. According to researchers, many immersion students have enough second-language proficiency to be able to do some of their course work in French alongside Francophone students.

Secondary effects

French immersion has had a positive effect on core French programs, both in providing new methodologies and in increasing interest in French second-language learning in general. Participation in all FSL programs at the elementary level has increased from 29% in 1970 to over 60% today.

Issues

Since its inception French immersion has been one of the most studied programs in the educational field in Canada. Some of the main issues surrounding French immersion follow.

Proficiency in English, mathematics and science

Initially, some parents worried that children in French immersion would fall behind their peers in the regular program, particularly in mastering English skills and in subjects like mathematics and science. Research has revealed, however, that after a slight early lag the proficiency of both immersion and regular stream students in English is the same within a year of introducing English language arts into the immersion curriculum (usually in grade 3 or 4). Likewise, results in mathematics and science show that immersion students perform as well as other students.

Fluency in French

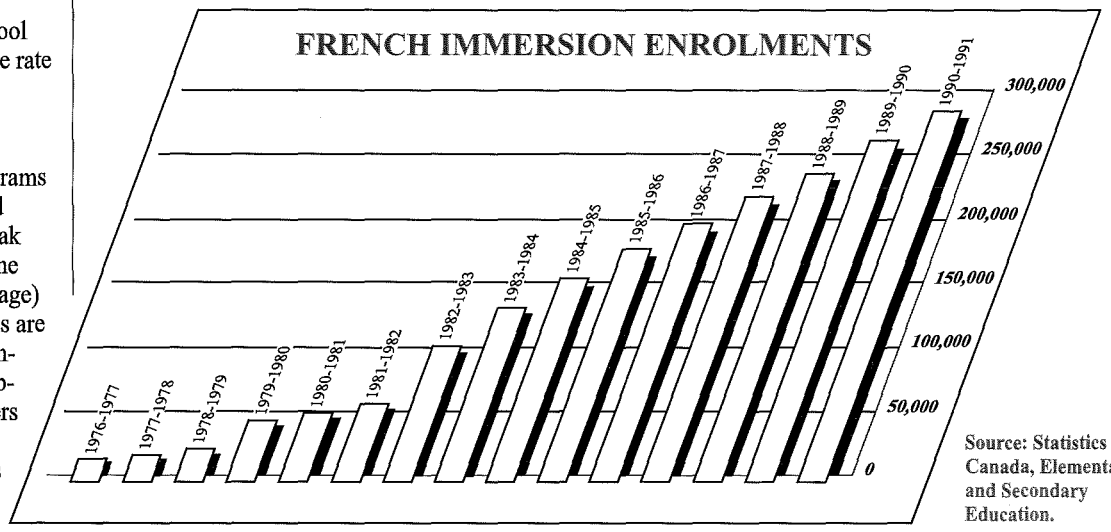
While immersion graduates do not achieve native fluency, the program does produce high levels of skill and confidence that can be built on later in life. Like other language learners, they face the problem of maintaining their language skills during periods of limited use.

Teacher shortages

Probably the single most important problem for all French second-language programs is the teacher shortage. One implication of this shortage is a potential reduction in the quality of programs. All provinces feel the pinch in one way or another and they are all involved in efforts to improve recruitment, training and retraining of second-language teachers. (See *Language and Society* 30, p. 32.)

Early, middle or late immersion?

Outcomes of different entry levels into the program are beginning to be explored. Generally speaking, there are three kinds of immersion: early (beginning in kindergarten or grade 1), middle (beginning in grade 4) and late (beginning in grade 6 or 7). Each program has its benefits and its supporters and it has become clear that none of these choices is the best for every child or for every school board. The fact that the expense of the program increases as more grade levels are offered must be considered, as well as the probability that the year of entry will affect a child's fluency on leaving the program. ■



Fifteen Years Later: A Parent's View

*PAT WEBSTER**

"If Canada endures, it is unlikely it will do so because some genius produces a single brilliant idea that solves all our problems. Our nation-saving ideas are already at hand: justice, tolerance, good will, concentration on what unites us rather than what divides. What is necessary is for more of us to put them into play in our daily lives as citizens, not to wait passively for government or saviours to do it for us. That, basically, is what Canadian Parents for French is about."

