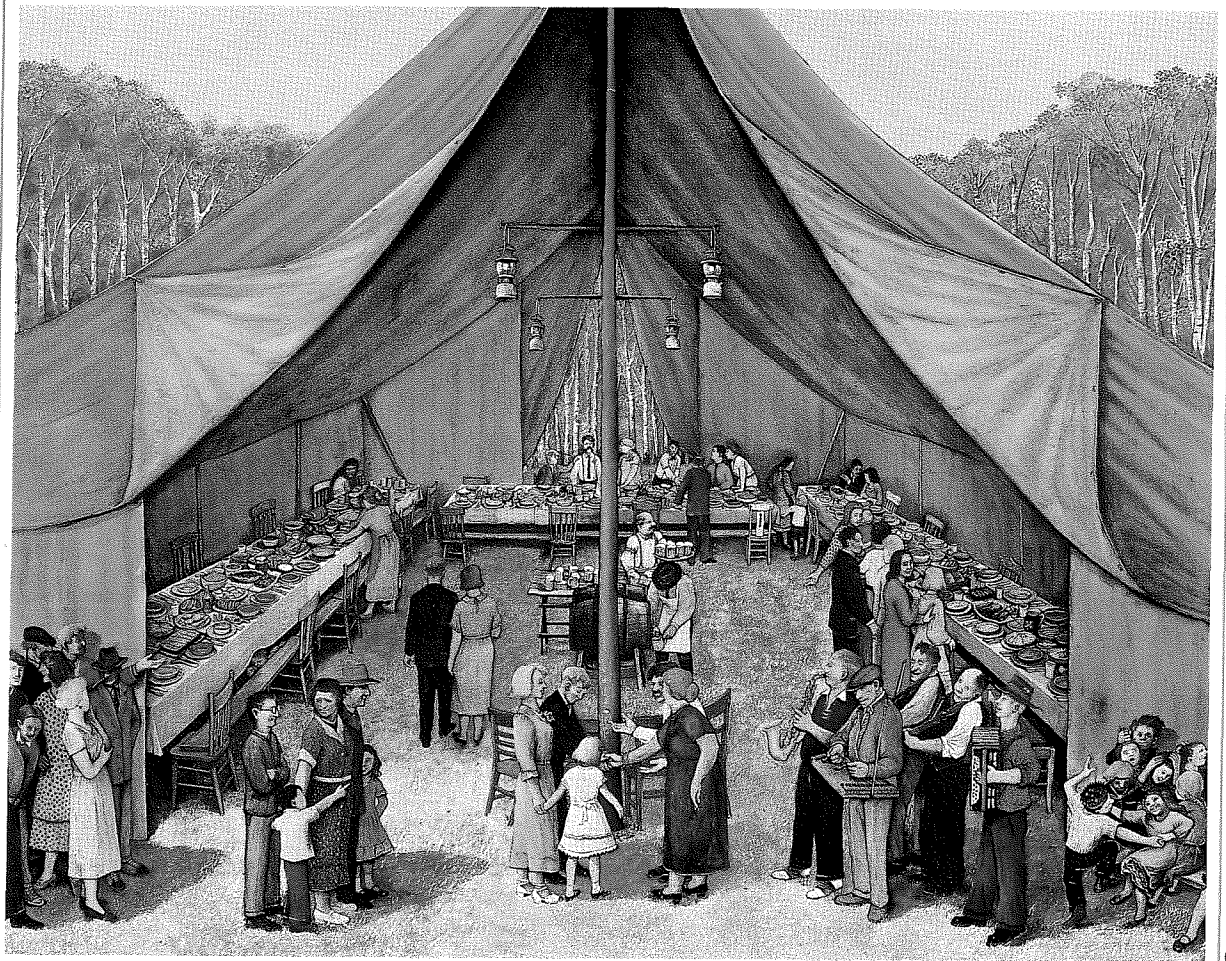


# LANGUAGE AND SOCIETY

Canada  125

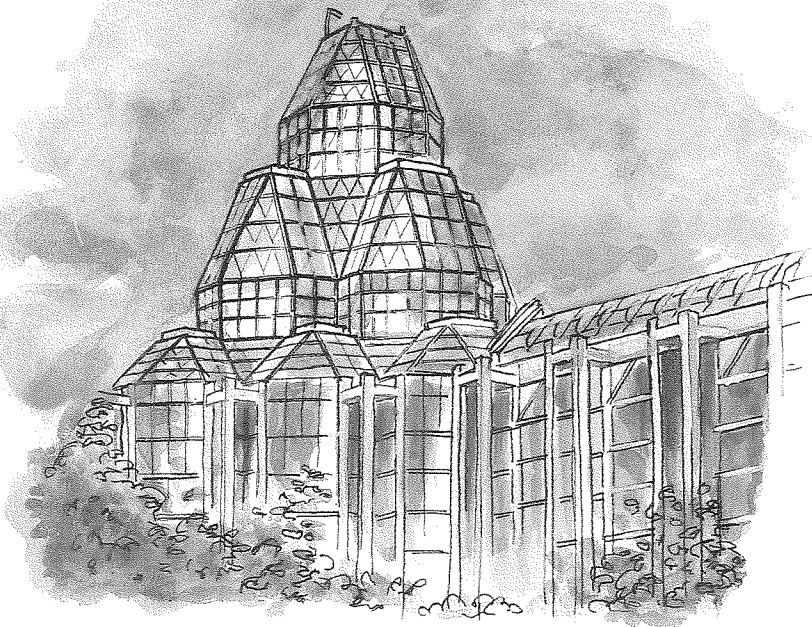


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*Weaving the Pattern*

Number 37, January 1992

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Victor C. Goldbloom.

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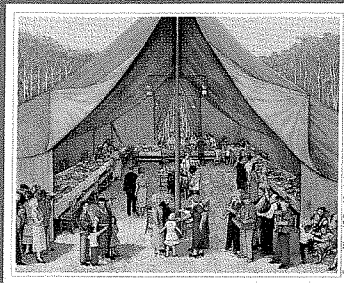
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# LANGUAGE

AND SOCIETY

Canada 125



*Weaving the Pattern*

Number 37, January 1992

## Our cover:

**Manitoba Party 1964,**  
by William Kurelek (1927-1977).

Kurelek, writes Patricia Morley in *The Canadian Encyclopedia*, "was an outstanding artist with a unique idealistic and pragmatic vision."

*Manitoba Party* represents the great coming together of peoples, the idealism and pragmatism, that is Canada.

Our thanks to the National Gallery of Canada.

## NOTICE

Letters to the Editor, with the writer's name, address and telephone number, are welcome.

The Editor reserves the right to publish letters, which may be condensed. Send to:

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COMMISSIONER OF OFFICIAL  
LANGUAGES  
COMMISSAIRE  
AUX LANGUES OFFICIELLES



## Weaving the Pattern

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# Weaving the pattern

**I**mmediately upon taking office I plunged into the thick of the action, impelled by a sense of urgency, and set about the task as I saw it: meeting with Canadians from one end of the country to the other, listening to them, explaining official languages policies and programs, and appealing for mutual respect among them.

## **A constitutional crisis is not *ipso facto* a linguistic crisis**

Canada is once again caught up in a debate on its constitutional future. Linguistic considerations inevitably come into it, but so do others: demographic, economic, regional and sociologic factors, among others. There exists a certain socio-linguistic malaise, but I am convinced that most Canadians will ultimately reject the break-up of our country as a remedy for it.

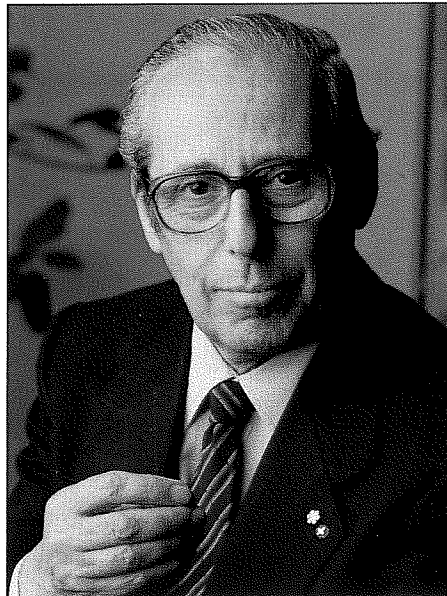
French has been spoken in Canada for four centuries. When, in 1759, we ceased to be a French domain and became a British one, the incoming administration chose not to eliminate the French language — and by that decision endowed us, from then on, with two official languages. We have, ever since, by a road which has had many potholes, been seeking a common ground between our two language groups.

A century and a half ago Robert Baldwin and Louis-Hippolyte Lafontaine thought that they were close to discovering it. A hundred and twenty-five years ago John A. Macdonald and Georges-Étienne Cartier were convinced that they had found it, and they built upon it our constitutional edifice.

We should not be astonished, still less discouraged, that this building has from time to time required some renovation. Our family has grown, and we may have to do some rebuilding, but to me the structure is still essentially solid.

## **The linguistic malaise**

Human perceptions are realities of which we have to take account. A diagnostic



*Victor C. Goldbloom*

assessment of the linguistic malaise felt by a certain number of Canadians shows, however, that a high percentage of the negative perceptions regarding official languages policies and programs are far, and often very far, from the reality.

Those policies and programs, of which the objective is essentially to ensure that the public is properly and courteously served, where numbers justify it, in the one or the other of our two official languages, are seen as measures of general coercion. Some see them as divisive rather than unifying factors — as if their disappearance would miraculously unify the country. The truth has the right to be heard, and I want to tell it.

## **Helping a consensus to emerge**

It would be utopian to think that a perfect and total consensus can be achieved. People of good will must nevertheless, once again, seek a common ground. Objectively and calmly, let us look together at the facts, and at the human needs — our own needs, and those of our brothers and sisters. Let us stop making bugbears out of

official languages. Let us try to understand each other's concerns and fears. Wherever we find ourselves neighbours, let us be good neighbours.

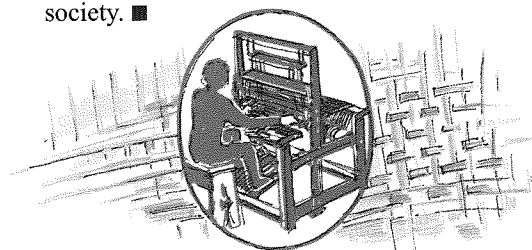
The social fabric of our country is showing signs of fragility; let us strengthen it. Let us keep faith with the purposes of those who founded our country and drew it together. Let us reweave the warp and the woof of our social fabric, and let us do so with as much skill and sensitivity as we can possibly muster.

## **A weaver of good will**

The Commissioner of Official Languages is a weaver of good will and of understanding. He is there to let the truth be known, to correct inaccurate impressions, to reduce antagonisms, to bring about dialogue, to promote mutual respect and to ensure that the public is properly served.

Our two languages contribute to our special competence in international affairs and make us more competitive. It is hard to imagine that a fragmented Canada would be able to continue to play the role which has so long been ours on the world stage and retain the respect we presently enjoy. Let us therefore find the means of reweaving the fabric of our rather special society.

This special issue of *Language and Society* has been put together to mark the 125th anniversary of Confederation. Let us not forget, however, that our linguistic roots go much further back than that — and those of our aboriginal brothers and sisters are older still. We have become in addition, especially since the Second World War, a multicultural country. It is my firm conviction that we can weave all these strands into a united and exemplary society. ■



## Bulletin! Bulletin!

For spring *Language and Society* will come at you with a totally new look!

Since number 20, back in the fall of 1987, the magazine's format has remained essentially the same.

And we aren't abandoning what we think is a handsome effort.

It's just that we feel that that suit of clothes can't fit all sizes. So, we're tailoring another suit to fit other occasions.

We haven't gone schizophrenic — we just feel the need to stretch and grow. Try us out for a few issues, and then let us know what you think of the new directions we're heading in.

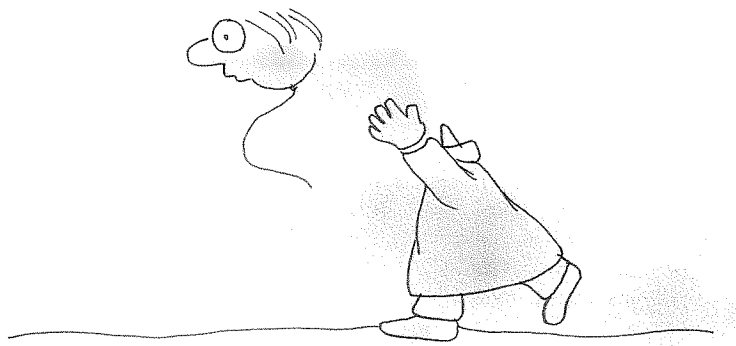
We'll only mention the word 'tabloid' and say no more. Why spoil the surprise?

### Errata

In *Language and Society* 36, page 28, we described Adrienne Bouchard-Langlois as a native of Winnipeg; in fact, she is from St-Front, Saskatchewan.

On page 38 we referred to "Heather Robertson". This should have read "Heather Morrison".

## PERDRE *la* TÊTE



(*Lit.*, to lose your head; *fig.*, bewilderment)

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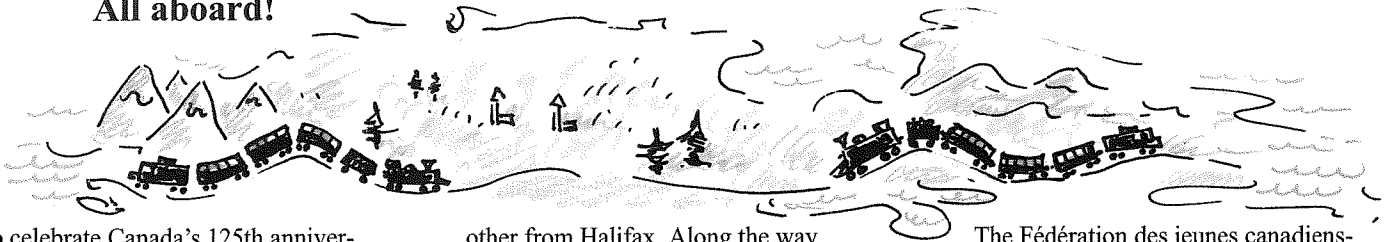
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The Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages

*Let's Talk*

### All aboard!



To celebrate Canada's 125th anniversary, youth organizations are showing no lack of imagination. At an Ottawa meeting last spring they settled on a single project, chosen from among various scenarios.

A train will start out from each end of the country, one from Vancouver and he

other from Halifax. Along the way, some 500 young people of various cultural backgrounds will board them. The trains will join up in Winnipeg. The young travellers will then meet together for a few days to discuss important issues of the day, such as multiculturalism and linguistic duality.

The Fédération des jeunes canadiens-français has already received letters of support for this project, which is now awaiting a favourable response and subsidies from various government agencies. Good luck to them!



# The growth of partnership

Tom Sloan



William Lyon Mackenzie King, Canada's prime minister during another period of tension between English- and French-speaking Canadians, once said that if other countries have too much history, Canada has too much geography. If we may concede that he may have had a point in his time, we have, since then, had another half-century of history. Now, with 125 years behind us as a country, we too may have reached the point where history, as well as geography, is weighing ever more heavily upon us. The last quarter century alone has seen enormous changes in many areas, not least in the realm of the relations between the two major languages of Canada and between those who speak them. If we are to understand our current tensions it may be worthwhile to take a brief, necessarily cursory, look at whence we came. It may not help us to solve our present problems, but it can help put them into perspective.

## Before 1867

Canada's linguistic destiny began to be forged and its linguistic contours to take shape more than a century before Confederation. The key event was the

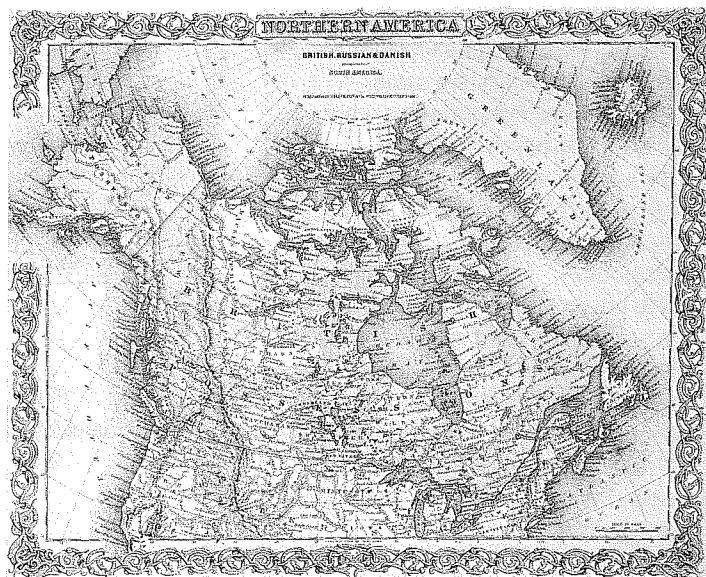
signing of the Treaty of Paris of 1763, by which France ceded control over its former colony on the banks of the St. Lawrence in return for British concessions in the West Indies.

The treaty, which accepted the continuation of civil customs as well as the continued use of French under British rule, marked the beginning of a long series of legal and political decisions, often contradictory, concerning the relations between the English and French languages in the country and its various regions. The process continues to this day.

Following a brief hiatus when the rights of French were placed in jeopardy, they were reaffirmed in the Quebec Act of 1774. There then followed decades of struggle on the part of "les Canadiens" to maintain their linguistic rights against the steady encroachment of English, represented by the English merchant class of Montreal and Quebec City. The political and legislative sphere was crucial, with the low point being reached shortly after the Durham Report of 1839 to the British Colonial Office, which recommended the assimilation of the French Canadians, "a people with no literature and no history." The result was the Act of Union of 1841, which united Upper and Lower Canada and declared English to be the sole official language of the new colony. This provision was, in turn,

repealed by the British Parliament in 1848 in the face of the fierce opposition of what was still a French-speaking majority in the colony.

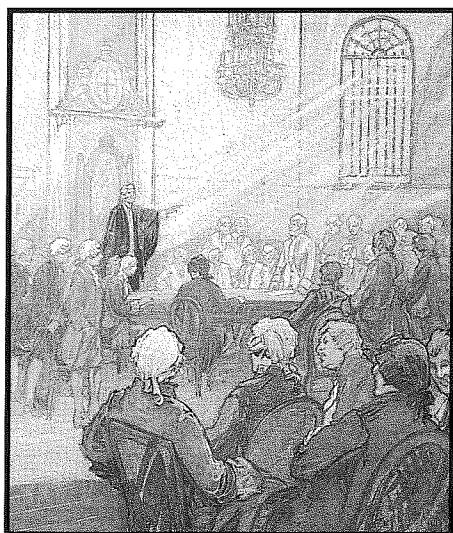
The next major step came with the creation of the Canadian federation itself, under the British North America Act of 1867. Section 133 of the Act declared that both English and French were to be offi-



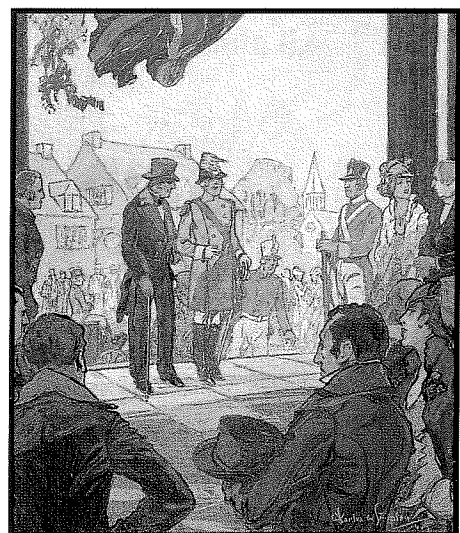
*British, Russian and Danish territory in North America (circa 1855)*

National Archives of Canada

National Archives of Canada



*Left: Opening of the Union Parliament, Kingston, 1841*



*Right: Lower Canada Legislative Assembly, 1792*

National Archives of Canada

cially recognized in the legislatures and the courts of Canada and Quebec.

### 1867-1927

The importance of the BNA Act was fundamental in that French was explicitly recognized as an official language. At the same time, however, its rights were circumscribed, limited essentially to the courts and legislatures of Canada and Quebec. In the words of Senator Gérard Beaudoin, a constitutional specialist, "the 1867 Constitution contains only the germs of bilingualism." It was only after another century and more of struggle and equivocation that those germs became something much more substantial.

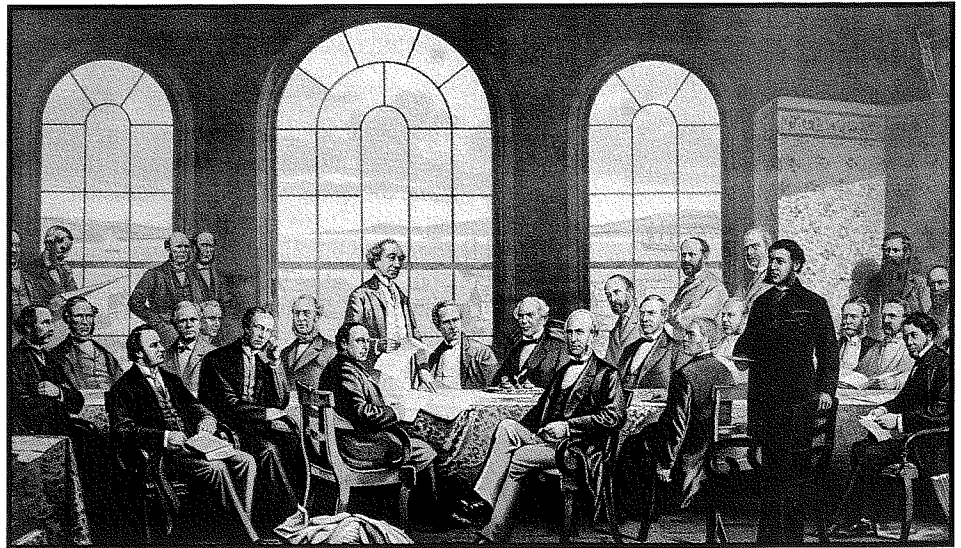
During all this period, in one important aspect, the place of French was becoming more and more precarious. Whereas at the start of British rule the French-speaking population was in a large majority, succeeding waves of immigration had, by the 1871 census, turned Canada into a predominantly English-speaking country, with the three million inhabitants divided approximately two to one

between English- and French-speakers. This sometimes had unfortunate results in the years following Confederation. While the rights of French were constitutionally enshrined in the Manitoba

## Our linguistic destiny began to take shape more than a century before Confederation.

Act of 1870 and in an 1877 amendment to the North-West Territories Act it was not long before, as the Francophone population dwindled in relative terms in all regions outside Quebec, rights were being whittled away. Disregarding the Constitution, in 1890 the Manitoba legislature passed an Official Language Act totally ignoring the rights of French in the province. And in several other provinces the educational rights of the Francophone

## The Fathers of Confederation



National Archives of Canada

minority were summarily restricted or wiped out entirely. The most notorious case was Ontario's Regulation 17, practically abolishing the educational rights of Francophone parents and children in 1912. The period from 1890 to 1920 could perhaps be considered the nadir in the post-Confederation era of French-language minority rights. Every province and territory outside Quebec was, for all practical purposes, largely English in terms of government, education and social and health services beyond those provided by Roman Catholic religious institutions. Even in Quebec, in many areas of activity, English was predominant.

### Symbols and substance

It was a very small thing in itself, perhaps, but in 1927 the federal Parliament made a gesture towards the French-speaking community. For the first time Canadian postage stamps were to be issued in a bilingual format. This initiated a series of federal government decisions, some little more than symbolic, others more substantial, that marked the decades of the 1930s to the middle of the 1960s, as English-speaking Canadians decided, for whatever reasons, that at least a modicum of justice should be done in the field of language. The measures included the issuing of bilingual

banknotes, the creation of a federal translation bureau, the first guidelines recognizing, under certain circumstances, the use of French in Quebec air traffic control operations, the introduction of simultaneous interpretation into Parliament, changes to the Civil Service Act to ensure better service to minority language groups and the beginning of second-language training for public servants.

Meantime, in the provinces, there was a grudging reversal of school language policies, expanding in various degrees the right to an education in their own language of Francophone pupils.

### The B and B Commission

And then, in 1963, came what was by far the most important and all encompassing linguistic initiative in the field of any government since Confederation: the setting up of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism. The Laurendeau-Dunton Commission, as it soon came to be known, quickly became the focal point for discussion of what, in its 1965 *Preliminary Report*, it had no hesitation about calling the Canadian crisis, one that endangered the very existence of the country. The Commission called for nothing less than "a new charter for the official languages of Canada, a charter based on the concept



# POST/POSTES

Stamps issued  
July 1, 1927



Sir John A.  
Macdonald



Sir Wilfrid  
Laurier



The political boundaries  
of Canada in 1867



The Fathers  
of Confederation



The Parliament Buildings  
Centre Block

of equal partnership." It appealed to both the federal and the provincial governments to co-operate in creating a whole new linguistic climate.

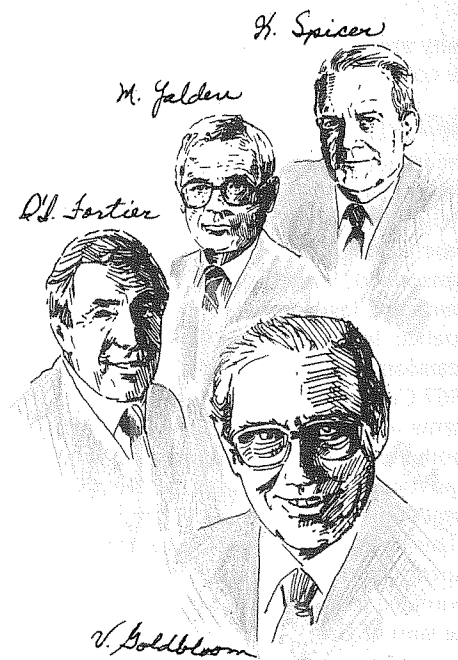
## The Official Languages Act

The result was a linguistic watershed, the Official Languages Act of 1969. Even though the Royal Commission continued its work until 1971 the Act, supported by all parties in Parliament, was, in its explicit recognition of the equality of English and French, the culmination of the Commission's work. And, while it placed its primary emphasis on the provision of services to Canadians in their own preferred official language, it also dealt with the role of public and private organizations alike in the promotion of relations between the two linguistic communities and on creating new opportunities for Canadians to become bilingual.

It also aroused concerns and created a certain backlash, reflected in the fact that 17 Progressive Conservative Members of Parliament defied their own leader, Robert Stanfield, and voted against the bill. Part of this resulted from sheer misunderstanding — the fear that French was to be forced on all Canadians — and part from the belief that bilingual Canadians, essentially Francophones, would have an unfair advantage, especially in the Public Service, over their unilingual compatriots. Poll after poll of the period, however, indicated that a majority of Canadians of both language groups favoured the law, certainly in principle.

Whatever else it accomplished, the 1969 Act laid the foundation for further progress in a number of fields. Among other things, it led to a whole new series of federal-provincial joint programs in the field of education, both to improve and expand the schooling offered in their own language to minority language pupils and to encourage and improve second-language training for pupils belonging to the majority communities.

With the creation of a special program for the promotion of both official languages the way was open



for the federal government to help strengthen the voices and the activities of organizations representing both the English- and French-speaking minority communities, most particularly the Fédération des francophones hors Québec (now the Fédération des communautés francophones et acadiennes du Canada) and Alliance Quebec. Through their activities these and many other minority community and cultural associations have made a strong contribution to helping create a new spirit of optimism and determination in official language minority groups across the country.

The Act also had its effect in encouraging further progress in Parliament itself. In 1973 a parliamentary resolution reaffirmed the principles of the Act and defined the right of public servants to work in their own language. Later that year the Treasury Board designated headquarters and several areas in New Brunswick, Quebec and Ontario, including the National Capital Region, where both English and French were to be recognized as normal languages in the workplace; in 1976 all federal government offices abroad were included. In 1980 Parliament created a special joint committee of the House and the Senate to assess progress in language reform; in 1983 it became a

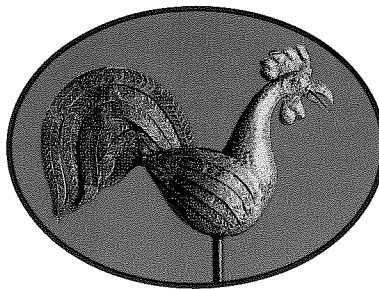


standing committee, issuing its own periodic reports. In 1982 the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms not only reaffirmed the equality of the official languages but also explicitly recognized the right of children across Canada to receive their education in their own mother tongue where numbers warranted, with a partial exception relating to immigrants being made for Quebec.

Finally, in 1988, Parliament acted to completely revamp the 1969 Act to sharpen it, broaden it and to adapt it to the provisions of the Charter of Rights.

### Outside Parliament

Outside Parliament a good deal happened between 1967 and 1991. Close to the centre of the activity was the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages, which had been created by the 1969 Act. Three commissioners, with a fourth having just been named this year, have been in the midst of the battles, the debates and the achievements over almost a quarter of a century. From the start its mission has been, through the use of persuasion, publicity and legal powers, expanded in the 1988 Act, to correct linguistic injustices, to help the cause of official language minority communities and to heighten the awareness and acceptance of the basic linguistic duality of Canada. In a real sense the commissioners have, through their words, their annual reports to



Canadian Museum of Civilization

*The rooster is a national as well as religious symbol in Francophone communities. A steeple cock like this one was erected on a parish church only once the debt for the building was paid off.*

Parliament, their responses to the complaints of individual Canadians and their general publications, acted as a combination of persuader and ombudsman; in the realm of language their influence has been considerable.

In the courts, especially the Supreme Court of Canada, during the past 25 years decision followed decision upholding both the provisions of the new language legislation and the position of the minority communities in terms of both educational and legislative

rights. Manitoba was the province most affected, discovering that, despite the lapse of almost a century, it was still under the jurisdiction of the Manitoba Act of 1870, which gave constitutional guarantees to its French-speaking population. The question of an appropriate response quickly became a major political issue in the province, but Franco-Manitobans continued to press, with considerable success, for recognition of their rights.

In the other regions of the country, too, while it has been inconsistent and subject to the occasional retreat, the movement has been in the same direction. The most spectacular developments were in New Brunswick, with one-third of its population Acadian, which in 1969 became Canada's only officially bilingual province, a development that was explicitly acknowledged in the Charter of Rights. The other Atlantic provinces, most particularly Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island, have also made considerable strides, especially in the field of minority language education. Ontario, with its French Language Services Act (Bill 8), which came into effect in 1990, has been gradually becoming ever more bilingual in practice, even though it has still avoided taking the final step of giving French official status. And the provinces to the west of Manitoba have also been moving, albeit sometimes in a seesaw motion,



A successful merchant's home in the Victorian age, ca. 1885



Domestic life in the St. Lawrence Valley, ca. 1720

towards providing more services, again particularly in education, to their linguistic minorities. In several instances, it must be noted, provincial measures in the educational and other domains were spurred by Supreme Court decisions favourable to the cause of Francophone parents.

There was progress in other areas as well. A new cultural centre for the French-speaking community was opened in downtown Vancouver in 1989 and the Franco-Manitoban cultural centre in Winnipeg was expanded, both projects being completed with the help of federal and provincial government financing.

During the late 60s and early 70s successive Quebec governments decided that strong action was legitimate and necessary in order to protect the position of French in the only jurisdiction in North America where Francophones form a majority of the population. The result was a series of measures, starting with the 1974 Official Language Act, declaring French to be the

official language for provincial purposes, continuing through the Charter of the French Language (Bill 101) of 1977, restricting the use of English and other languages in business and on commercial signage and in

governmental operations, and culminating in Bill 178, passed in 1988, reaffirming the prohibition of English on external commercial signs although enlarging its use inside commercial establishments. In the same year, however, the National Assembly also passed an amendment to the Health and Social Services Act which guaranteed the right of English-speaking Quebecers to receive health care in their own language. The Quebec government also continues to provide a broad range of

educational and government services in English.

While Quebec's language policies have been criticized for their restrictions, and have been at least partially blamed for the failure of the Meech Lake constitutional accord that would have recognized Quebec as a distinct society, in other parts of the country it was what some saw as over-generosity to the French-speaking minorities that raised some hackles. Ontario's French Language Services Act was roundly condemned by groups claiming to represent Anglophone interests, led by the Alliance for the Preservation of English in Canada. These efforts were unsuccessful. In New Brunswick, however, while the Confederation of Regions party, formed in 1989 specifically to combat "official bilingualism", also failed to change government

policy, the party did succeed in winning eight of 58 seats and getting about 30% of the Anglophone vote in the September 1991 provincial elections. CoR became the official opposition in the legislature.

The rise and partial success of such organized opposition to recognition of Canadian duality was but another indication of the rocky road the country is travelling on its way to the goal of linguistic harmony. On the one hand the past quarter century has seen an explosion in the demand for French immersion classes in every region of the country; on the other it has seen manifestations of nastiness, both national and local, such as the bitter controversy over the limited use of French by air traffic controllers in the late 70s and the more localized furore when Léo Piquette, a Franco-Albertan,



Canadian Museum of Civilization

*Conestoga wagon, circa 1840. Covered wagons, like the ones used by United Empire Loyalists, later became the fabled "prairie schooners" of the American West.*

dared, as was his right, to use a few words of French in the legislature in 1987.

### **The Peaceable Kingdom**

As Canada embarks on what could be its final flurry of constitutional negotiations so too the accompanying linguistic issues threaten once more to come close to centre stage. If a country which has, as one of its main characteristics, a structure involving two linguistic majorities is replaced by two sovereign states, each with a substantial minority within its borders, what will be the future of these communities? What will happen to a Quebec Anglophone community, shrinking in size, in a Quebec that defines itself essentially as a French-speaking state? And what will happen to the beleaguered Francophone communities

dispersed over thousands of kilometres and several regions?

For two centuries and more, Canada, "The Peaceable Kingdom", has been both defined and challenged by its linguistic duality. There can be little doubt that a breakup of Canada, as envisaged by English- and French-speaking separatists alike, would strengthen the position of the language fundamentalists on both sides. For those who continue to believe both in minority rights and in the capacity of a supposedly civilized people to live and work together in two of the world's great languages, there is surely still every reason to try to achieve a reasonable accommodation. The Commissioner of Official Languages, as a promoter of dialogue and mutual respect, may prove to play a key role in keeping the country together. ■

# Why I study an extinct Canadian language

John L. Steckley\*



It is not for someone to talk to. In the early part of this century Huron lost its last fluent speaker, as have other Canadian languages — Laurentian Iroquois (which gave us the word ‘Canada’, meaning ‘village’, and was last spoken in the late 16th century), Neutral (late 17th century), Beothuk (1830s) and Tagish (1991). Maybe I study an extinct Canadian language just to listen to a unique voice. For listen we can; there is an amazingly rich literature in and about Huron, recorded mainly by Jesuit missionaries in the 17th and 18th centuries.

Stephen Gould, the Harvard biology and geology professor and popular science writer, has written that “The beauty of nature lies in detail; the message, in generality.” Think of each language as a biological species, similar to but ultimately unlike any other species, and you can perceive both the appeal and necessity of my making my life’s work the learning of and communication about an extinct Canadian language.

What makes Huron unique and beautiful, with important general messages? Lots of terms for the parts and products of the corn plant, at least 34 that early translators could decipher; a reminder to my students and to anyone who will listen to me at parties that the world received corn (like tomatoes, potatoes, peppers, squashes, beans and chocolate) from the First Nations of the New World. It serves notice as well (as do the Inuktitut words for snow and the Slavey terms for ice) that a people can have a detailed

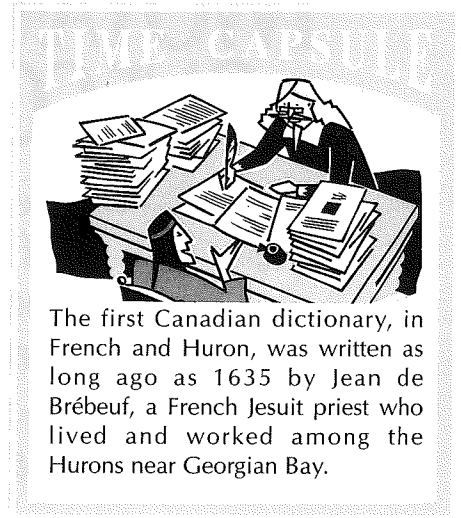
vocabulary and a complex culture without 20th century technology and Western ‘civilization’. I can create more than 700 words from a verb meaning ‘to prepare a field for planting’; only one of several thousand verbs in the language. It is a verb that can be used to create what to the Huron were ideal images of peace.

To calm or pacify a person or spirit was ‘to make the mind like a field prepared for planting’. My Mennonite farmer ancestors would certainly have understood that. The same expression was used to mean ‘to give someone a gift’. It could be heard when offerings of sacred tobacco were put into a fire to find their way as wisps of smoke to the winds that would take them to the spirits being addressed.

## Planting the ideal images of peace.

### Ghosts of forgotten gods

In the Huron terms for months we see the natural cycle of a year’s life, not our ghosts of forgotten gods, arrogant emperors and Latin numbers. The Huron months spoke of days growing longer after winter, water beginning to flow in spring melt awakening, fish running, berries flowering and becoming fruit, crops maturing, birds returning, deer yarding and bears giving birth. Next to the crops of corn, beans and squash (the ‘life-providers’), the Huron relied on fishing for food. The months tell us this. What we call April was named after the pickerel that were in abundance then. October was named after lake trout and there were two fish names for November. One called that month ‘white fish running’, while the other had been a mystery to historians since it was first written about in the early 17th century. Even when I translated the name as ‘one casts a net from the shore’ I did not know what



The first Canadian dictionary, in French and Huron, was written as long ago as 1635 by Jean de Brébeuf, a French Jesuit priest who lived and worked among the Hurons near Georgian Bay.

the fish was. Nor did I receive much help at first from a reference in the writings of a Recollect Brother, Gabriel Sagard, that this fish was the only one that the Huron did not gut before they ate it. It was only after I was able to identify the name with another term, meaning ‘long fin’, that took a French translation of ‘morue’ (‘cod’) that my linguistic detective work was rewarded. The Huron were fishing for burbot, the freshwater cod. They did not eviscerate it because they knew about the vitamin value of cod livers in helping people survive through a winter with little in the way of fresh food.

Even though hunting did not provide a significant percentage of their food, the Huron recognized the special spirituality of animals and recorded that in their language. The main term for deer was ‘oskennonton’, meaning ‘one who goes to the land of the dead’, referring to the role of the first deer in the story of the origin of things as they are now. Toads were called ‘our grandmother’ as a reminder that they provided the earth we walk on by diving to retrieve a few grains of sand that other, more boastful, divers had failed to obtain. Once these grains were placed on the back of the

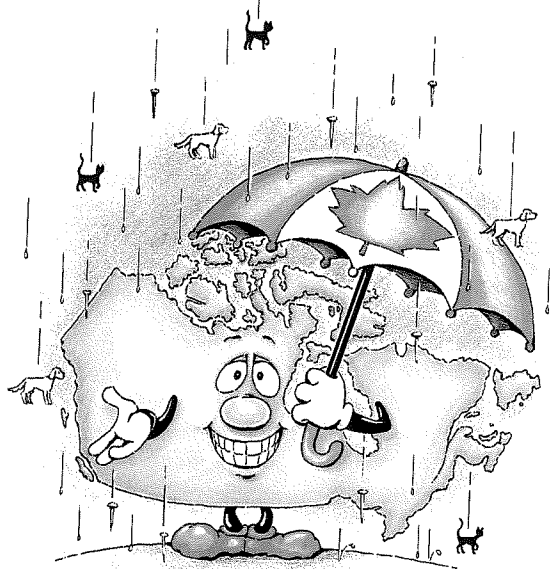
\* John Steckley teaches in Human Studies at Humber College in Toronto. He has been working with Huron since 1974.