The beginning: 1977

That is how Canadian Parents for French was introduced to adherents and potential members in a newsletter in 1977, the year the association was founded. In that article, "French Second Language Programs and National Unity", I was writing as the newly-elected president of CPF to parents like myself who wanted their children to have the chance to become fluent in French. As the mother of five children, none able to study French in our local public schools before grade 6, I was angry that such a denial of their rights could occur, particularly at a time of national crisis, the year after the Parti Québécois was first elected. As the first national president of Canadian Parents for French, I was determined to change the situation so that they — and any Canadian child — would have the right to become bilingual. For me, bilingualism wasn't a frill but a basic ingredient in a uniquely Canadian recipe.

I wrote what I believed, hoping that others shared my ideas.

They did. Parents from every province and territory responded enthusiastically and wholeheartedly by becoming members of CPF, lobbying for changes in school systems and enrolling their children by the thousands in French immersion programs. The response was overwhelming because CPF was articulating a common vision: that the Canadian who knows both English and French and can take part in both cultures is immeasurably richer for it. CPF members believed that Canadians who could talk to each other had a better chance of staying together as a country. We believed that fluency in a language led to understanding and that understanding was necessary to find political solutions acceptable to all. We thought that to deny children the opportunity to become bilingual was an insult to the mind, the soul and the spirit of this country.

Canadian Parents for French has grown from 35 to 18,000 members in 200 local chapters across Canada. Idealists we were and idealists we remain, sharing the view that Canada is a better place to live because it has more than one language.

Most of us in the founding group were parents of young school-age children, and it was in them that we put our faith for the future. Children who became fluent in French and developed positive attitudes towards their fellow Canadians during their school years were unlikely to become ignorant, mean and sour as adults. To a very satisfying degree they are proving us right. They are more tolerant. More than older Canadians, they recognize the benefits of living in a country with two languages. Survey after survey confirms this.

There is every reason to believe that this positive development in attitudes will continue. Enrolment in French second-language programs continues to increase. More than two million students are now studying French at school in core and immersion programs, twice as many as in 1984. Immersion enrolments have grown from 35,000 in 1977, when CPF was founded, to 288,000 in the current year.

Pat Webster

Canadians are increasingly bilingual, particularly those aged 15 to 24. In the five years from 1981 to 1986 their level of bilingualism increased from 18% to 20.5%.

Those who aren't bilingual themselves increasingly see this as an advantage. Three-quarters of all Canadians now want their children to become bilingual, most of them because of cultural and intellectual growth. Employment opportunities are the major advantage for some while others remain motivated by idealism and national unity.

Changes in attitude

Whatever their parents' motives may be, when these bilingual young Canadians speak to each other directly wonderful changes in attitudes can occur. Several years ago, at CPF's national Festival d'art oratoire, a young separatist from

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***Pat Webster was the first president of Canadian Parents for French and is now Quebec director of CPF.**

Quebec set out his views on Canada's future and then listened while a boy from the West explained his vision of a Canada in which Quebec played a vital and integral role. The young boy from Quebec had never known there were people outside his province who valued its language and culture. He went home to rethink his views.

Attitudes can change during formal events like the Festival or during informal ones like CPF's Rendez-Vous, where English- and French-speaking students from the same region or province get together for a weekend of fun and learning in French. New "best friends" can be made at summer camps or during a bilingual exchange. What a tragedy it is that groups like the Society for Educational Visits and Exchanges are unable to respond to even half the requests they receive for bilingual exchanges. The friendships formed during an exchange may end after a few weeks or may last for years but the good will and respect on which they are based does endure.

Constitutional struggles and a Canada increasingly divided suggest to some the failure of bilingualism as a unifying force. I suggest that what we need now is what was needed in 1977 — justice, tolerance and good will.

"Changes in the Constitution, redistribution of federal and provincial powers, a new economic deal for Canadians — obviously, such things are important. But what is more important is a change in attitudes." That is what I wrote in 1977. Nothing has changed.

Learning to speak French is not a panacea. Alone, it will not save the country, but it continues to be a concrete sign of respect and a source of individual enrichment. ■

Five Graduates of French Immersion

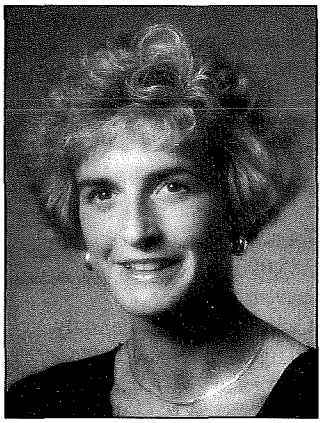
TOM SLOAN

What do the graduates of French immersion programs really think of them? How do they evaluate their experiences? Would they do it again? Admittedly, the personal testimony of five young Canadians does not constitute scientific evidence, but it does allow us to glimpse the universe of immersion as it is perceived by a few of those who have seen it at first hand and, more importantly, who have lived it.