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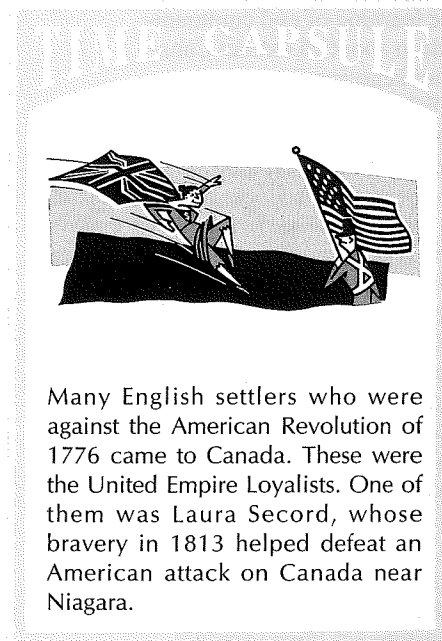
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Great Turtle human beings had a home. Huron children were early taught that we should not bother 'our grandmothers'.

I think that the Huron made the Jesuit missionaries see animals in a new spiritual light. One young Jesuit, Father Philippe Pierson, writing in the 1670s, tried to explain the nature of Christianity in the Huron language. He compared the souls ('our medicine') of plants and animals to those of humans. I wonder if he had ever thought of the life-force of plants and animals as being like souls before he came to Canada.

I was glad when I watched the movie *Dances with Wolves* to hear Dakota Sioux being spoken. I am happy to see that there is now a Canadian movie, *Black Robe*, that presents one version of the story of the Huron and of the Jesuit missionaries who did the world a favour in recording so well and so voluminously the Huron language, although they must take partial responsibility for the circumstances that diminished the Huron severely and sent them to Quebec and Oklahoma, where the last speakers were heard. But I am saddened not to hear in that movie the voice that sings in the spirits of my mind and my heart — a Huron expression. ■



Many English settlers who were against the American Revolution of 1776 came to Canada. These were the United Empire Loyalists. One of them was Laura Secord, whose bravery in 1813 helped defeat an American attack on Canada near Niagara.

# Seven Canadian stories

Gilles Laframboise\*



## Françoise Landry

Françoise Landry is a Franco-Ontarian. Like hundreds of thousands of others, she was born in the province and has preserved her language and culture. She has always lived in the Francophone enclave of eastern Ontario, which extends for nearly 200 kilometres between Ottawa and Montreal. Every day she travels 60 kilometres from her home to her job with a national association in Ottawa.

She readily admits that what preserved the French fact in eastern Ontario was the natural isolation in which the thousands of Francophones in this region bordering the national capital lived, as well as the strength of their school system.

"Even when I was a child we had our schools, our doctors, our pharmacies and all the community services we needed to live in French in this area of Ontario," she says.

\* Gilles Laframboise is a freelance journalist.

**Thousands of Canadian communities have linguistic minorities. Each day, Francophones continue to live in French in Western Canada and Anglophones study and work in English in places as French as Quebec City.**

**More often than ever, minority Canadians are represented by associations. When these organizations speak to the press or demonstrate in public the message is often political and assertive.**

**In what follows we have tried to let ordinary people speak for themselves; they are members of linguistic minorities who hope for the preservation or broadening of their language rights. They are not militants. Some of them have chosen to use their own language only rarely while others make incredible efforts to preserve it.**

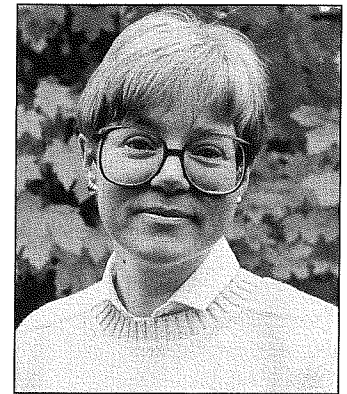
**It goes without saying that the people who agreed to speak to us should not be seen as a scientific sampling of Canada's linguistic minorities.**

French is the language of Landry's household. "My husband has worked in English for 28 years but when he comes home all our conversations are in French," she says. Speaking of the various jobs she has held in Ottawa, Landry is well aware that, with time, there is a risk of "losing your French or speaking it less correctly," since French is not the language of

work for many citizens of Ottawa.

"As for me, I will never lose my culture or my language but I often have difficulty remembering a particular grammatical rule that I have not used for a long time."

Will her grandchildren speak French? She answers without hesitation: "Definitely!"



## Vilia Cox

Toronto native Vilia Cox has lived in Quebec City for five years. She and her husband decided to leave Ontario in order to learn French. For a short while she has been working for the city's only English-language newspaper, the *Quebec Chronicle Telegraph*. She is not disappointed with her stay in "la belle province", but is anxious to return "home, to Ontario."

Five years ago Vilia Cox could not speak even a little French. Since then she has participated in 12 weeks of French immersion but has reached a plateau. "I know that to get rid of my accent and be really at ease in French I would have to devote hundreds more hours to it and I am not prepared to do so."

She misses the members of her family who live in Toronto, she explains, and an environment where she would feel completely at home. "When you do not know the language of the majority very well," she says, "you tend to lose your spontaneity and you often



rehearse sentences in your head before speaking them.

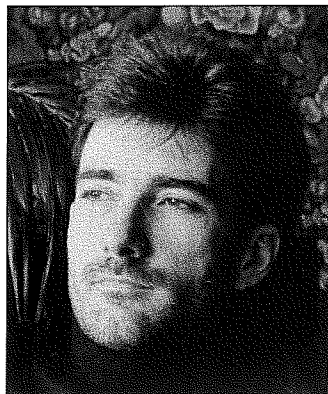
"For five years I have constantly been in a learning situation. Instead of watching the news on French television to improve my French I just want to listen to the news to find out what is happening in the world, like most people do."

However, she is not disappointed with her stay in Quebec. "Not only do I now speak French, but I also understand Quebecers and their aspirations better. Besides, every Canadian should live in another province for a while.

"As well, when I lived in Toronto I wondered why immigrants did not learn English before coming to settle in Canada. Now, I understand them much better. I have learned to be patient."

### André Jutras

André Jutras is 34. A Quebec native, he now lives in Vancouver where he has been a piano repairer for two years. Since leaving Quebec four years ago, he has also worked in Toronto and in northern Canada. He is a former presi-



*André Jutras*

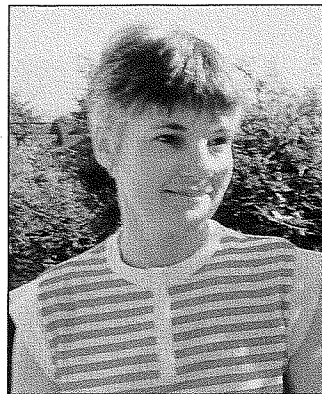
dent of the Association des luthiers du Québec.

Jutras feels he is a minority among all the minorities who live in the Greater Vancouver area. "It's difficult to explain," he says, but I feel far more affinity with the Asiatics than with the English Canadians who form most of the population.

"Most of my friends — none of whom are Francophones — are also part of the great multi-ethnic minority here. I have even begun to learn Mandarin in order to communicate better with my Chinese friends."

Having travelled and worked in many parts of the country, he not only understands Western Canada better but "also what it means to be a Canadian, north, south, east and west."

Jutras is single and has never used any of the scanty services available in French to families, such as daycare or a French school. And, since his social life mainly revolves around members of other ethnic groups, he rarely uses French, although he wants to preserve his language.



*Monique Truchon-Cashman*

He feels he is only in Vancouver temporarily. "I now want to live in the United States for a while, to jump the fence to explore that country and understand it better."

He thinks it is a shame that in many cases political projects such as the Meech Lake Accord contribute to the poisoning of inter-cultural relations in cities like Vancouver.

"It's not complicated," he says. "During the Meech Lake debate I was told a number of times that I could speak German, Chinese or Japanese at work, but not French."

Tolerance returned after the failure of the Meech Lake Accord, he says.

### Monique Truchon-Cashman

A native of Chicoutimi, Monique Truchon-Cashman has lived in British Columbia for 25 years. She is married to an Anglophone; her three children were unable to attend a French school because there were none at the time. She works as a remedial English teacher.

To hear her, one would never guess that she very rarely speaks French. No word of English slips into the conversation and the French sentence structure and grammar are undiminished.

"The CBC French network has helped a great deal in preserving my French through the years," she explains. Both in Edmonton and Vancouver, Truchon-Cashman has always listened to the French CBC station in her free time and sometimes even at work.

"I spent hours in the library reading dictionaries and other reference books dealing with French. I also used all the bilingual folders, tourist guides, instructions for using household appliances, election literature, and so on. If I heard a new expression in English I tried every way of finding the French equivalent. I didn't always succeed, but often I made other interesting discoveries during my research."

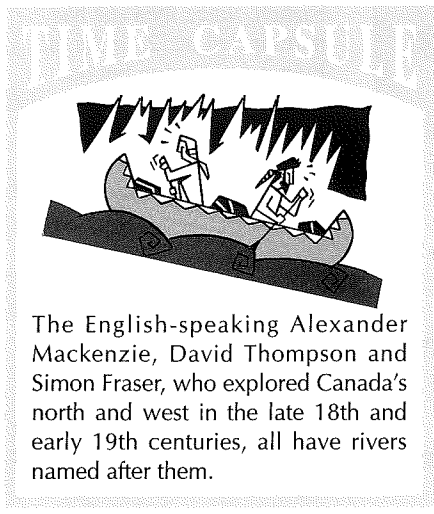
Will her three children speak French? Truchon-Cashman wants them to be able to, but she cannot swear that her grandchildren will be capable of speaking to her in French.

Does she miss the Quebec that she left more than 20 years ago? "Yes, sometimes I miss the snow," she says. "When I do, I go to the mountains."

### Louise Davide

Louise Davide is a translator in the New Brunswick government's Fredericton translation office. She is a native of Montreal who has lived in Canada's only officially bilingual province for just two years.

On arriving in Fredericton, which is two-thirds English-speaking, Davide did not feel out of place. She comes from the West Island, an Anglophone area of Montreal. This part of Montreal Island has long been a vast Anglophone sea where people are often surprised to hear Francophone Quebecers demand service in French — in Quebec.



The English-speaking Alexander Mackenzie, David Thompson and Simon Fraser, who explored Canada's north and west in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, all have rivers named after them.



"My husband and I were tired of the big city," she explains. The couple wanted a quieter environment for themselves and their young children. They miss Montreal's great variety of social and cultural activities a little, "but, even when you live in Montreal, you don't always take advantage of what is there."

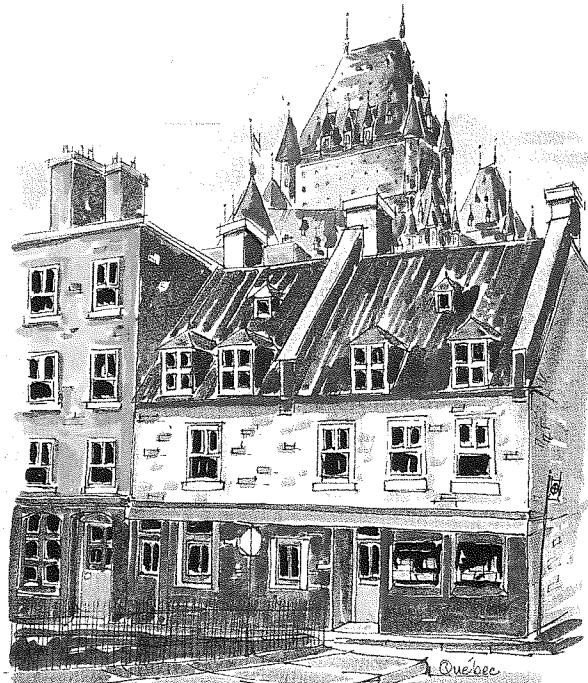
The two years she has spent in the Maritimes have made her aware of a new threat: the constant danger of her children's assimilation. "Every day, my children are threatened with assimilation to the majority group, which neither I nor my husband want," she says. Although they attend a French daycare centre, her children sometimes answer her in English at home. "Since we want our children to continue to speak French, we now have to be vigilant," the former Quebecer concluded.

### **Charles Black**

Charles Black was born in Quebec and worked there all his life. He married a Franco-phonie and had three children. They are all bilingual. A painter by trade, he retired a few years ago and lives in Sillery, the formerly English suburb of Quebec City.

Today, Sillery, like the Anglophone community in the Quebec City area, has changed a great deal. There are now only a few thousand Anglophones scattered throughout the Quebec City Urban Community.

"It's very different from when I was a child and you heard English spoken on an entire street, for example," Black comments. He is not nostalgic, however. He thinks that the problems are less serious for the members of his generation who learned French



when they were very young and quickly integrated into Quebec society without putting aside their own language and culture.

"Elderly people who never learned French and young people who are tempted to move [from Quebec] find the situation difficult right now," he says.

When asked to predict the future of the Quebec Anglophone minority, Black says he fears that their rights will be "still further infringed than they are by Bill 178, which outlaws English signs." Relations between Francophones and Anglophones have always been good here but, in his opinion, the actions of governments have been bad.

Finally, Black says he fears that the Quebec Anglophone community will continue to shrink. "When I was young, immigrants came from other provinces, from England and even from Scotland to settle in this area. Today, you can almost count the new English families on the fingers of one hand. What does the future hold for us in such a context?"

### **Gail Quinn**

Like her parents before her, Gail Quinn lives in Quebec City. She works as volunteer co-ordinator at the Holland Centre, a community centre for elderly Anglophones in the greater Quebec City area. She is married to an Anglophone and the couple have a teenage daughter.

Quinn is proud of the fact that she and her family are fully integrated into Quebec and "not assimilated". "For me," she says, "Quebec is home. I was born here, I raised my family here and I want to stay here."

She tells Anglo-Quebecers who have left Quebec and talk about all she is missing that she is very happy where she is and has no intention of moving. She says that her attitude, like that of most Quebec Anglophones who are well integrated, is very different from that of Anglo-Quebecers who live

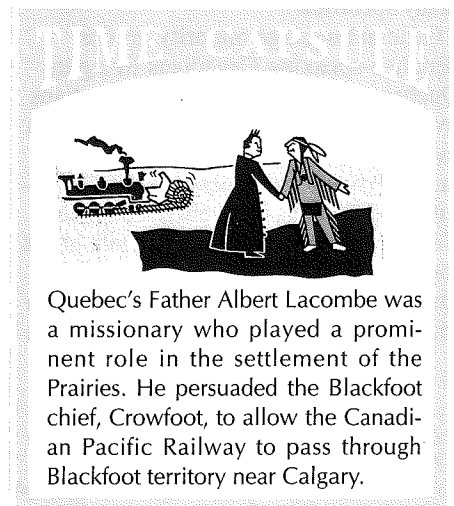
in enclaves in places like Montreal.

"I have relatives who live on the West Island of Montreal but we do not share the same view of things, especially in the political area."

In the Quebec City region, she explains, the small Anglophone community has all the services it needs to flourish: its own hospital, social services, educational institutions, a newspaper and cultural activities. According to Quinn, there is no animosity to Anglophones in the provincial capital area. As for the long constitutional debate, it has not poisoned relations between the two groups, "because, on both sides, people have had enough of these endless discussions," she says.

What does the future have in store for her daughter, who is still in school? Quinn thinks before answering. "When it is time for her to find a job," she says, "I really don't know whether my daughter will decide to stay in Quebec, not because instruction is English is not good but because young people now think they can do better if they find a job outside Quebec." ■

*(Our translation)*



Quebec's Father Albert Lacombe was a missionary who played a prominent role in the settlement of the Prairies. He persuaded the Blackfoot chief, Crowfoot, to allow the Canadian Pacific Railway to pass through Blackfoot territory near Calgary.

# What is the target?

Ronald J. Duhamel\*



"Official bilingualism", however defined, is under attack. Clearly, there are some highly placed officials who have been contemplating how it might be changed. The *Winnipeg Free Press* (March 16, 1991) cites Norman Spector, Prime Minister Mulroney's Chief of Staff, who has suggested reviewing Canada's official bilingualism policy. Senator Lowell Murray recently proposed that certain powers over language be transferred to the provinces in order to reduce "the very serious linguistic tensions" in Canada. No doubt these people are responding to organizations such as the Association for the Preservation of English in Canada which are adamantly opposed to the current status of the French language in Canada. They are also very much aware of Preston Manning's Reform Party and its attack on "official bilingualism". Of course, they also know the Confederation of Regions party, which has a similar position. They have witnessed the anti-bilingual policies of urban centres such as Sault Ste. Marie and Thunder Bay. Most recently Keith Spicer's Citizens' Forum report, at least in part, added fuel to the fire by indicating that they believed the policy should be reviewed. The report did not provide many specifics.

Official language minority groups (English-speaking Canadians living in Quebec and French-speaking Canadians living outside Quebec) are worried. As a member of the Special Joint Committee on the Process for Amending the Constitution of Canada, I travelled throughout Canada listening to Canadians talk about their Constitution and some of the changes they believe should be made. In virtually every city where the committee

heard testimony the French-speaking representatives voiced their concerns and their anxieties about their future as they considered the various rumours circulating with regard to impending changes in Canada's language policies. Similar concerns were heard in Quebec. In this instance, Bill 178 ("the sign law") came under attack most frequently from English-speaking Quebecers but, on occasion, from French-speaking citizens as well.

## ■ No targets?

Difficult to assess precisely is the specific target of current assault on "bilingualism". What do these various groups want to change? To say that they are against bilingualism *per se* is simply unacceptable because they take refuge behind a poorly understood and an ill-defined concept which is interpreted differently by many Canadians. And, to be fair, it is complex. "Official bilingualism", assuming that we can agree on a definition, no doubt involves the Charter of Rights, laws, policies, regulations and a myriad of services to both English- and French-speaking Canadians.

There have been suggestions that these groups critical of "official bilingualism" are anti-French. Some are, perhaps. But that explanation is inadequate. It does not explain clearly what is happening with respect to their movement nor the thinking behind their desire to reduce or eliminate certain programs or even the "official bilingualism policy" in its entirety.

## ■ No minority rights?

There have been suggestions that those who want change seek to eliminate minority language rights protected by the Charter (English inside Quebec and French outside Quebec). Is their disagreement instead with the Official Languages Act? Are their objections directed rather to the policy, including the regulations which attempt to implement the Official Languages Act?

Charter rights need unanimous approval of the provinces and the federal Parliament before they can be changed; the Official Languages Act and government policy could be changed by Parliament. In both instances, changes, though not impossible, would be most difficult because they do offer significant protection to Canada's official language minorities. Few Canadians realize that there are approximately one million French-speaking Canadians living outside Quebec and probably slightly more than 800,000 English-speaking Canadians living in Quebec.

Some would suggest that minority language rights are not the subject of attack, that services are the target. Is this not contradictory? Surely language rights in the absence of appropriate services are meaningless. To reduce services when they are already insufficient further undermines and invalidates any rights accorded our official language minorities.

## ■ No chance to learn?

If services in fact are the target, which are being attacked? Are those who oppose Canada's language policies objecting to the federal government's transfer payments to the provinces and territories for the teaching of French in the two territories and in all of the provinces except Quebec? Are they targeting the teaching of English in Quebec? Could they be attacking grants paid for French immersion and basic French programs? Do they take issue with other educational initiatives such as special funding for certain minority language post-secondary institutions? To

**Official language minorities are worried**

\* Ronald J. Duhamel is the Member of Parliament for St. Boniface and a member of the Special Joint Committee on the Process for Amending the Constitution of Canada.

which of these educational services do critics of bilingualism object? What is the basis of their objections? Have they considered fully the impact of cutbacks in this area on those whose needs are being met?

### ■ No service or safety?

I have heard numerous complaints about the lack of appropriate English-French language services on airlines, in post offices and in other service areas. Often, I have also heard the opposite point of view. Is this the target of the attacks? Yet another frequent complaint is English-French labelling on most of our products. What are the possible health and safety ramifications of changes in these areas? Are there other concerns which could surface?

The House of Commons and the Senate provide translation services to their members, both for what is said as well as for written communications. Is this the target? Since both Houses have unilingual English and French members, can this service really be seen as anything but essential?

### ■ No jobs?

In the approximately 210,000 Public Service positions almost 30% are identified as bilingual, requiring different levels of language competency. Over 86% of these positions are in the Ottawa-Hull area and in Quebec. Outside Quebec over 50% of the positions are filled by bilingual English-speaking Canadians. Many of these bilingual positions are in the lower half of the pay scale. Moreover, almost three-quarters of the senior positions requiring a bilingual competency are filled with English-speaking Canadians who have the required linguistic competency. Is the hiring policy the subject of attack?

### ■ No money?

The costs of official bilingualism are often cited as a cause of great discontent. Indeed, they are large. But we must examine these significant expenditures from a larger perspective. It costs about \$440 million a day to operate the country. The current cost of "official languages" services represents roughly two

dollars for every \$440 the federal government spends. Stated another way, the cost of bilingualism is about \$25 per Canadian per year. The cost for our official language programs is 30 cents per \$100 of federal services if you exclude grants for second-language programs. Are these figures the source of frustration and calls for change? How might we reduce these expenditures without infringing upon current language rights?

### ■ No communication?

For those who would change Canada's language policies there are yet other points to consider. First, it would be extremely difficult to remove many of the programs currently in place. As noted earlier, both in the Senate and in the House of Commons there are unilingual English- and French-speaking members who have frequent discussions on many complex matters. In some cases they can only do so through translation. Were Quebec to become an independent nation, and no matter how difficult the adjustments to such a change might be, the "New Canada" and the "New Quebec" would need to communicate with each other frequently on a host of issues. This communication would take place both in English and in French. There is also a continued need to interact with countries such as France. And what of the almost one million French-speaking Canadians living outside Quebec? Would their language rights be eliminated? Not without major disruption and unrest, I suggest. Across the country English-speaking Canadian supporters of current policy and practice would oppose reductions or cuts regarding official bilingualism as would the approximately 800,000 English-speaking Quebecers. Others would be suspicious of any changes which might jeopardize the current support which they enjoy for their languages and cultures. Many would have real concerns with respect to their own probable destinies insofar as the future of their languages and cultures within the Canadian mosaic were concerned.

### ■ No self-respect?

As I travelled throughout the country with the Special Joint Committee on

the Process for Amending the Constitution of Canada I heard testimonials about our country and its needs. There are two which I recall most frequently. First, could we even think of breaking up a nation which is envied by most of the world? Why would we let it happen? Our problems, be they economic, linguistic, cultural or other, appear to be almost insignificant in comparison to the benefits we enjoy as citizens of the world's second largest country with a culturally diverse population, a respectable economy and a potential as yet largely untapped. Second, many Canadians are firmly convinced the only way to build a stronger nation is to ensure that the current rights enjoyed by our citizens are respected, maintained, even enhanced, while at the same time we respond concretely and quickly to the legitimate needs of others, such as the aboriginal peoples, who have been neglected and mistreated.

### ■ No clarity?

The current attack on bilingualism lacks precision or clarity. To be sure, there is discontent our country and in some cases great discontent. This anger and malaise has the potential to be extremely destructive. If our language policies need to be refined, then a thorough and objective third-party review is required to determine what is working, what is causing legitimate difficulties and what steps might be taken to effectively correct deficiencies as soon as they are identified. But we need to ensure that any reviewers of such policy are as objective and rational as can be found. This is a time for common sense and sensitivity to prevail. Destruction of that which has been useful, albeit imperfect, is seldom the way to proceed. And any attack on established policies, particularly when it is not focused, as is the case here, risks alienating those the attackers want to save and causing even more disruption, disharmony and conflict than currently exists. This kind of cost too must be considered. May wisdom, common sense and sensitivity guide us all. ■





# Bilingualism pays dividends

Brigitte Morissette\*



## J. Armand Bombardier: Creating a sport and an industry

**T**he scene: an Ottawa outlet of a chain of electronic equipment stores. Enter a woman, asking to look at facsimile machines. Without letting her finish her sentence or waiting to hear the word "fax" — which he would certainly have understood — the young salesperson cuts her off: "I'm sorry, I don't speak French!"

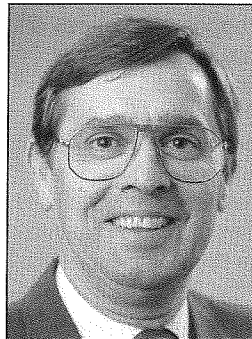
Sorry? He should be! This young man, thoughtless and impatient at hearing a language other than his own, lost a fine opportunity to keep quiet and make a quick sale of equipment worth at least \$1,200.

At a time when markets are becoming more global, this is certainly not an attitude that big corporations — even American subsidiaries doing business in Canada — recommend. General Motors, with head offices in Oshawa, is



reaping the dividends of an investment in French that goes back to the early 1970s.

Head of language services Oleg Kusin says, "It is important to speak to customers in their language. And that begins with translating sales manuals and instructions.



Oleg Kusin

We have already translated millions of words, and we have millions more to be revised. Sometimes we are stricter language purists than the French themselves!" For the benefit of its customers, for the past two years GM has even translated its operating manuals — for 160 models! Toyota offers no more than 20

such translated manuals. Is all this being done to please French-speaking customers in Canada, or to meet the requirements of Bill 101 in Quebec, where GM has an assembly plant? In fact, this effort is being made for other reasons as well: the GM subsidiary in Oshawa now does business in Europe, and particularly in France. This means that certain steps taken in the field of language services are now beginning to pay dividends.

Although GM no longer has an in-house translation service and now uses the services of specialized companies and freelance translators, it has its own terminology committee, which sometimes coins words such as "mécatronique" (mechatronics: combined electronics, machine and computer technology). GM's classic work, however, is still its terminology manual, a veritable automobile dictionary, just out in a new 250-page edition costing \$15.

"At GM we realized that we do not have to be legally compelled to use French, because using French has clear business advantages," points out Oleg Kusin.

## French means value added



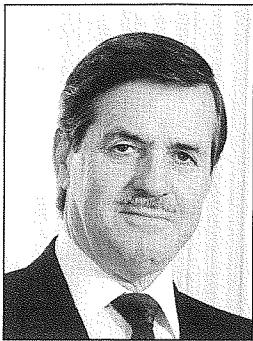
Until quite recently at Bombardier, an international Quebec corporation established in 1926 following the invention of

the snowmobile, French was the language of work and English the language of business. Now a public transportation giant in North America (involved in manufacturing subway and railway cars and, later, in the civil aeronautics and military aircraft industries after buying Canadair), this corporation has expanded not only in the United States (the New York subway and the high-speed train between Houston and Dallas), but also in Europe. And, for Bombardier, French has become an important language of business.

Bombardier's knowledge of French and its longstanding contacts in Europe have

allowed it to set up operations in Belgium and, from that base, to expand on the other side of the Atlantic and even take over a French firm, ANF-Industrie. As a result, Bombardier has been a major partner in developing the only high-speed train already in service in Europe and the train that will soon link London and Paris via the Chunnel. The introduction of North America's first high-speed train will be another opportunity for Bombardier to showcase its pioneer spirit.

### Timmins: Years of persistence



*Gaston Mallette*

In three decades Timmins, Ontario, has radically altered its appearance, particularly from a linguistic point of view. Today in Timmins money talks — in French. Most bank managers are French-speaking, something that was unheard-of only 30 years ago.

Gaston Mallette, an owner of Transports Mallette, remembers with amusement the time, not so very long ago, when an insurance agent turned him down. In a town where, at the time, it was not easy to work in French, he spoke hardly any English. Today in Gaston Mallette's plant, which employs 1,500 workers, French is the language of work. This timber company has two plants in Quebec as well.

When he goes to board meetings in Toronto Gaston Mallette notes with satisfaction that people always try to greet him and say a few words to him in French. Annual sales figures of \$200 million are indeed impressive.

When asked what has been the key to his financial success, Gaston Mallette replies, "We've never grovelled, but we're not aggressive either."

For approximately 20 years Timmins has had a French-language secondary school, which is now attended by some 1,500 Franco-Ontarian students. The expansion of the French-speaking population has given rise to new tensions, how-

ever: a movement to protect the English language has recently surfaced.

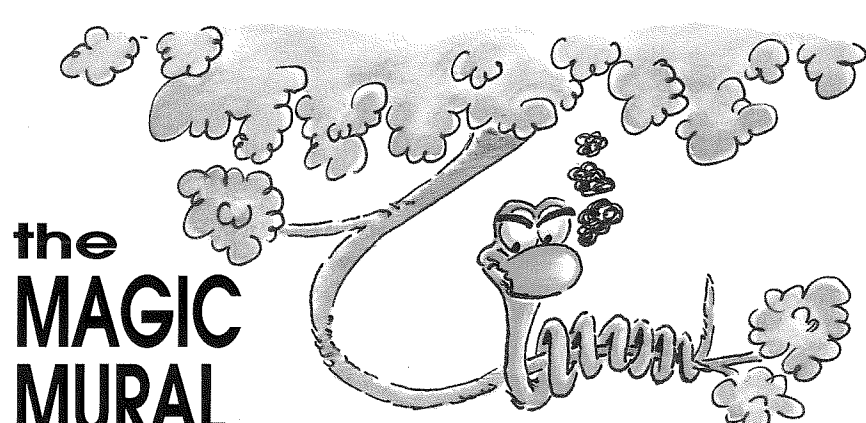
Philosophically, Gaston Mallette notes, "These groups come and go. We do have to recognize that French-speaking young people are less active in community organizations. The language situation has stabilized, but mixed marriages could mean the loss of ground. That possibility makes it clear that Francophones should not relax their awareness of the language issue."

The result of this patient victory is that when people think of Gaston Mallette in

Timmins they make efforts to write and produce — whether for charity campaigns, fundraising or signage — in French. Ultimately, the more Francophones make their contribution to the national economy known to other, English-speaking, Canadians, the better their chances will be of finding business partners who, like them, aim for national success on the international market. ■

*(Our translation)*

\* *Brigitte Morissette is a freelance journalist.*



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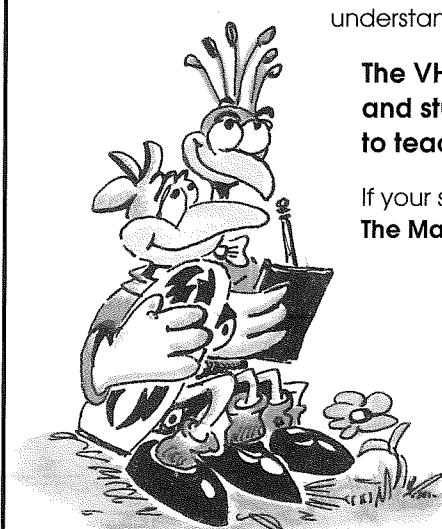
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# Scientific communications

Gilles Laframboise

**“We must face the fact that even for a Francophone the American language has become the preferred medium of communications in the field of scientific research.”**



Serge Rossignol

According to University of Montreal researcher Serge Rossignol, although some people may have found that statement startling in the Canadian context it is nevertheless an apolitical

observation, since it does no more than acknowledge a fact.

“It is important to teach science in French in our French-language universities,” he says, “but today, if you want to make a mark in the highly competitive field of scientific research, you must

have the results of your work appear in the American journals, which are published in English.”

In Serge Rossignol’s opinion nationalism has nothing to do with this practice. The world of science has chosen a medium of communications in order to ensure better understanding and that medium is the one in use in the country in which, at the moment, most of the world’s research is conducted.

“If I spoke only Spanish and Swahili right now,” he notes, “I would have to learn English quickly if I wanted to have access to the latest research in my field or communicate the results of my own work to the scientific community.

“Even researchers in France now submit their manuscripts in English in order to reach the vast majority of their colleagues, whether they are next door in Germany or in Japan,” he points out.

“During a two-year stay in Sweden, I attended many meetings among

Swedes at which English was the language normally used by specialists,” he adds.



John Kalaska

## And Japanese tomorrow?

According to John Kalaska, a colleague of Serge Rossignol, American English began to be the dominant language in the sciences right after the Second

World War. Since that time it has continued to invade all fields of scientific activity.

“These days, a researcher who published work only in German, French or Spanish journals would reach no more than a tiny portion of the target audience,” explains John Kalaska.

Originally from Ontario, John Kalaska studied first in Toronto and then in the United States. After returning to Canada, he learned French in order to obtain a teaching and research position at the University of Montreal. Half of the members of his research team are Anglophones who, like him, teach in French.

“Our students can be taught in French but if they want access to the latest research, they must have a command of English, which is the worldwide medium of communications in the sciences,” he remarks.

This situation is far from being cast in concrete, however. John Kalaska thinks that today there is an upswing in scientific research in Europe and in Japan.

He makes an intriguing comment: “If this trend accelerates, there is no reason Japanese could not become the language of communications in the field of science in 20 or 30 years.” ■

(Our translation)

## Those bilingual cereal boxes...

Cereal boxes with French on them antedate Canada’s 1969 Official Languages Act by many decades. Kellogg headquarters in Battle Creek, Michigan, found a package in its archives that has French as part of the label and is dated 1907. W.K. Kellogg knew what it takes to reach consumers.





# They shoot, they score...

Gilles Laframboise



The Canadian sports community benefits greatly from the bilingual character of the country. In both

professional and amateur sports the use of two official languages is an important asset.

According to the president of Athletics Canada, Paul Dupré, "bilingualism is a fundamental value of our organization, both nationally and on the international scene."

In an interview, Dupré stated that "everywhere in the world Canada is seen very clearly as a bilingual country that can provide professional support to dozens of countries, in fact, to all the countries of the world where English or French is spoken."

Canada's bilingualism puts it in a very enviable position. "We are often invited," Dupré noted, "to advise new athletic associations, in Africa or elsewhere, and we can do so in most cases because, as Canadians, we usually speak the language of the country that needs a helping hand."

## Important asset

Canada's bilingual character also opens the door to major international sports organizations.

At the International Olympic Committee in Lausanne, Switzerland, the language of work is French. At the headquarters of the International Amateur Athletic Federation in London, the official languages are English and French.

"Needless to say, in such a linguistic context Athletics Canada is very comfortable when it comes time to communicate with these international organizations and often serves in an advisory capacity because of its linguistic resources," according to the president of Athletics Canada.

"Since we straddle two linguistic worlds," he adds, "it is not surprising to

see us play an important role in the Commonwealth Games and in organizing the Jeux de la francophonie."

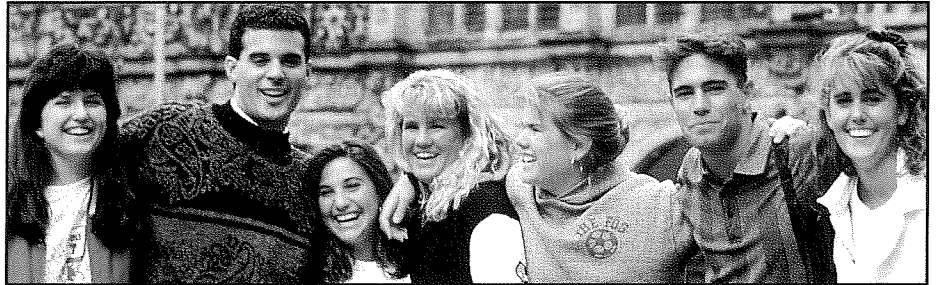
## Bilingual services

Athletics Canada enjoys such influence in the world only because the organization itself practises bilingualism at home.

"I cannot say that Athletics Canada as an organization is representative of all sports federations in Canada," its president says, "but we make great efforts to recognize bilingualism as a fundamental value."

For some years Athletics Canada has made it a point of honour to provide its

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services in both official languages. "We want to serve both our athletes and our coaches in the language of their choice," he says.

Under Dupré's direction some positions at the organization's headquarters have even been classified "bilingual imperative". "All Canadian athletes, be they Anglophones or Francophones, are entitled to the same services in their own language, whenever it is humanly possible to provide them," he comments.\*

In Dupré's view these include the services of a coach, the preparation of information bulletins, the operation of appeals panels and reception at the headquarters of Athletics Canada.

"Members of the sports community must feel that Athletics Canada is their organization, whether they speak English or French."

### Special skiers



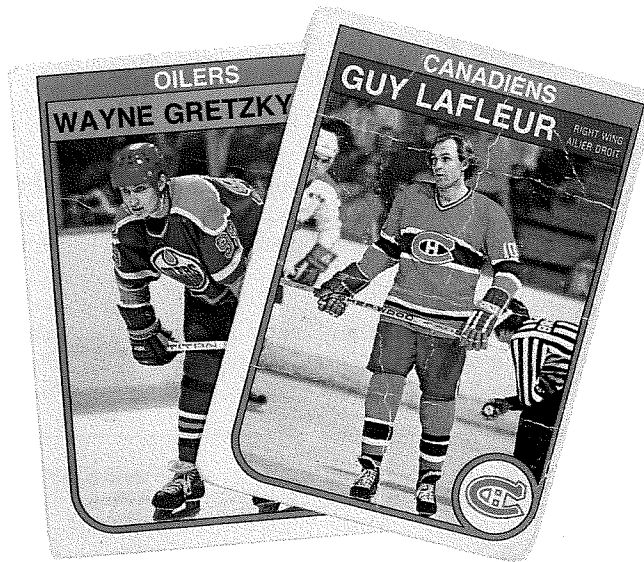
Athletics is not the only area in which the bilingual character of Canada is an asset.

According to Peter Duncan, a member of Canada's national ski team for 11 years, Canadian skiers, although they come from the same continent as American skiers, are a breed apart linguistically.

"When Canadian skiers are in Austria, for example, they will try out a few words of German to make themselves understood in restaurants or on the street, while the vast majority of American skiers will impose English on their listeners," he says.

The same thing happens when Canadian skiers are in France, Italy or Switzerland. "Since we come from a country where it is normal to speak two languages," the former ski champion, now a television host and businessman, explains, "we are naturally more open, more willing than others to add strings to our bow by learning the basics of a third or even fourth language."

He himself speaks English and French and "gets along", as he says, in German



Private collection: Claude Martine

and Italian. "I am not the only person in this situation. Ken Reid and Podborski speak English and German, and Nancy Greene speaks English and French."

### Building bridges

In the field of professional sports — hockey, football or baseball — bilingualism takes on quite a different aspect.

Jean Béliveau, the former star of the Montreal Canadiens and now vice-president of the team, speaks of bilingualism as a means of building bridges between people.

"As soon as I left junior hockey in the 1950s I became aware of the importance of bilingualism for my career. How can you think of becoming captain of your team if you can't speak to all the players in their own language?"

By learning English over the years, he says, recalling a visit he made to the Northwest Territories accompanied by former Governor General Roland Michener, "I was better able to understand my country, not only from east to west but also from south to north.

"Being bilingual never prevented me from being proud to be a Quebecer and representing Francophones wherever I went, both in Canada and abroad," says the player they call "Le gros Bill". ■

*(Our translation)*

### Note:

\* The incumbent of a bilingual imperative position must meet the language requirements at the time of appointment.



**Jean Béliveau** CENTRE, MONTREAL CANADIENS

1953-54 Record	GP	G	A	TP	MIP
	43	13	21	34	22

Born: Three Rivers, Que., August 31, 1931. 6'1", 190 lbs. Shoots left. One of the most publicized rookies of all time, big, fast, smooth-skating Jean is known for his ability to score goals as well as set them up for his mates. He began to find his stride towards the close of last season after being plagued by a broken ankle and a shattered jaw. Plays semi-pro ball during the summer months.