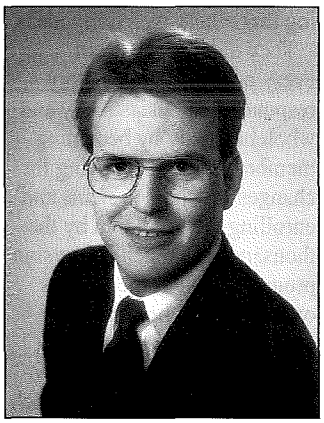
Heather Robertson

Heather Robertson graduated this summer with a degree in biology from the University of Prince Edward Island. This fall she entered Oxford University with a Rhodes Scholarship to study Human Sciences for the next two years, following which she intends to return to Canada to enter medical school.

Heather was a participant in the first-ever early immersion program in Prince Edward Island, which started in 1976, and continued in it until she completed secondary school. She entered school after spending a year with her family in Switzerland, where her father, a university professor, was on sabbatical leave. "It seemed automatic to continue in French," she remarks. "And it's something I'm very proud of."



Heather Robertson



Steven MacKinnon

On a practical note, "every summer job I have had was because I was bilingual." Those jobs have mainly been with Parks Canada in her own province, where a large proportion of visitors are from Quebec and Atlantic Canada. She expects to continue to use both languages throughout her life.

Steven MacKinnon

Steven MacKinnon now lives in New Brunswick, but he also is a graduate of French immersion in Charlottetown. In his case it was the late immersion program, starting in grade 7 and continuing through grade 12.

He made the decision personally, along with his parents. "I wanted to get a better perspective and, I suppose, to enhance my career," Steven says. "At first we were all a little wary, but soon we started having fun. I don't think I really missed anything by starting late."

After high school he studied French literature — in French, of course — at the University of Moncton. At 24 he is now executive assistant to the premier of New Brunswick, using English and French every day in the course of his duties. "There's no question. I'm in this for life."

Alan Roberts

Alan Roberts is also a product of late immersion, starting in grade 7 in the first such program offered by the Carleton, Ontario, Board of Education in 1973. In his case the motivation came from an enjoyable exchange visit the summer before to Valcartier, near Quebec City.

Unfortunately, his exposure to full immersion lasted just two years. "When we got to high school they didn't know what to do with us," he recalls. He continued to study French as intensively as he could — 40 minutes a day at school followed by night school and weekend immersion.

Following graduation from Algonquin College in Ottawa in Radio and Television Arts Alan started his own public relations consultancy firm and married into a French-speaking family. He uses French regularly in his profession and has "nothing but positive feelings" about his immersion experience.

EYE ON IMMERSION

Araxi Arslanian

Araxi Arslanian has completed her first year at the National Theatre School in Montreal. She is one of 14 carefully selected students in the School's English-language program but she regularly participates in the activities of the French-language students as well.

In one sense she is not typical because, under the provisions of Quebec's French Language Charter, as the child of recent immigrants to the province she automatically began her studies in a French school near her home in Pointe-Claire. After finishing grade 2 she moved with her parents to Calgary. "I wanted to try something different." In her case that meant spending four years in an English school. But, she says, "it felt strange." So, for the first time, she went into immersion in grade 7, remaining until the end of grade 9, after which she went into the International Baccalaureat Program, involving intensive language training, from which she graduated in 1990. "I never had any second thoughts about the value of immersion," Araxi reports, "especially now that I'm back in Montreal."

Heather Coward

Heather Coward had also just finished her first year out of high school. She is a student in the Bachelor of Education program of the Faculté Saint-Jean in Edmonton, the only university-level Francophone institution in the three westernmost provinces.

Heather started immersion in a French play school in Burnaby, British Columbia, and continued through until grade 11. "I don't ever remember learning French. It was just a natural part of the learning process." Would she send her own children? "Of course."

While she is taking some optional courses in English at the University of Alberta, with which the Faculté Saint-Jean is affiliated, all her education courses are in French. When she graduates Heather hopes to teach in a French immersion school, preferably at the kindergarten level. "I'm very glad I did it myself," she says.