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**CENTRE** CANADIENS DE MONTREAL  
Né à Trois-Rivières, P.Q., le 31 août 1931, 6'1", 190 lbs. Lance à gauche. Une des recrues les plus réclamées de tout temps. Gros, rapide et bon patineur, Jean est connu pour son habileté à compter des buts aussi bien que pour ses passes. Il commença à trouver son enjambée vers la fin de la saison dernière alors qu'il fut affecté d'une cheville cassée et d'une mâchoire brisée. Il joue à la balle comme semi-pro pendant l'été.

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# Public Service bilingualism

Tom Sloan



David Davidson and Marcel Pilon are two senior public servants with very different jobs and responsibilities, who are both, each in his own way, key players in one of the crucial projects in the field of official languages policy in the federal government. They are both, in a sense, frontline officers in an operation designed to give each of Canada's two official language groups a stake in and an acceptance of a functionally bilingual federal Public Service.

Specifically, both Davidson, director general of communications in the Solicitor General's department, and Pilon, director of official languages at Revenue Canada (Taxation), are closely involved in the



David Davidson

long-term drive to allow, under certain conditions, public servants to work to a large extent in their own first official language in their own workplace. Davidson's involvement in the process is more implicit than Pilon's; but it is real nevertheless.

## The road to choice

In 1967, when Canada was celebrating the centenary of Confederation, Davidson's job, or something like it, existed, but its language component did not. In Pilon's case his very job was at most a gleam in the eye of a Royal Commissioner. Much can happen in 25 years.

It was, in fact, just 23 years ago when, in 1969, Parliament first set along the road of a comprehensive and coherent official languages policy with the adoption of the first Official Languages Act.

While that Act confined itself essentially to establishing English and French as the languages of federal government services to the public, the distinct but

related question of the use of both languages in the workplace was also being raised in the form of a complete volume dealing with the issue published by the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism — the body that initiated the whole linguistic revolution. In that volume it insisted on the need to improve the place of French within the Public Service itself, as well as in terms of the service it provides the public. After Parliament passed a resolution in the same sense in 1973 the government started to draft directives. Finally, the revised Official Languages Act of 1988 gave public servants in prescribed bilingual regions the right to work in the language of their choice.

## Principles and practices

Principle is one thing and practice another. In fact, the principle itself is far from absolute. Its application is restricted by another principle: the right of individual Canadians to service in their own preferred official language. Secondly, the right to choice is geographically limited to a number of designated areas — the National Capital Region, New Brunswick and parts of Quebec and Ontario.

Even within the boundaries of the designated regions the process of ensuring a real choice of the language of work has been long and difficult. French is still struggling in most areas, including the National Capital Region, and English does not enjoy the status it should as an internal working language in the federal Public Service in Quebec.

And yet, despite the difficulties, if we look back on the situation of 25 years ago we can gain a perspective on the

**The  
customer  
is always  
right.**

strides that have been made. In fact, of the many changes that have occurred in the language field over the years, the change in the position of French in the Public Service has been among the more dramatic.

The truth is that in 1967 French had virtually no status within the federal administration. Even in Quebec English was the normal working language in many departments, especially in the Montreal region. In Ottawa and, needless to say, the rest of the country, the Public Service was, for all practical purposes, unilingually English. French-speaking Canadians were grossly underrepresented at all levels, but most particularly in senior management.

Where are we now, 25 years later? The short answer: we have come a long way, but not everyone is satisfied that we have come far enough.

One fact tells part of the story. In terms of sheer physical participation, in 1990 French-speakers accounted for 26.7% of the federal Public Service, slightly higher than their percentage of the total population. However, French-speaking Canadians are still underrepresented at the decision-making, managerial level. There were and are discrepancies between departments and various levels, but overall the picture represents a substantial improvement over an earlier time. It is quite clear that, at least in the designated bilingual regions, and despite some wide variations, French is present as a language of work and communications to a degree that would have been unthinkable only a generation ago.

## Commitment and structures

There are several factors involved in a development such as this. From the start there must be a firm commitment on the part of the highest levels of government and of the bureaucracy. Then there must be set in place structures such as the official languages divisions that now work



in every department and agency to supervise and encourage the acceptance of the new policies. There must next be a sufficient number of members of the minority community and bilingual members of the majority group to provide a "critical mass" of people to allow the process to get started in practice. And finally there must be present a sufficient degree of acceptance of the process by members of the majority group to give it time to develop into a smooth, non-threatening and pleasant enough operation for everyone involved.

## In 1967 the Public Service was, for all practical purposes, unilingual.

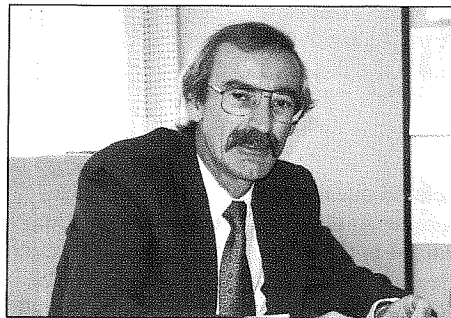
solutions available to what is certainly a structural but, above all, a human operation.

As a director general of communications Davidson's primary responsibilities have little or nothing to do with language. But, as is the case with everyone at a supervisory level in the Public Service, he must deal professionally with the members of both language groups who report to him. In his case there are 20, of whom half are Francophones.

Starting off as essentially a unilingual Anglophone, Davidson is now more than functionally bilingual and operates routinely in both languages. "If I am dealing with a Francophone I try to go out of my way to speak French. It's more than just communicating, it's sending a message," Davidson feels.

As for his own shop, Davidson today sees no animosity on language grounds. "Bilingualism is intellectually and spiritually accepted." Many unilingual Anglophones are looking forward to the opportunity to learn French but, as

This is where people like David Davidson and Marcel Pilon, with their different skills and responsibilities, can and do make an invaluable contribution. What happens in their two areas offers an illustration both of the challenges involved and the



*Marcel Pilon*

unilinguals, they too are fully accepted. "I no longer detect people in the Public Service trying to hurt others." Meetings are regularly held bilingually, involving a good deal of receptive bilingualism, where participants speak their own language and the chair acts where necessary to keep those with an imperfect knowledge of the second language informed as to what is happening. This, by the way, is one of the knacks suggested in a booklet, "Chairing Meetings", put out by the Treasury Board, which is the department responsible for administering language policies inside the Public Service.

Another brochure has been published under the supervision of Marcel Pilon. Its title is straightforward: "Official Languages at Revenue Canada Taxation... Everybody's Business".

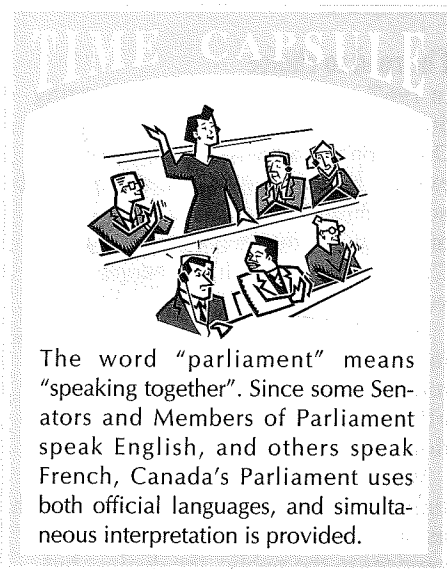
As director of the department's Official Languages Division Pilon is in the thick of administering language policies and has been for 10 of his 20 years as a public servant. The brochure, 15 pages in each language, covers just about everything an employee might need to know, including the wide variety of language training opportunities available, in addition to those required, for personnel in or aspiring to bilingual positions. One of the most imaginative is the Follow-up to Language Training program, offering some 15 options to those who want to maintain their second language. These include twinning of English- and French-speaking employees, written correspondence practice, guest speakers, round-table discussions in the second language and several other activities. In addition, employees participate in many different bilingual social

activities, from softball to bowling tournaments, all at least partially designed to encourage friendly interaction among the 3,200 employees at the department's head office, of whom about 35% are French-speaking.

## Escalating progress

Since 1970, when he joined the Public Service, Pilon has seen much progress, at first slow, but steadily escalating in the past decade. "At one time I would not even have imagined speaking French in a meeting or asking for an assessment report in French." Now these are normal situations. "There is still a good deal to do," he warns, especially in increasing the number of really bilingual supervisors. But he continues to favour a gradual approach as the most effective in terms of end results.

Despite their differences in scope and content David Davidson's and Marcel Pilon's operations clearly have much in common. Above all, they demonstrate the vital importance of the personal component in an area as complex and delicate as that of linguistic duality in the offices and other workplaces of government. All the structures in the world won't help if respect, good will and friendship are lacking. Their presence is precisely what Davidson, Pilon and many others like them are trying to ensure. ■



The word "parliament" means "speaking together". Since some Senators and Members of Parliament speak English, and others speak French, Canada's Parliament uses both official languages, and simultaneous interpretation is provided.



# Computer software in French

Dorothy Guinan\*



Computers were once tools of the elite and software catered mostly to the English-speaking user.

Times have changed.

Support from the federal government has had an influence. Policy concerning bilingual software was emphasized in the 1988 Official Languages Act and by a Treasury Board directive that defined the linguistic obligations of federal agencies relative to commonly used programs. The government's commercially important involvement has had a significant effect on the production of software that "speaks French".

The Centre international de recherche en aménagement linguistique (CIRAL), a language planning centre at Laval University, hopes to further this change and facilitate the use of computers for Francophones by developing computer software in French.

"We believe if Quebecers can work in French with modern tools they will be more productive and more competitive," said CIRAL's director, Conrad Ouellon. "The computer is a tool we cannot afford to overlook."

CIRAL is interested in developing the type of software that cannot be translated, particularly writing tools such as grammar corrector software and document analysis systems.

Quebec's Conseil de la langue française (CLF) conducted a study in 1986 which concluded that 34% of people in Quebec who use computers at work use software only in English. Seventy-eight per cent of the respondents said the software in French available in the workplace was not sufficient.

"We believe more Quebec companies use software in French today, although we haven't done a study since 1986. Now there is more software in French on

the market," said Daniel Monnier, the CLF researcher responsible for the 1986 study.

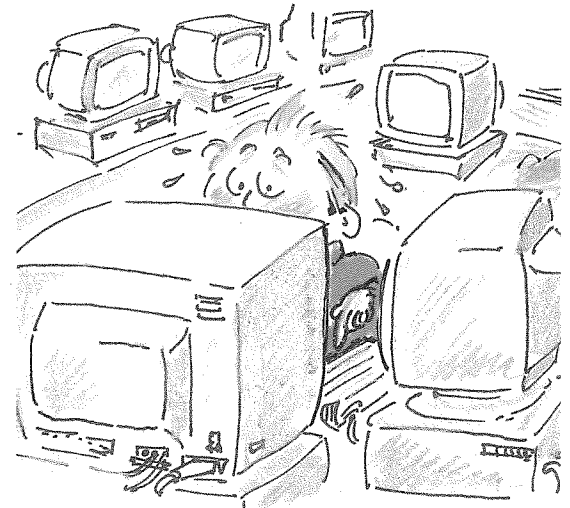
Software development, which includes everything from market research to creating prototype software, is only part of CIRAL's mandate. Other areas of study include defining Quebec French, both written and oral.

Most projects are funded by provincial and federal government organizations, such as the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, the Formation de chercheurs et aide à la recherche and the privately operated Centre francophone de recherche en informatisation des organisations (CEFRIO). CIRAL's annual operating budget is about \$600,000.

The Centre has an impressive make-up, with a dozen of Quebec's top language experts, whose expertise is recognized nationwide and internationally. Four of Quebec's dictionary experts are based at CIRAL. Claude Poirier, editor of the Quebec-adapted French dictionary, *Français Plus*, is part of the CIRAL team. Other members have travelled as far as Tunisia, upon request, to train fellow French-speaking linguists to use computer software for linguistic research.

## Wide range

Many language research centres in Canada and Europe tend to concentrate on specific language industries and not on as wide a variety of sectors as CIRAL, which claims to be the largest organization of its kind in the world.



**The  
future  
is  
secure.**

Jean-Claude Corbeil, a CLF language-planning specialist, said Canada, France and Belgium are the most active countries involved in language planning in French. Rwanda and the Central African Republic have recently joined them.

The Canadian Centre for Research and Development in Language Processing Technologies, now being established in Moncton, New Brunswick, concentrates only on translation. Its goal is to improve the translation industry, making software more user-friendly and economical and Canada more competitive in the international market.

CIRAL applies this goal to all language industries, which include word processing, publishing, language teaching and terminology.

## Dreams and deeds

At present, CIRAL's promises and possibilities far outnumber its accomplishments. "It takes time to become established, and we must develop contacts outside Quebec City," Ouellon explained.

And the CIRAL team is actively spreading the word. Each member belongs to one or more provincial, Canadian or international organizations, such as the Observatoire Québécois des industries de la langue, the Fédération canadienne des sciences humaines and the Agence de coopération culturelle et technique.

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

CIRAL has just completed phase one of a French electronic style and grammar corrector and is starting phase two, the final phase before marketing. This particular project is a joint effort between the Centre and a private company. It is funded by CEFRIO, which is a common financial set-up for the projects of this nature. The final product, to be marketed by the private company, is intended for general, mostly clerical, use.

Another project underway is a document analysis program meant to aid research, allowing retrieval of computerized information by punching in key words.

CIRAL does market research as well. It is presently involved, in collaboration with Bell Canada and 100 other compa-

nies, in research directed at finding out what percentage of Quebec companies use linguistic software in French and, if not, why. CEFRIO is funding the project.

The Secretary of State of Canada has commissioned CIRAL to analyse, modernize and adjust selected volumes of Hector Carbonneau's *Terminology Bulletins*, an English-French dictionary used by the department's translators. The volumes date back to the early 1970s, when Canada identified its French with France instead of with Quebec and many modern concepts did not exist.

### Research

CIRAL is also involved in self-inspired pure research projects.

Ouellon and two other researchers are analysing and trying to define Quebec's oral French. Ouellon says that the results of such research will produce far more than theory and eventually could help develop and adapt voice recognition software for French-speaking users in Quebec, a project started three years ago by the Centre international de recherche sur le bilinguisme (CIRB), CIRAL's predecessor.

It wasn't until 1985, 18 years after the birth of CIRB, that the idea for CIRAL emerged. IBM Canada asked three Laval University departments to participate in a three-year project to develop the use of computers in French.

"We asked Laval University to participate with IBM because the university is recognized for its expertise in the field of linguistics and small and medium enterprises," recalled Yves Valiquette, information manager for IBM Canada in Montreal.

By this time CIRB's mandate to study the relationship between English and French in Canada had become outdated. The Centre also studied the place of French in the world and second-language teaching methods.

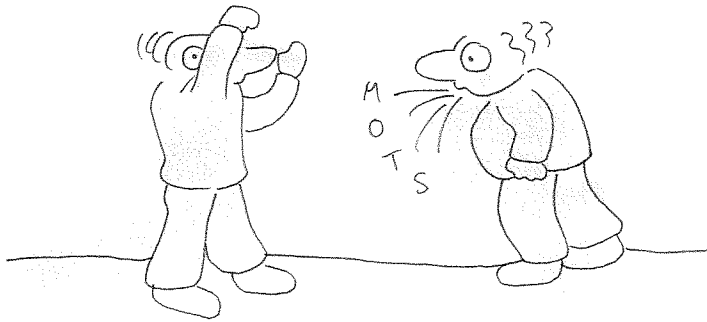
"The bilingualism theme did not disappear, it was simply incorporated into a larger theme, language planning," Ouellon recounted.

Ouellon believes the future of computer software in French is secure. However, he finds it disappointing that much of the research done to achieve this goal is done in English.

"When France hosts a symposium, the research documents about language planning are published in English," Ouellon said. "One thing is certain, when we attend a symposium in France, or in any other French-speaking province or country, our documents are published in French. It's a political choice."

Whether or not French is established as an efficient language for linguistic research, CIRAL will continue to pursue its goal: to develop computer software for French-speaking users, in French. ■

## Ne pas MÂCHER ses MOTS



(Lit., to not chew one's words; fig., to tell it like it is)

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The Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages

*Let's Talk*



# Languages: Passport to success

Brigitte Morissette

**L**anguages will take you everywhere. As long as you speak them. Better two than only one. And even as many as 10 if you want to express yourself in all the languages of the European Economic Community. At the Parliament in Strasbourg, where subjects are already debated in nine official languages, there is some question of introducing a tenth: Catalan. Unless English, which is already the language of business in a few large companies (Swedish ones, for example), becomes the sole vehicle of European communications.

However, it seems that the Twelve aren't ready to sacrifice either their sovereignty or their cultural heritage on the altar of unilingualism. And what about the pleasure of savouring another language and even making your career in it, as many Europeans do? Not to mention the advantages of selling your products to customers or spectators in their language!

We won't talk about opera singers, about those well-known situations in which, for example, a buxom English-speaking soprano goes into raptures in the arms of a huge Spanish tenor, while both sing a famous dialogue beautifully in Italian! For a long time now opera has been defying the Babel syndrome.

Singing, playing, teaching or commenting on politics in the country's other language — that which is not your own — can pay big dividends, intellectually as well as financially. The list of intellectuals, journalists, industrialists and specialists asked to comment on the news of the day on television and in the major newspapers in one or the other of our two official languages grows ever longer.

Look at Albert Millaire. When he was 20 years old he played Hamlet on a Montreal stage. Twenty years later he triumphed at Stratford in the same Shakespearean play, but this time acting the part of the player king (the leader of the troupe invited to the palace). The role

may not have same glamour, but what an accomplishment!

Albert Millaire had always spoken some English. He learned it on the street as a child in the West Montreal neighbourhood between Saint-Henri and Notre-Dame-de-Grâce. To master Shakespeare in English, though — the cadence, rhythms and accents — he had to work hard for nine months to learn the intricacies of the language under the guidance of a professional. He calls this person his "coach", since it requires



Albert Millaire

real training to play a role in a piece of classical theatre which is, in addition, in another language. Those "th's" and tonic stresses can really trip you up! For Albert Millaire, to play Shakespeare was to discover a language which, he says, he had never learned. Except by ear! He does seem to be deriving enormous personal pleasure from it now, however.

"Speaking a second language, learning English," he says, "is essential. No matter what occupation I had been in, I would have made an effort to learn it."

Albert Millaire didn't start with Shakespeare. Back in 1970, he put on Molière's *Le Misanthrope* at the Saint Lawrence Centre in Montreal. Then Strindberg, then another Molière (*The Cheats of Scapin*), both in English. He started a small career in the United States with *The Imaginary Invalid* in Dallas. Finally, in 1973, a colleague, Jean Gascon, invited him to play Louis Riel at the National Arts Centre in Ottawa. There was no problem with the accent when he played the Métis hero.

However, new challenges presented themselves when he acted at Stratford (he also played Malvolio in *Twelfth Night* at Stratford). Challenges involving both memory and language. Intellectual as well as physical effort was called for.

"Stage fright is a much bigger factor," he says. "It's fantastic to act in another language, but you have to watch yourself all the time. If you don't, your mouth can really get you in trouble!"

A challenge, definitely. But the friendships you form when you enter a new world may be the real reward.

"They're puritanical. We talk too much. I invite people over, cook for them! I hate intolerance. My window is open on New York, Los Angeles, Paris. I am an artist who lives out of his suitcase. Speaking English is a tool. In the case of this globetrotter, you might say it's an extra ticket."

## Learning French at 25

At the age of 25 John Van Burek, founder of Toronto's Théâtre français, spoke not one word of the language of Molière. He went to Paris in 1969, spent eight months there, and came back with a new career ahead of him. Rather, several careers — and in French — because this Toronto director, who struck out on his own again a few months ago, is also the official translator for the works of Michel Tremblay, now Quebec's most frequently produced playwright.



John Van Burek

"It was love at first sight for me, as far as French was concerned," he exclaims. "A pleasure which I discovered late in the day, but then wanted to apply immediately to theatre. This is how I came to take part in the great Quebec theatre movement." Moreover, he has just given a series of courses at the École nationale de théâtre de Montréal.

John Van Burek likes to talk about his perfect — and rare — knowledge of Canada's two big theatrical worlds — the English-speaking one and the French-speaking one.

"It gives me a different and more complete view of our country," he makes a point of saying.

He is an artist who has no difficulty recognizing that Quebec is different.

"It's very different, because Quebec has always been forced to fight to defend itself: defend its ideas, its customs, its traditions. English Canada has depended more on imported culture. This sense of impending disaster, this need to define oneself, to recall constantly who one is: what an incredible stimulus!"

French has, in a way, changed John Van Burek's life.

"I'm unique! Through theatre I have been able to establish good relations with both Anglophone and Francophone artists. Thanks to Michel Tremblay, my translations (18 plays) have been put on

in the United States, Australia, England. There is marvelous energy in Quebec theatre. Unfortunately, my fellow English-speaking Canadians are unaware of the advantage I have over most of them. Generally speaking, our two theatrical communities don't know anything about each other. The two solitudes still exist. We deny ourselves the opportunity to draw from both repertoires and benefit from the riches to be found in the other theatre."

### A winner in two languages

Born in the United States, Nanette Workman became a rock star in Quebec and has had her share of success in France. And in England, too. Recently, in a famous Paris theatre, Nanette played one of the leading roles in a successful musical comedy (*La légende de Jimmy*) written by the most famous Quebec lyricist, Luc Plamondon, and the equally well-known French musician, Michel Berger. At one time Johnny Hallyday, dynamic French concert performer and rock superstar, had taken her under his wing. Three years of touring and record production followed. But Nanette always preferred to go it alone. Preferably in French and in Quebec.

However, nothing had prepared Nanette Workman, who was born in Jackson, Mississippi, for this double career. Which is also a double love story. There are no French ancestors in her family: her first name comes from the title of a musical comedy in which her mother was playing in the United States.

It was also in a musical comedy on Broadway, in which she was the star's understudy, that Nanette's love affair with the French language began. In the arms of an Italian Quebecer (Tony Roman) from Montreal. This was in 1967, a memorable year for Quebecers, who were hosting the international exposition. Nanette recorded her first 45 in French (to date she has made 12 LPs in her second language) and did an appropriately titled television show with Tony (*D'amour et d'amitié*). Then the couple left for England. Owing to a residence permit problem Nanette had to go to France, where, thanks to her style,

energy and knowledge of French, she ended up touring (in England!) with Johnny Hallyday.

Meanwhile, Nanette hadn't forgotten Quebec, which had been her springboard to success. She still lives there, on a farm near Valleyfield (and the American border) with her husband and son.

"My four-year-old is also perfectly bilingual," she hastens to point out. "Speaking two languages is such a practical thing. It's allowed me to communicate with millions of people. I've finally settled in Quebec, because there's so much life here. When I leave, it's to work."



Nanette Workman

To put a twist on the old adage, one could say of Nanette: "She who takes a country takes a husband!" It was when she singing in Paris in *La légende de Jimmy* that Nanette Workman met her husband. After this musical success the two came back to live in Quebec. Nanette today asserts: "I am very much a Quebecer! Speaking two languages is such a practical thing."

And three? The question seldom comes up in Ottawa. Even at Berlitz. For Canadians are tuned in to United States. They are still not tuned in to Europe or to the realities of market globalization. ■

(Our translation)



# Constitutions and elections

Tom Sloan

**T**he last, desperate chance for Canada? A new and encouraging start? An irrelevant exercise in futility? Just what was the real significance of the latest constitutional proposals unveiled by the government of Canada last September 24? While the responses of the nation's editorial writers ran a fairly wide gamut of opinion, by and large those responses can be described as in a sense similar to the proposals themselves: tentative, cautious and just slightly hopeful, with occasionally a dose of scepticism added to spice up the mixture. They were, however, apparently not yet bored with the subject; it was almost as though it were being raised for the first as well as perhaps for the last time, and many wanted to have their say. In any case, the operation was not shot down at its inception. There were even a few glowing reviews.

## A starting point

One of them came from the *Toronto Globe and Mail*. "If the task of government... is to set before the people the unfinished business of the nation, the Mulroney government has earned its wages." The proposal may not have tried to give definitive answers, but it did address the issues and the possible trade-offs that may be necessary. "It is intelligently framed and unflinching in advancing radical reforms where only radical reforms will do. The people could not ask for better coun-

sel." Perhaps in the end, the *Globe* suggested, the main achievement of the proposal will be to permit Canadians to show there is a real consensus concerning issues such as a stronger economic union, an elected Senate, protection of individual and minority language rights and the need for constitutional recognition of the special place of Quebec and the aboriginal peoples. The need is for everyone to take a cool look at difficult questions. "If these are to have any possibility of resolution... all sides must refrain from snap judgement on what is, after all, merely a starting point for debate."

In general, the English-language editorialists across the country adopted a positive tone without necessarily subscribing to the specific provisions of the federal proposals. For the *Vancouver Province*, "the package offers much to build on and be hopeful about. Maybe the past year wasn't a total loss after all." To the *Edmonton Journal* the proposals were evidence that the government had been working seriously and in good faith. "The proposals... are complex. They are also a genuine attempt to respond to the realities of the country itself. They seem to contain some contradictions... but this is a contradictory country." The *Winnipeg Free Press* agreed the proposals were complex. Indeed they form "a tangled

web" involving many changes with unforeseeable consequences. But "it also shows that lessons have been learned from the Meech Lake failure. It is worth considering." And, for the editorialist of the Chatham, Ontario, *Daily News*, it was "an excellent starting point."

There was also considerable emphasis placed on the need to compromise in the upcoming period of negotiation. In the words of the *Montreal Gazette*: "There will have to be long negotiations and many compromises.... But this time, unlike the Meech negotiations, the government of Canada has staked out the national ground. And it has given us all a fine framework for our discussion about the kind of country we want to be." The *Edmonton Journal* was on site. "Our country was built on compromise, and it is compromise that will secure our future."

## Prudence, openness

In the Quebec French-language press, while there was no sign of an immediate total rejection, the response was cooler.

By far the warmest welcome came from Claude Masson in *La Presse* of Montreal. Despite a number of shortcomings, Masson wrote, the September document was a distinct improvement over the Meech Lake Accord — more

substantial and more comprehensive; nonetheless, some were ready to reject it immediately. "The extremists, those in favour of a rigid and centralizing federalism as well as the partisans of total independence, will see red. They will be shocked and upset. Their spokespersons have already started to denounce this reform for diametrically opposed reasons. Their totally emotional reaction was predictable.... But this is an important, solid and profound document which, in its contents, goes beyond the constitutional repatriation of 1981 and the Meech Lake Accord. There is nothing humiliating in this proposal. There is no treason."

*Le Devoir* publisher Lise Bissonnette agreed that the federal document was important. "Here we are at last in the heart of the subject." But what did it all really mean? There was no doubt that "the federal proposal is the maximum of what Canada can 'offer'." But in trying to reconcile all the opposing claims was the whole exercise not really one of trying to square the circle? At the very least, Quebec must not act precipitately, as it did in the case of Meech Lake. "Before endorsing a proposal, before approving it, we must wait until it has been given its final form and enough provinces have ratified it in a credible fashion."

Prudence was also the watchword of Raymond Giroux in Quebec's *Le Soleil*. While "Quebec must respond

**"All sides must refrain from snap judgement."**

with great openness of mind" in order not to exacerbate tensions, neither must it play ostrich. "The federal proposal contains aspects completely unacceptable to Quebec, a situation that demands great firmness." These include dangers of economic centralization, uncertainties as to the future of a Quebec veto over constitutional change and limitations on the concept of a distinct society. Quebec's distinctiveness is not a matter for negotiation. "English Canada still has a few months to take account of these realities."

### The distinct society

And, as was the case in the Meech Lake debate, *Le Soleil's* preoccupation with the distinct society issue was echoed throughout Quebec and across the country. Unfortunately there was not even any agreement about what the government was actually proposing. While to some Anglophone editorialists the concept of distinct society had been broadened but should be accepted anyway, to Lise Bissonnette in *Le Devoir*, because it was being defined in terms of language, culture and civil law, its significance had shrunk. "To define is to limit, as Mr. Bourassa ceaselessly repeated between 1987 and 1990; now the significance of the idea seems to be reduced to nothing more than a sociological and historical statement," wrote Bissonnette.

It was, however, precisely that interpretation of the concept in social and historical terms that appealed to some Anglophone editorialists. The *London Free Press*, for example, concluded that as long as the provision did not give Quebec significant powers

denied other provinces, "the rest of Canada should welcome a symbolic declaration in the Constitution that Quebec... does constitute a distinct and much appreciated society within Canada." For its part, however, the *Ottawa Citizen* was willing to take the plunge and accept the entrenchment of the idea even if there might be some dangers involved. "In reality, the only effective brake on repressive government action is public opinion. As long as Quebec remains what it is today — a modern liberal democracy — draconian laws will be rejected by Quebecers themselves."

The *Ottawa Sun* had its own modest suggestion to surmount the question of terminology that bedeviled much of the debate: "En français it is individuelle. In English it translates as individuality, and there is no doubt that English Canada would have to agree that Quebec has a historical and social image which is different in character than those provinces with which it shares this fragile confederation."

### Economic union

While the cautious but somewhat positive response of Quebec Premier Robert Bourassa to the federal proposals caused some rejoicing among Anglophone editorialists, there was also unsurprising negative reaction to the nationalist rejection of negotiations. Among the sharpest responses was that of the *London Free Press*. Perhaps, the paper wrote, Ottawa was offering to give up too much to people who would never be satisfied. "If anything, the Mulroney government is open to criticism for undermining

the Canadian economic union by proposing to surrender more federal power to the provinces than is reasonably prudent. But Quebec nationalists are beyond appeasement; they will never be content with anything less than outright independence for Quebec."

As though to provide the counterpoint, *Le Soleil's* Raymond Giroux criticized Bourassa for perhaps being too moderate in his initial response and raised the alarm about the dangers to Quebec of a strengthened economic union. Reminding the premier of his past assertions that Quebec must control the important economic levers, he warned: "The premier has no reason to soften his position. Above all he must not get together with his friend Mulroney to try to achieve the withdrawal of the game plan for federal economic and financial dictatorship in exchange for concessions in other areas, everyone of them essential."

On this subject, however, there was a dissident Quebec voice, that of Alain Dubuc, chief editorialist of Montreal's *La Presse*, who assailed what he suggested was an artificial furore over the economic union proposals.

In an editorial entitled "The Conspiracy Theory", Dubuc wrote that it was no surprise that the first reactions of many Quebecers to the Ottawa document was negative since almost all the early analysis of the proposal had come from separatist politicians and their allies who maintained that it

was nothing more nor less than a threat to the basic decision-making powers of Quebec. Dubuc disputed the conclusion. "For several days we have been bombarded with demagogical exaggerations and arguments based on fear by people who ordinarily would complain bitterly about the use of such tactics. But if some have concluded, calmly like Jacques Parizeau, or hysterically like Lucien

Bouchard, that the federal project threatens the foundations of the Quebec economy, it is because they have never analysed the proposal." Dubuc also took note of the contrast between the opposition to freer inter-provincial trade and "the verve of all Quebec leaders of all

political tendencies in praising free trade with the United States." Surely, he argued, the Canadian market is more important than that of the United States and in both cases concessions must be made. "Why should a limited loss of powers, fully acceptable when we are dealing with the American giant, become horrifying in a Canadian context? That can doubtless be explained by our almost visceral mistrust of the rest of Canada, which leads us to find the Minnesota market more attractive than that of Alberta. Some day we shall have to overcome this reflex." This did not mean that Dubuc unquestionably supported the federal proposals. They were, he argued, too paternalistic. And while the lowering of inter-provincial barriers was desirable, placing it in the Constitution could lead to

**"There is nothing humiliating in this proposal."**

over-reliance on the courts in dealing with economic and trade matters. "Supreme Court judges would also have to have the talents of a minister of industry. That would be an aberration which would make Canada ungovernable."

### The New Brunswick election

At almost exactly the same time as the federal government was issuing its constitutional package the volatile mixture of language and politics resulted in an explosion of sorts in Canada's only officially bilingual province, New Brunswick. The event that caused shock waves, especially among official language minority groups, was the performance of the Confederation of Regions party in the September 23 provincial elections. CoR, which had as one of its major planks the dismantling of "official bilingualism", not only won eight of 58 seats in the legislature but also became the official opposition to the Liberal government of Premier Frank McKenna, which gained easy re-election province-wide. The fact that the party took about 30% of the English-speaking vote, and much more in and around the capital, Fredericton, demonstrated the depth of the continuing resentment among some parts of the Anglophone community that felt shut out because of increased Francophone participation in the government and administration of the province.

### The heart of CoR

What was the significance of the CoR showing? Opinions varied within New Brunswick and outside. In the immediate aftermath there was some confusion abroad, as reflected

in an editorial of the Moncton *Times-Transcript*, which didn't quite know what to think. "But the very real impact of CoR ought not to be over-estimated at this time, nor should it be assumed that this strong performance is necessarily the beginning of a continuing upward surge for that party, although obviously there's a strong base for possible future growth." The paper finally concluded a few days later that, whatever happens, the supporters of the new official Opposition should not be pushed to the wall. "How real CoR's support is on a long-term basis is a matter of opinion. But a sure way to cement what they have and to help them build upon it is to take the attitude that they won't in any way impact on the government's agenda.... Honey works better than vinegar."

The Saint John *Telegraph-Journal* agreed that a message of discontent had been received and must be addressed. Nevertheless, it maintained a certain guarded optimism. "Does the presence of eight CoR members mean the voters have rejected 22 years of official bilingualism? Is the sky falling? No. And no one should over-react. With eight members the party will not be able to wield much power or turn back the clock."

New Brunswick's only French-language daily, *L'Acadie Nouvelle*, took an extremely serious view of the CoR phenomenon. In fact, it saw a historical precedent: Nazi Germany. "As in the time of the Hitler regime, while the population in general remained silent before the

repeated attacks against the Jews, we could say the same thing seems to be occurring, this time against Franco-phones, but in a more subtle manner.... The CoR party is dividing the province. It supports discrimination and engenders hatred and incomprehension between the two groups."

*Pro Kent*, a Francophone weekly published in Richibucto, called on the government to act to avoid the dangers ahead. "The rights of Acadians... must be defended. Let us hope that

this election has helped demonstrate that these rights are fragile. Now, with the election of a handful of CoR candidates, Mr. McKenna will be obliged by something more than mere political reasons to pursue the consolidation of official languages policies in New Brunswick."

For *Le Devoir's* Lise Bissonnette the CoR breakthrough constituted a moment of truth. "The grumbling about unilingualism lost has always been quite loud in New Brunswick, but had difficulty finding any place to express itself because the two big parties had to court the Francophone electorate.... As a result they supported the progress of French and for more than 30 years have, with varying degrees of enthusiasm, worked to enhance the status of the Acadians. The rise of CoR could, unfortunately, once again divide the parties on the basis of language."

In neighbouring Nova Scotia, also home to a considerable, although smaller, Acadian population, the Halifax

*Chronicle-Herald* was somewhat bemused by events. Arguing that it would be wrong to claim that any party receiving such a large percentage of the vote was racist or "out-of-touch", it suggested that perhaps "the appeal of anti-bilingualism might have more to do with the excesses of official languages policy than with anti-French sentiment." Nevertheless, given CoR's flat rejection of French-language services in a province that is one-third Francophone, "the party's appeal to sheer small-mindedness is difficult to dismiss."

English-language editorialists generally took comfort from the fact that 80% of New Brunswick voters had supported parties favouring bilingualism. To the *Montreal Gazette*, "CoR clearly made a breakthrough.... But that does not make CoR a great power in the land, or even in New Brunswick, where the large majority rejected its narrow-minded approach."

The *Globe and Mail*, however, saw a potential fallout from the happenings in New Brunswick. While there were certainly specific circumstances favouring the rise of a party like CoR in the province, "its performance is likely to echo across the Canadian political landscape. The result will be particularly resonant for its federalist kissing cousin, the Reform Party."

And, while it too hailed the large pro-bilingual majority, the *Toronto Star* saw reason for concern. "To Canadians who view New Brunswick... as an inspiring example of harmony between English- and French-speaking peoples, CoR's rise in popularity is cause for some sadness." ■

Is  
the  
sky  
falling?

No."

# Summer immersion at Laval

Dorothy Guinan



Learn French in six weeks? It's possible, says Marcel Tremblay, assistant

director of Laval University's Modern Language School, near Quebec City.

"A person who has at least some knowledge of the language (such as high school French) and takes advantage of the six-week summer immersion program can get a good grasp of the language," says Tremblay.

But it takes a lot of hard work.

The Special Program for Non-Francophones (FNF), the largest of 13 similar programs in Quebec, is aimed at developing and fine-tuning spoken French. Laval established the program 54 years ago. In 1991, 1,200 students, averaging 23 years of age, attended.

The FNF fall-winter program has about 300 students.

Although only 20 hours a week are spent in the classroom much of the time is taken up by group activities. This summer students visited many regions throughout the province, all under the watchful eye of program monitors

who insisted French be spoken at all times.

They dined on Île d'Orléans, went shopping in Montreal, attended mass at the famous shrine in Ste-Anne-de-Beaupré, and never spoke a word of English — supposedly.

Maria Gluyas, an FNF student from Mexico who has attended the summer and the fall-winter immersion programs at Laval, says the summer program is more intensive than the fall-winter program, yet the atmosphere is more relaxed.

"There is a lot of homework but students still feel like they are on vacation," says Gluyas.

About 65% of FNF students come from

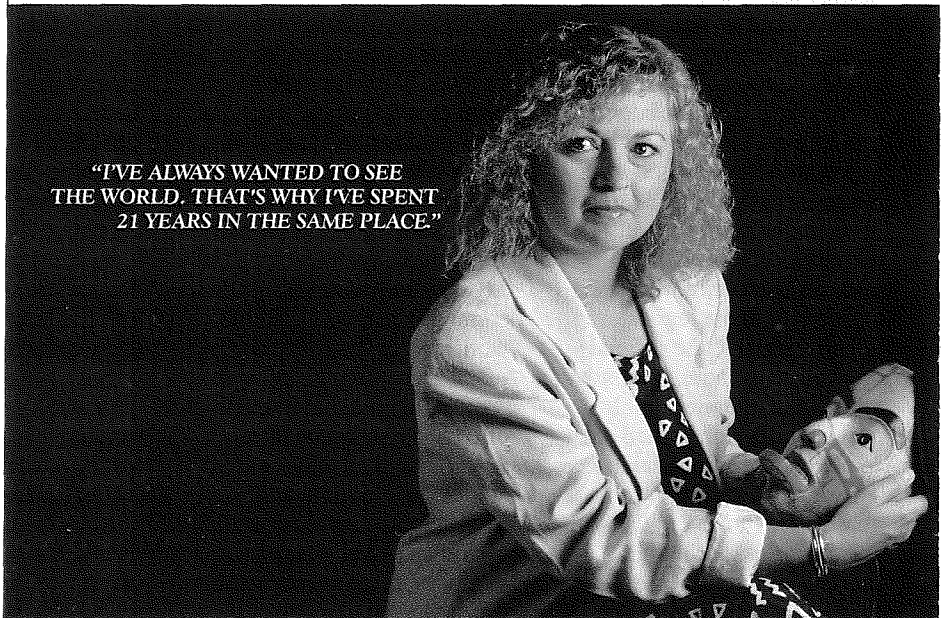
other Canadian provinces; most others are from the United States and Latin America.

In 1991 the federal Secretary of State paid tuition, lodging and meals for nearly half the students. The Summer Language Bursary Program is offered to Canadian

students who wish to learn their second official language.