Five stories: each unique, but with a common thread — one that has enriched five lives and many more throughout Canada. ■

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Downsizing Language

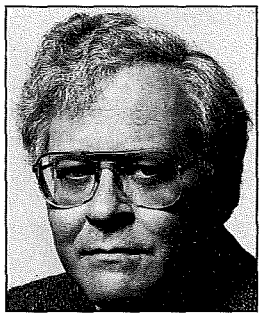
*Harry Bruce**

One use of euphemism is to express an intolerable fact in a tolerable way. People don't die. They pass away, go west, kick the bucket, lapse into the big sleep, push up daisies, pay the debt of nature, yield up the ghost, or join the dear departed. They're called home, or to the Happy Hunting Grounds, or they cross the Great Divide. There are scores of indirect ways to say someone has died, but it's a measure of our fear of unemployment that there are almost as many euphemisms for being fired or laid off.

Termination...

Terminate pops up in both fields. "Terminate with extreme prejudice" was a CIA order to murder someone as far back as 1970, and when a U.S. football team fired a cheerleader because she'd posed nude for *Playboy*, it *terminated* her. When a corporation wants to fire executives, they may be *selected out.* They are then at liberty, as though they'd gone to Jamaica for a holiday or had been released from jail. Speaking of released, aging professional athletes with battered knees and sore elbows are never fired; they're *released.* "I'm sorry, but I'm afraid I'll have to let you go," also suggests that the employee has been in manacles for too long and that the boss, by firing him, is really doing him a favour.

The urge to avoid "to fire" and "to dismiss" has turned the nouns excess and surplus into strange verbs. Someone who was fired, not because of incompetence but to cut costs, may have been *excessed* and, in *A Dictionary of Euphemisms and Other Doubletalk*, Hugh Rawson offers this headline from the *New York Times*: "Executives Who Were Surplused". They'd been canned. When *Publisher's Weekly* reported that Penguin Books had "announced cuts in its publishing program of 22%, staff redundancies of nearly 100 and economies in overhead," the real news was that Penguin had fired nearly 100 men and women.



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

Constructive termination...

When a firm tries to find work for an executive it has just surplused, Rawson explains, it engages in *outplacement*, sometimes known as *decruitment*, *dehiring*, or even *constructive termination*. Oh well, that's probably better than destructive termination.

Some corporations aren't good at dismissing people and hire experts to do it for them. "Firing workers is such big business in these days of restructuring and downsizing that there are companies whose business is helping other companies to fire their workers," William Lutz recently wrote in *Doublespeak*. "Michael McKee, for example, is president of Corporate Consultants, Inc. Mr. McKee does most of his work in termination and out-placement consulting for companies involved in reduction activities. In other words, he teaches companies how to fire or lay off workers."

Voluntary termination...

Fired people, like married people, are sometimes *separated*, in which case their dismissals are *separations*. Others are *relieved of their duties*, which again suggests that getting the old heave-ho is somehow good for you. Companies have *workforce reductions*, *headcount reductions* and programs of *management turnover*, *negative employee reduction*, *voluntary termination* and *voluntary resignations*. All these expressions really mean that people are getting the axe. If you're being *transitioned*, say hello to your friendly unemployment insurance office.

Civilian and military bureaucracies talk of Reduction in Force, or RIF. Some poor sod is *riffed*. A Reduction-in-Personnel Plan, or RIPP, means a big layoff, as in an 800-person RIPP. The firing of teachers in one American city was merely a *reallocation exercise*. *Downsizing* is bad enough, but in a program "to substantially reduce payroll costs through reducing head count," the Harris Bank of Chicago has been *rightsizing*.

Then there's good old *streamlining*. Toronto business journalist David Olive says streamline really means "slash and burn, in the form of layoffs, sale of assets, closure of plants and other draconian measures, and usually announced in an upbeat way." Thus, Ramada Inns, while explaining the laying off of hotel workers, said, "Our objective in making these changes is to streamline our organization and to focus our human resources on priority areas of our business."

...and other adjustments

"We don't characterize it as a layoff," said a spokesman for Sun Oil when it told 500 men and women to quit reporting for work. "We're managing our staff resources. Sometimes you manage them up, and sometimes you manage them down." When you're managed down, you may find yourself lining up at a food bank.

Beware, too, of *schedule adjustments*. In 1987 General Motors Corporation announced "a volume-related production schedule adjustment at its Chevrolet-Pontiac-Canada (CPC) Group Framingham, Massachusetts, assembly plant." What this really meant was that General Motors was closing down an entire factory. When Chrysler laid off more than 5,000 workers at a plant in Wisconsin it said it had merely "initiated a career alternative enhancement program." A smaller firm laid off 15, but its president said, "This was not a cutback nor a layoff. It was a career-change opportunity."

Gee, thanks, boss. ■