Tremblay attributes the program's success to its long-standing reputation, historical location, government funding, and the curriculum developed by the professors in the department. ■

*Sylvie Morel, Director of Exhibitions and Programmes*



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# Cité libre revived

Tom Sloan



Quebec, like other parts of Canada and the world, has seen many periodicals come and go; and once they have gone, that is usually that. But last summer that which once had gone, after a quarter-century, actually came back to life. This was and is the magazine *Cité libre*, and its return could yet cause a stir.

Founded in 1951 as an unpretentious little magazine concerned with social, political and religious issues, it quickly became a sharp critic of many aspects of Quebec society, and most particularly of the authoritarian nationalist government of the day led by Premier Maurice Duplessis.

## Pro-federalism

Described by the *Canadian Encyclopedia* as "progressive, humanist and non-doctrinaire", *Cité libre* meant at least three things as it matured in the 1960s. It was a leading player in the political and intellectual crosscurrents of the period; it was a beacon to traditional federalists; and it was a red flag to the rising nationalist sentiment that was beginning to make its mark on modern Quebec political thinking.

Under the intellectual leadership of men such as Pierre Elliott Trudeau and Gérard Pelletier, then respectively a professor of constitutional law and a newspaper editor, *Cité libre* had no doubts as to where it stood. It was unabashedly pro-federalist and deeply suspicious of Quebec nationalism, whether of the old-line Duplessis variety or, later, the new, younger and overtly separatist brand represented by le Rassemblement pour l'indépendance nationale. *Cité libre* never knew the Parti Québécois; the magazine disappeared from the scene in 1966, apparently out of touch with the changing political climate. It survived four more years, in a manner of speaking, in the form of a series of special reports on various subjects under the title of "Les Cahiers de *Cité libre*"; and then

there was silence until last summer, when it made a Lazarus-like reappearance in the midst of a new national crisis, prepared to challenge the pro-nationalist, anti-federalist virtual unanimity in present-day Quebec.

The name has not changed and neither, apparently, has the magazine's essential philosophy nor its combativeness. And at least one of the original contributors is back; Gérard Pelletier is represented by an article deploring the extent of poverty in Montreal which, he says, should be at least as much concern to Quebec politicians and intellectuals as are "constitutional games".

"*Cité libre* is back" is the innocent title of the brief opening editorial by Editor-in-Chief Anne-Marie Bourdouxhe, Pelletier's daughter; but she quickly sets a more militant tone. "Personal happiness versus collective honour. The dichotomy is always with us. One has only to see the faces made by the sovereignists if anyone has the temerity to ask them what will happen to our standard of living in an independent Quebec.... That is why we have brought *Cité libre* back to life, to offer a tribune for those who believe, as we do, that the critical spirit should take back its rightful place." The goal is to question the insistence on nationalist unanimity that, she suggests, currently holds sway in Quebec, and to take a critical look at Quebec society "using all the tools available to us".

## The concept of "nation"

A critical look indeed comes from novelist and poet Jacques Renaud. Reflecting on the whole concept of "nation", as invoked by today's nationalist, he concludes that, objectively, it is essentially meaningless. "The nation is to a large extent a creation of the mind.... All nationalisms are works of fiction... that pretend not to be so. They are collective rituals, lived unconsciously without any notion of their profoundly mythical and inhuman nature." Taking aim at the

## Michel Thibert: In Memoriam

We pay tribute to Michel Thibert, whose untimely death last summer cut short his valuable contribution, over nine years, to our Office.

Among Michel Thibert's principal responsibilities with the Office was the ombudsman portfolio. In this role he made an important contribution to the chapter on "The Ombudsman and the Citizen" in our 1990 Annual Report and to the speech which Mr. Fortier gave to the National Conference of Ombudsmen on September 20, 1990.

Those of us who had the pleasure of working with Michel will remember his integrity, his graciousness and his balanced approach to official languages issues.

claim that the nation is essentially defined in terms of a common language, Renaud notes that, if such were the case, all of Spanish-speaking Latin America, for example, should be one nation; and it would be impossible for Switzerland to be one at all. As for language legislation, "I do not want to live in a society that legalizes linguistic segregation...."

## Regional provinces

While, like the old, the new *Cité libre* is an unabashed supporter of federalism, its

contributors do not necessarily rule out structural changes, even quite drastic ones. To Kimon Valaskakis, a professor of economics at the University of Montreal, for example, renewed federalism is more than just a slogan. His goal, however, is not that of the Quebec Liberal Party — a wholesale transfer of power from the federal government. In a “Preamble to a truly renewed federalism” Valaskakis put the emphasis on “community” and “harmony” rather than on the division of powers and notions such as “profitable federalism”. The objective should be common general policies, which need not be uniform but which should be in harmony with one another.

Valaskakis’s renewed federalism has elements that could appeal to both sovereignists and traditional federalists. Adherence to it, he argues, should be not only voluntary but completely reversible. At the same time, the new federalism should be symmetrical and balanced. The former condition rules out any idea of special status, which he rejects as an “elitist” concept. The latter rules out the constitutional status quo. The present structure involving 10 unequal provinces should be replaced by one of five “regional provinces”, in which a reasonable balance would be far more easily maintained. Valaskakis does not address the issue of the place of the territories nor that of the future of aboriginal rights.

Above all, he argues, there has to be something better than the compromises presently being offered to Canadians: “an unworkable status quo, an independence that goes against the current of history and a lusterless, shoddy marriage without any meaning whatsoever. It is time to reverse the engines and to offer a real choice: Going it alone or a real Canadian community.”

### Other issues

Beyond politics and the constitution, Pierre Anctil, director of French-Canadian Studies at McGill University, pleads for a new understanding on the part of his fellow Quebecers that immigrants to the province are more than an abstraction or in some cases a dangerous

counterweight to the majority Franco-phone culture. They must be accepted as an enriching addition to the society through a process of “mutual acculturation” in which both French-speaking Quebecers and others of different backgrounds work together to create a new, more diverse society in which all can play their appropriate part.

These subjects far from exhaust the list of topics in the 34 densely packed pages — with no photographs or art work — of the July-August issue. *Cité libre* also includes a letter from the West, a look at the dangers of conformism among today’s youth, reflections on the Gulf war, a critique of policies promoting unilingualism, a review of television fiction programming and a sharp look at a poll on the Constitution sent out by the Caisse Desjardins to its management employees. Despite the diversity of topics, however, the main thrust is clear: Yes to a bilingual, federal Canada; no to a unilingual, independent Quebec.

### The basic challenge

Even if we know much about its past history, it is still difficult to come to a firm conclusion about the quality and the effectiveness of a magazine such as this on the basis of one or even two issues. There can, however, be no doubt about one thing. The renewed *Cité libre* is certainly a different voice in today’s Quebec. And whereas 25 years ago federalism was still the conventional wisdom of the large majority of Quebecers, this has since been reversed. It now takes considerable courage to adopt a resolutely pro-federalist stance — a little perhaps like being a Communist in today’s Soviet Union.

As for effectiveness, certainly the new *Cité libre* is and must be more than a mere repetition of its forbear. The problems have evolved, at least in some of their aspects, along with the times. And yet the basic challenge, that of preserving the Canadian federation against the assaults of determined adversaries, remains essentially the same. If its opening salvoes are any indication, the magazine intends to take the offensive against the new conventional wisdom, the “una-

nimisme” that appears to reign among Quebec’s current opinion leaders.

Whatever else its value may be, the new *Cité libre* is not only contributing to the debate in Quebec, it is to a large extent re-initiating it. That is something for which Canadians, whether inside or outside Quebec, who continue to believe that Canada is worth preserving should be grateful. ■

### And furthermore...

Any suspicions that the first issue of the new *Cité libre* might also be its last were quickly put to rest when two further issues hit the newsstands, on schedule, in September and October. Their contents, consisting mainly of essays on ideas and on social and international affairs, essentially followed the pattern set in the first issue, with a growing emphasis on arts and letters.

As though to celebrate its determination to become once again a Quebec institution, the review has even produced its own boutique T-shirt, with a limited edition of 75 selling for \$30 each.

Has the review had any impact so far? The only letter it published in the first three issues came from a reader for whom “disgruntled” would be too mild an epithet: “I bought and read the first issue of the ‘new’ *Cité libre* for the first and the last time.... The federal monster must be at bay for these mental acrobats to be committing to themselves in a review that has lost its reasons for existing.... So go about your little business and allow the last victims of colonization in America to achieve independence in peace and serenity.”

A raw nerve perhaps, but certainly an impact. T.S.

# Second-language retention

Tom Sloan

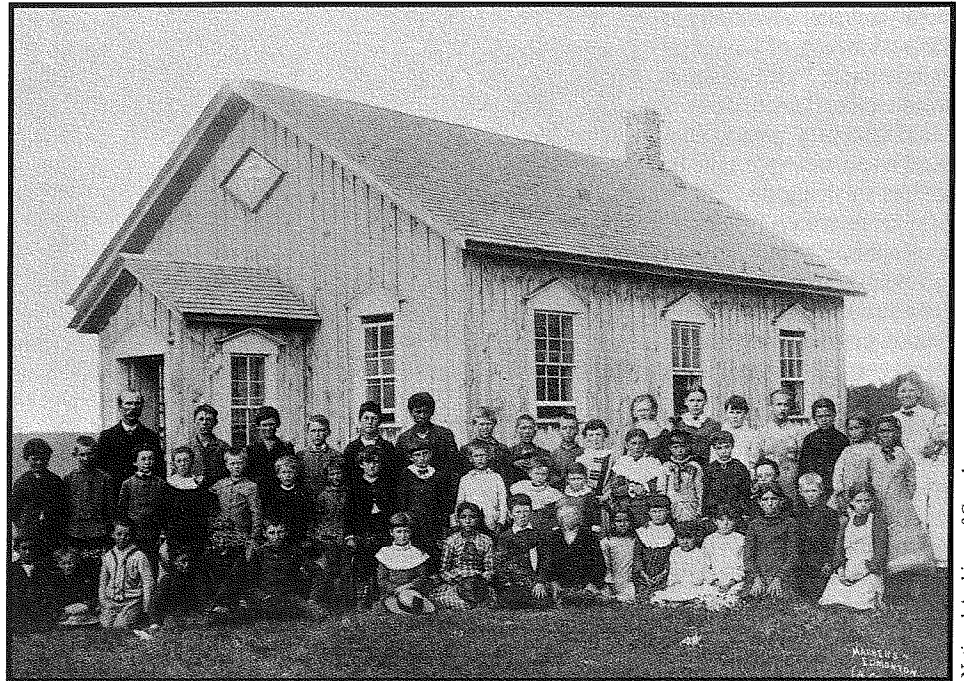
**T**o study and more or less successfully learn a second language is one thing. To retain in the mind in any meaningful sense what has been acquired once the formal learning process is over is quite another. The question naturally arises as to the record of Canadians when it comes to this rather important aspect of bilingualism and of the effort to achieve a climate in which the ability to operate in a second language is seen as something quite normal within a society.

This was precisely the topic of a panel of experts in the field of second-language training gathered together by *Language and Society* in Hull one cold day in February 1991.

Panel moderator Raymond LeBlanc, a professor of education at the University of Ottawa, summed up the challenge. "We all know how much our country invests in second-language training. We are talking in terms of millions and millions of dollars....All these students are taking second-language courses and, once they have finished, should normally be able to function in the second language. But what happens in reality?... Are they really able to use what they have practised in the classroom?"

The panel itself was a model of bilingualism. The two Anglophone participants, Birgit Harley of the Modern Languages Centre of the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education and Marjorie Wesche of the Institute of Second Languages at the University of Ottawa, spoke English. The two Francophones, Gilles Bibeau of the Faculty of Educational Sciences at the University of Montreal and Richard Clément of the School of Psychology of the University of Ottawa, presented their views in French. The moderator switched back and forth between the two languages. In this dialogue there was no language barrier.

Neither was there much disagreement as to the existence of a problem. Effec-



National Archives of Canada

tive retention of a second language, once it has been more or less mastered, can pose a difficult challenge met with varying degrees of success by the individuals concerned.

## Memory

An essential factor helping determine both the quality and the quantity of what is retained is, of course, memory, with all its vagaries and variables. While different research studies have yielded disparate results as to the speed with which certain elements are lost and the success with which others are retained, there was agreement on several points. For one, in the words of Richard Clément, "the most complex and the most recently learned structures, are less well anchored in the existing memory." There was also agreement that, while vocabulary is one of the first things to go in the absence of practice, it was also easily recovered. Panelists also agreed that the least successful situation is one in which learning occurred at an early age and then stopped.

## Motivation

Other important elements in the process included the level of knowledge actually reached during formal learning, recency of use, the length of time studies continued, the degree of literacy in the second language and variations in individual capacities, expectations, opportunities to practice and, above all, motivation.

"It shouldn't be a problem and the reason why it becomes a problem is a very good question," commented Gilles Bibeau. The basic reason, he suggested, was precisely in the absence of motivation among young learners who, all too often, were not studying for their own goals but because of priorities set by others, including parents and schools. "Very often we adopt policies on second-language teaching for political or openly ideological reasons" with no real consideration of the social and individual needs of those being taught. Often, in fact, there is no such need, he contended.

The pinpointing of motivation as the single key factor in the whole question

of second-language retention received the general assent of the panelists.

"Obviously the best motivation," Marjorie Wesche said, "is the personal one, integrating the use of the second language into one's life in a diversity of ways, and that obviously is the best means of language maintenance." But in some areas external motivation could also play a part. She cited as an example recent studies showing that the level of retention of many Anglophone public servants following their exposure to government-sponsored French courses was low. However, she argued, if those studies were re-done today the results might well be quite different due to the introduction of new kinds of oral testing and of re-testing procedures after a certain period of time. While personal motivation is the most effective, "any kind of motivation will help."

Returning to the charge, Gilles Bibeau questioned the depth of motivation even of graduates of immersion programs in Quebec. "It is quite disconcerting to see that the large majority

of practical opportunities to continue to communicate in the second language. Clearly, in some areas and some situations such opportunities are more available than in others. However, for Birgit Harley this pointed up the need

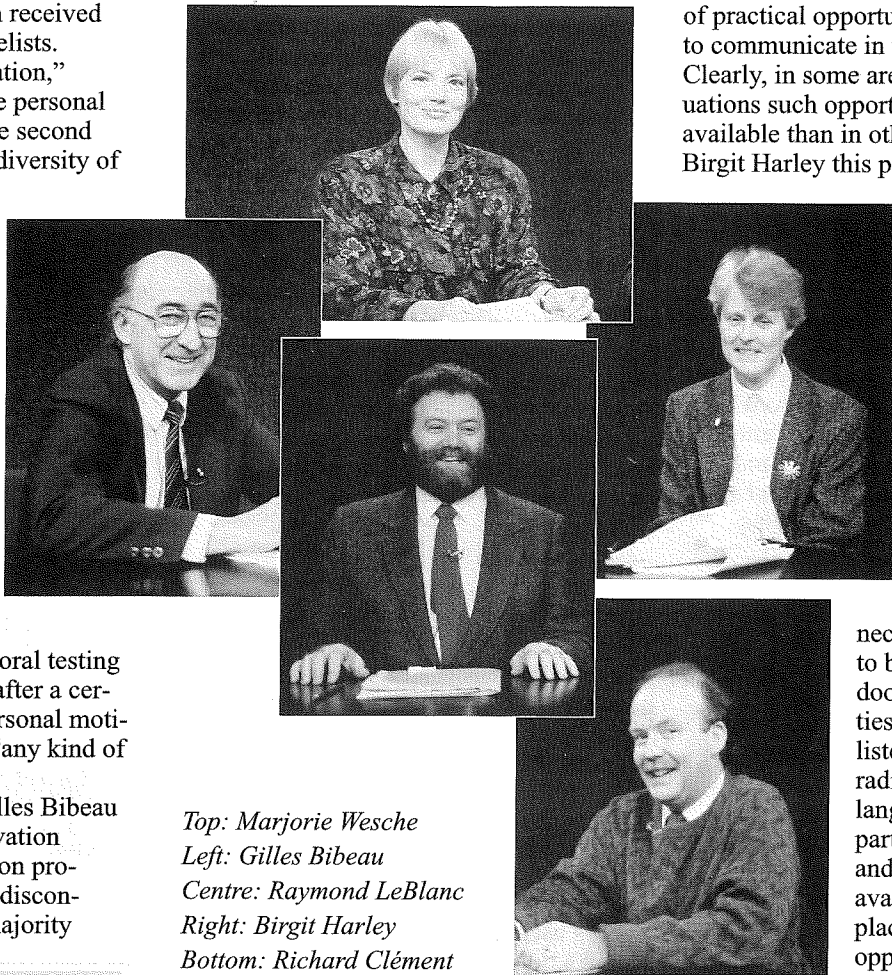
to encourage people to take their own initiatives. "I think there comes a point... where they have to take opportunities, where they have to develop an independent stance, where they will go out after the opportunities which are not

necessarily just going to be laid at their front door." She noted activities such as reading, listening to TV and radio in the other language and participating in social and cultural events available in many places. "Seize every opportunity to speak French; relax and express yourselves"

without worrying about making the odd mistake was her advice to Anglophones.

Could support be given to the encouragement of such attitudes? the moderator asked. "Yes, by all means," Birgit Harley replied, stressing the particular importance of good teachers in helping to provide long-term motivation.

The need to work at both the individual and institutional levels to help meet the challenge of encouraging the retention of second-language skills was emphasized by Raymond LeBlanc in his summing up of the discussion. But no one disputed Gilles Bibeau's suggestion that, without a perceived social need to use the second language, its retention is, to that extent, compromised. ■



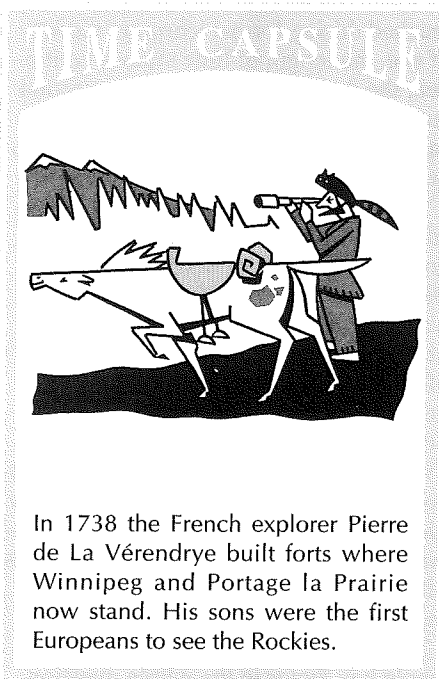
*Top: Marjorie Wesche  
Left: Gilles Bibeau  
Centre: Raymond LeBlanc  
Right: Birgit Harley  
Bottom: Richard Clément*

of them show no further interest in French, at least in no visible way.... This is a false political need based on ideology."

Coming to the defence of immersion was Marjorie Wesche, who had detected "a robust interest" on the part of immersion graduates in continuing and strengthening their knowledge of French. One reason for the phenomenon noted by Gilles Bibeau was perhaps "a real frustration among many high school students in finding that, when they ventured into the real world away from their sympathetic teachers, Francophones didn't really want to interact with them in French... It's a real put-down."

### **Opportunity**

Closely tied to the factor of motivation was another — the presence or absence



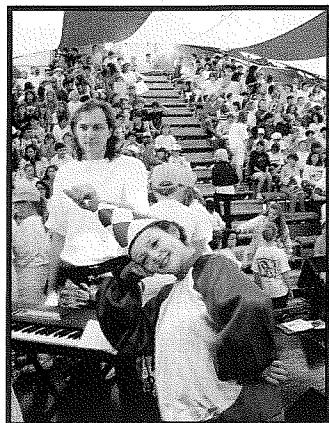
In 1738 the French explorer Pierre de La Vérendrye built forts where Winnipeg and Portage la Prairie now stand. His sons were the first Europeans to see the Rockies.





# The Fête colombienne

Denis Alarie\*



December and the holiday season are here. Everywhere, people are bustling about. Spirits are high, and suddenly the rigours of winter seem a little less harsh. We even put aside our dreams of spring, at least for a few days.

However, for John Stewart and his team, spring seems to approach by leaps and bounds, announcing the joyous return of the Fête colombienne des enfants. For four

\* Denis Alarie is a freelance journalist.

years now a community in British Columbia has welcomed more than 15,000 children each year from all parts of the country who come to celebrate the joy of speaking French. For a few days, the celebration is in full swing. Typical French-Canadian food is available, there are puppet shows and you can even practise cooking on stage with James Barber. There is also the chance that you will be interviewed by the CBC. All that, in addition to exhibitors stalls and clowns and acrobats wandering the streets.

In 1987 John Stewart noticed that his students were really interested in their second language despite the lack of organized cultural activities. Supported by the community services of Crescent Beach and provincial school boards, he set about building a bridge between the French taught at school and French culture, an integral part of learning a second language, and organized the



Fête colombienne des enfants.

The first was held in 1989. A student at Simon Fraser University, George Kraus, coordinated the efforts of more than 600 student volunteers to welcome nearly 15,000 guests. In 1990 more than 23,000 students took part; the theme was "It's our world".

There were a number of first-time guests, including the Department of National Defence, Environment Canada, Alcan Recycling, the Musée du Séminaire de Sherbrooke, UNICEF and Canada World Youth. McDonald's restaurants sponsored a "McFun" tour and Campbell's Soups offered "home-style soups".

Performers from all across Canada also participated in the Fête, including, to name just a few, Suzanne Pinel, Charlotte Diamond, Jacques Chauvin and Crystal Plamondon. There was even a troupe

from France, Macadam Phénomènes.

On arriving at the site one is at first struck by the enthusiasm of an entire community that turns out to welcome thousands of children. Even business firms take part; it is they who provide the tents. What is even more fascinating is the very focus of the Fête. Through games and cultural activities the children are encouraged to make a commitment to and recognize their responsibility towards the environment and other social issues, as witness the themes, "It's our world" and "Canada: Our country celebrates 125 years".

The Fête's fame has spread so far that there is now talk of holding one in Calgary. Accordingly, and for the simple pleasure of getting together, the children are right to hope that the celebration will go on. ■

*(Our translation)*

**LA FÊTE COLOMBIENNE  
DES ENFANTS  
202-12840, 16th Floor  
Surrey, British Columbia  
V4H 1N6  
(604) 535-1311**

# The Festival franco-ontarien

Martin Bélanger\*

**The Festival franco-ontarien aims at the promotion of Francophone culture, to make it better known and appreciated by more and more Canadians.**



We had made arrangements to meet after work at the main site of the Festival franco-ontarien to enjoy a picnic with friends a few

*\* Martin Bélanger is an editor with the advertising firm Les productions Claude Savoie inc.*



metres from the main stage. We were going to see two shows: the opening one and, as a featured attraction, a crowd of 20,000, Francophones and Anglophones, who had come to celebrate the French fact in downtown Ottawa. As the sun set and

the colours softened, the temperature of the crowd rose and people began to clap. Backstage, the performer could hear the murmur of an enthusiastic audience. The voice of the master of ceremonies rang out, the applause rose. The show is about to begin.

The 1991 Festival franco-ontarien attracted more than 800,000 to listen to French singers, to watch street theatre, to laugh along with great comedians, to participate in shows

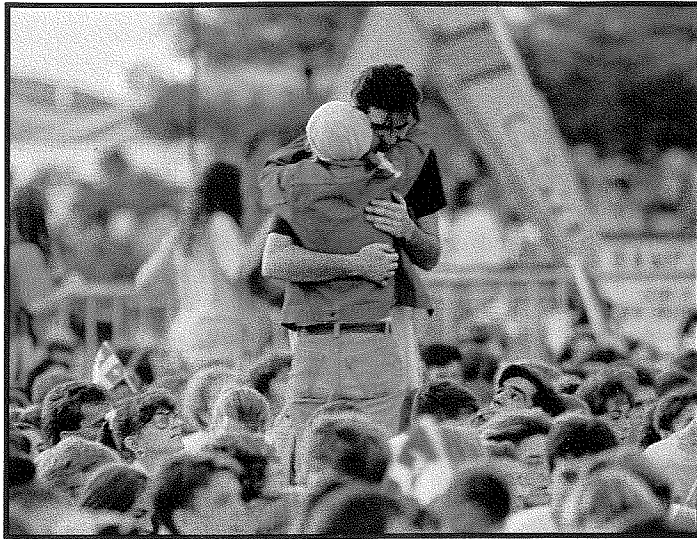
featuring artists from England, Australia, France, Senegal and Canada, to experience an exciting atmosphere during an extraordinary week in June that gives the Francophone community the keys to the national capital.

The Festival franco-ontarien is now 16 years old. Its success mirrors the perseverance of those responsible for it who, for the most part,

are its founders. A festival that began unpretentiously is preparing to welcome a million guests who have come to celebrate the French fact in the national capital.

It was estimated that about 200,000 Anglophones attended the Festival franco-ontarien in June 1991. For Vital Adam, its director general, the participation of Anglophones helps the





Festival meet its objective of promoting Francophone culture and making it known and appreciated by as many Canadians as possible.

The Festival is meant to be a celebration of art and culture to which everyone is invited. To make things easier for Anglophones the Festival publishes a bilingual program. Efforts are made to interest the English-language media by providing them with additional information on Francophone artists, who are often little known in English Canada. No one should underestimate the power of entertainers from around the world, communicating their culture through music, dance, mime and acrobatics, to eliminate language barriers.

When an Anglophone journalist discovers that "September Morning" sung by Neil Diamond is by Gilbert Bécaud and that Frank Sinatra, Elvis Presley, Bob Dylan and Barbra Streisand have also performed songs by Bécaud, the article that appears in the paper will make readers curious to dis-

cover the singer all the world's Francophones call "M. 100,000 Volts".

For Carole Dolan, a resident of Ottawa originally from the Peterborough area, the Festival franco-ontarien is a chance to make discoveries. "I find the Festival very rewarding culturally, to say nothing of the fact that it adds lots of colour to downtown Ottawa with its emotion, joy, novelty, humour and poetry. My nine-year-old son Carle also enjoys it a great deal. For him and his friends the Festival's school program is a very important annual event that gives them the chance to attend shows in French designed especially for them."

The Festival franco-ontarien has become one of the largest Francophone cultural events in the world and one of the most important gatherings of Francophones in North America. Its wide range and major media impact help it promote the Canadian French-speaking community well beyond its borders. ■

*(Our translation)*

## The United Way

*Colette Duhaime*



"It is thanks to men and women who deeply understood the Canadian reality that bilingualism is now an integral part of United Way/Centraide Canada culture," Yves Beaudin, the President of this pan-Canadian agency, points out.

It was in the early 80s that United Way/Centraide Canada really became aware of the country's linguistic duality and started emphasizing the bilingualization of its services.

Yves Beaudin, a Franco-Manitoban by birth who has lived in Quebec since 1968, has adopted this bilingual culture and emphasizes that all Canadians who use the services of this agency should be served in their own language.

In fact, United Way/Centraide Canada has two full-time translators and, each year, when the budget is being discussed, nobody questions these two positions. "Everyone understands that translation costs are part of the fixed costs and no one questions the need to maintain them," Yves Beaudin explains. After all, it is through the generosity of both Anglophones and Francophones that aid is given to the agencies funded by United Way.

At the Ottawa head office it is not unusual for speakers to switch from one language to the other whenever necessary and even at board of trustees meetings, where there are representatives of all sociocultur-

al and linguistic groups in Canada, simultaneous interpretation is always provided. Furthermore, in 1990 the agency took yet another major step, since the annual meeting, which was held in Montreal, was conducted in French. And as Yves Beaudin points out, "no one complained."

Far from complaining, some Anglophones are striving to learn French in order to understand their Francophone colleagues better. For example, Sara Filbee, the current Chair, who lives in Halifax, has decided to take French lessons two evenings each week so that she can better understand her peers.

At least 40% of the board of trustees, 16 members out of 40, speak French and some others are seriously considering studying the language so as to be able to communicate directly with Francophone members.

It is clear that — beyond United Way/Centraide Canada's official policy on bilingualism — relationships are being created. By working together people representing almost all parts of Canada are realizing that, in spite of their different cultural backgrounds, they can be friends and can achieve a common goal: helping the needy.

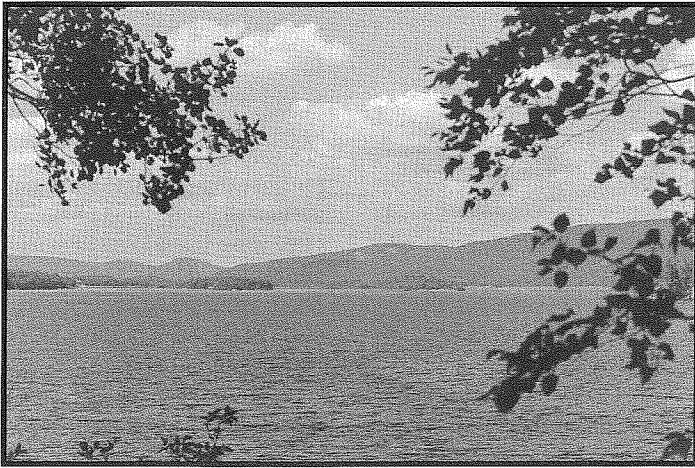
In addition, there is another goal of equal importance: better understanding one's friends through what is dearest to them, their language. ■

*(Our translation)*



# Singing together

Colette Duhaime\*



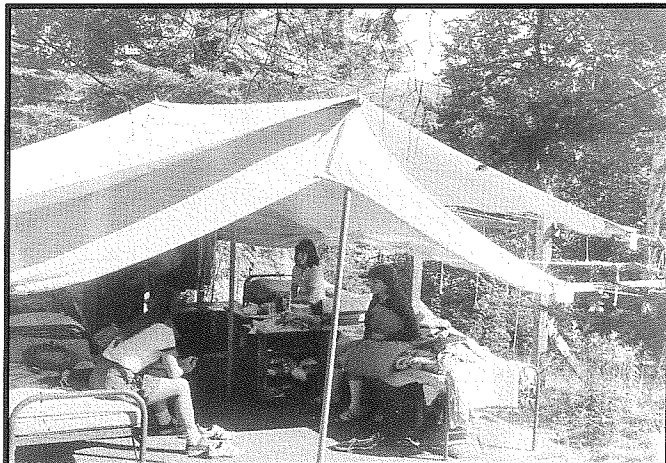
Madeleine Ferguson Allen, director of Camp Ouareau at Saint-Donat, Quebec, experienced one of the great moments of her career a few years ago when, at the end of a busy day, she noticed a group of young Anglophone and Francophone girls singing in both languages, their arms around one another, before sunset.

"As I watched I said to myself that we should invite Bourassa, Bouchard, Mulroney, Parizeau and Wells to see such a scene. Maybe then there would be better communication and understanding among them," she commented.

As the director of this summer camp that welcomes Anglophone and Francophone girls each year, she has learned over the years that only proximity can lead to better understanding

between the two solitudes and, finally, acceptance and liking for one another.

The director has a wealth of stories about friendships that have developed between young Anglophones and Francophones. For nearly 20 years, she has welcomed 9 to 14 year-old girls from various socio-cultural and linguistic environments. In the magical world of the summer camp they have the chance to relax and to get to know others through their culture.



A few days after they arrive at the camp the walls between the participants come down, and even if they do not always understand what their friends are saying they already are aware of their differences. Anglophones are twinned with Francophones; they spend their four weeks at the camp living together, and this forges links.

In addition, a camp rule obliges the girls to speak English for two days and then French for two days. This slowly leads them to discover the other language and learn it.

It is more a desire to understand others and respect their differences, however, than to learn the other language that brings young people to Camp Ouareau. The amazing thing, Madeleine Ferguson Allen says, is that after a few days at the camp the young Francophones become more and more proud of their culture while the young Anglophones become aware that

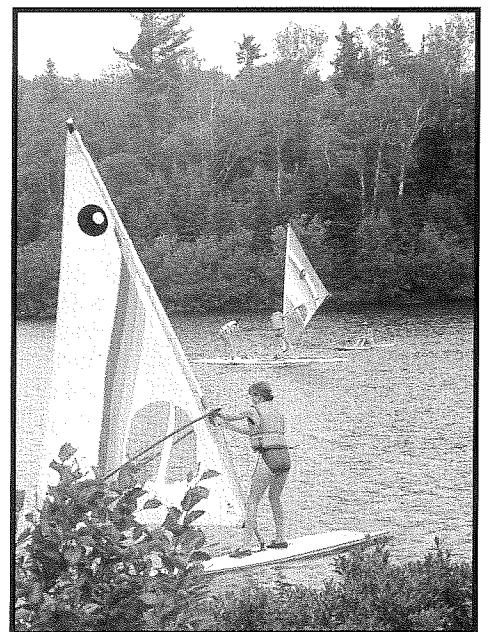
Canada is not solely English and discover the other fundamental linguistic component of their country.

It is a fascinating experience for these young people, who learn to understand one other better and discover that they share common values despite their different cultures.

It is not unusual, moreover, for the friendships that develop at Camp Ouareau between young Anglophones from all across Canada and Francophones mainly from Quebec to endure.

Some of the girls maintain their relationships and continue to learn more about one another by correspondence. This helps to break down the walls of solitude and build a nation based on camaraderie. ■

*(Our translation)*

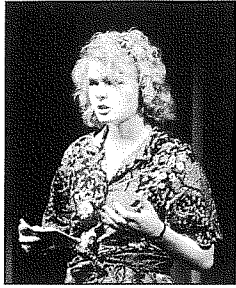


\* Colette Duhaime is a freelance journalist.



## People like you and me

Denis Alarie



Cindy-Lyn Bauks



Pei-Lian Ma

Have you ever wondered what you have in common with such well-known literary figures as Samuel Beckett or Eugène Ionesco? You may smile, thinking that you are about to hear a joke or an exaggerated compliment, but I am quite serious. Thousands of Canadians share with these two authors, sometimes without really being aware of it, the same passion: discovering French and speaking it in all its variety and richness. Like these two authors who adopted the French language, many Canadians, like you and me, each year discover the joys of speaking a second language.

For its part, Canadian Parents for French, through its Festival d'art oratoire, encourages young people to speak French and meet their contemporaries from all parts of the country who share the same enthusiasm. The 1991 Festival in Quebec City was the seventh of its kind. Acadian, Quebec and Fransaskois accents mingled with those of Anglophone

students, all of them marked by the same passion. The Festival provided an opportunity for the participants to get to know one another better and to discover another part of Canada, perhaps even to

develop friendships. This is one of the ways Canadian Parents for French forges links between the two language communities.

The public speaking competition is open to all students, Anglophone and Francophone. The competition begins in classrooms and ends with provincial and territorial contests. For three days the students converse, chat and hold discussions. With debates, exchanges of views and their respective cultures on the menu, there is something for everyone.

Hats off to the organizers! The love of speaking French is a passion many great figures have in common — and it is shared by young people and adults, people like you and me. ■

*(Our translation)*

For more information concerning the programs of Canadian Parents for French, please call the National Office in Ottawa at (613) 235-1481.

## The École internationale de l'Outaouais

Colette Duhaime

When they complete their studies in a few years the 128 young people who have participated since the beginning of September in the fascinating adventure of the École internationale de l'Outaouais will be properly equipped to discover the world and understand others through their culture and language.

At least this is what Laurence Lavoie-Atkins, the director of this new Outaouais educational institution, hopes. She tells us that the philosophy of international schools is an international humanism. "An international humanism based on knowledge of humanity and one's own cultural identity coming into contact with other cultural identities," she says.

Open to all Canadians, the school is built on Canada's bilingual heritage and, since classes began, the first students in the school have been immersed in that context, one that is very new to most of them. Since the École internationale shares the premises of Hull's English-language school, D'Arcy McGee, they have had to learn very rapidly to co-exist peacefully with other young people who have a different language and culture.

Forced by events to live side by side, they have already begun to make personal friendships, and the

authorities of the two schools are even considering organizing joint events, such as carnivals.

But the most important cultural exchanges are taking place in the very heart of the school since about 10 young English Canadians are already registered and there



Laurence Lavoie-Atkins

are also students from other ethnic groups. This facilitates exchanges and fosters a better understanding of each person's differences.

To promote a broader perspective of the world the school management is also considering implementing exchange programs with students from other countries and, as of 1991, a computer communication program with international schools overseas is to be instituted.

(continued on page 42)

# Dialogue New Brunswick

Marc Poirier\*

**I**n November 1989 Frank McKenna, premier of New Brunswick, convoked a conference in Fredericton entitled "Dialogue New Brunswick". Bringing together around a hundred "thinkers" from both of the province's language communities, the exercise was designed to promote careful consideration of official bilingualism and attempt to avoid ending up with "two solitudes".

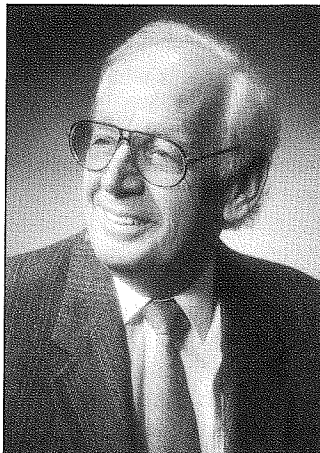
The conference gave rise to the creation of a permanent non-governmental organization, whose board consists of Anglophones and Francophones from across the province.

The goal of Dialogue New Brunswick is to bridge the gap between the two linguistic communities, which often keep to themselves without seeking to understand the hopes and fears of the other group.

These objectives correspond to those of the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages, and this agency and Dialogue New Brunswick are therefore regularly in touch. "We consider our missions related, especially since the arrival of the new commissioner, Victor C. Goldbloom, who has asked us to step up our work with the majority," explained the director of the Office of the Commis-

sioner in Moncton, Jeanne Renault.

Dialogue New Brunswick devoted its first year primarily to organizing itself. Since August 1990 it has had a permanent director general who ensures that matters are followed up, but the agency has only become active since the beginning of 1991.



Marcel Sormany

Last May it held a youth forum on language and culture entitled "Take a step forward". Young Anglophones and Francophones were able to discuss cultural and linguistic problems.

The co-president of Dialogue New Brunswick, Marcel Sormany, was particularly proud of this activity. "Young people are generally much more open. Very often, they will say we have no problem with [bilingualism]. You old people are the ones who have problems," he indicated.

In addition, the organization published a bilingual insert in the provincial newspapers *L'Acadie Nouvelle* and the *Telegraph-Journal*. This insert contained articles about bilingualism written by young people.

Young people thus represent a specific clientele for Dialogue New Brunswick. Marcel Sormany says he would like to ensure that the next generation does not have the preconceived ideas of today's adults.

Communication is not always easy between Anglophones and Francophones. The last provincial election is a case in point since eight MPs from a party determined to eliminate bilingualism, the Confederation of Regions, were elected and now constitute the official Opposition.

Marcel Sormany therefore hesitated when we asked him if he was satisfied with the progress of Dialogue New Brunswick. "I don't know. When we look at our last election in New Brunswick, we feel that we must not have influenced opinions yet."

However, the agency is doing its utmost to succeed. It is currently developing a public awareness plan that aims at convincing people of the advantages of bilingualism and informing them about Dialogue New Brunswick, still fairly unknown to many people.

"There is some frustration in the initial stages of an organization such as ours.

We are trying to find ourselves; we know we have a goal to reach. But as for the means of attaining it, we return to it, rethink it and try all kinds of formulas. I am quite sure that at some point in time we shall succeed and really be a catalyst," said the co-president. ■

*(Our translation)*

## The École internationale de l'Outaouais

(from page 41)

The use of English, French and Spanish in the international school should also enable young people to communicate better with their peers and gain insight into their culture through their words.

For communication is at the heart of the education given at the École internationale de l'Outaouais — a living education, based on concrete realities and opening doors to others and the world. Young people are encouraged to get to know, understand and accept one another as they are. ■

*(Our translation)*

\* Marc Poirier is a freelance journalist.