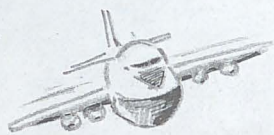


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# Language AND SOCIETY

BULLETIN No. 40 SEPTEMBER 1992



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## New Brunswick: Talking business

Marc Poirier

Bilingualism is proving its worth financially.

In the past two years several major firms have located their offices in New Brunswick or announced their intention to do so. One of the reasons given is the presence of a bilingual labour force. And most of the bilingual workers are Acadians.

The Moncton area is benefiting most from this windfall, because it

is the second-largest city in the province and is located in a heavily bilingual region.

One of the first firms to start the trend was CP Express and Transport, a trucking company that in January 1991 opened a billing and service centre for the Atlantic region that employs 55 persons.

The experiment was so profitable that the company decided soon after to serve the entire coun-

try from Moncton, where there are now 125 employees. The availability of bilingual personnel was central to this decision. "As we are a very significant player in the Quebec market, we needed the ability to communicate with our Quebec customers," explains Brent Neil, a CP Express and Transport vice-president.

The same scenario was repeated in the summer of 1991 when Camco, a division of General Electric, decided that four client service offices for household appliance retailers should be centralized in Moncton. This required an initial investment of three million dollars and the creation of some 30 jobs.

Camco's first thought was to locate in Ontario because its head office is in that province. However, Camco looked at New Brunswick after a visit from Premier Frank McKenna. Once again, Moncton, with its concentration of bilingual citizens, was the winner.

Could the company not have found bilingual employees in Ontario as well, where there are 500,000 Francophones? "Yes, but I think we would have had more difficulty getting them," says Ellen Christensen, Director of Client Service at Camco. "I'm not sure that we would have had as high a bilingual ratio as we have in

Moncton. So that gave us the luxury of being able to hire everyone bilingual, and have the flexibility within the centre to move them around."

Another transport company, Federal Express, also located in Moncton last year because of the bilingual character of the region. Nearly 100 jobs were added to the local economy.

Bilingualism has become such an important factor in various business decisions that Moncton and New Brunswick make it a fundamental part of their promotions to attract new firms.

"It is a very important factor because these companies have to serve the Canadian market, and hence all the other provinces. Service thus has to be provided in both official languages and in New Brunswick, and particularly in several communities, we have the best location for serving the rest of

### COMMISSIONER'S EDITORIAL



### A QUESTION OF COURTESY

The summer of 1992 was marked by the World's Fair in Seville and the Olympic Games in Barcelona. Such events of international scope require extraordinary preparations, beginning years ahead of time. Language management plays an important role.

Continued on page 2

#### THE BULLETIN

The Bulletin, published by the Commissioner of Official Languages, Victor C. Goldbloom, emphasizes the benefits - personal, national and international - of a two-language Canada.

COMMISSIONER OF OFFICIAL LANGUAGES / COMMISSAIRE AUX LANGUES OFFICIELLES  
CANADA

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EDITORIAL continued from page 1

A common denominator of these two events might be the attention given to visitors to make their stay pleasant. To ensure the success of their ventures, the organizers made respect for the client a priority. Reception services were designed and put in place to make it easier for visitors to understand what was being said and what was happening at the sites.

Services were available in many languages – a question of courtesy and a sacred business principle.

The role of the Commissioner is to ensure that the Canada's federal institutions provide their services in the official languages of citizens of this country. Unilingual Canadians, English-speaking or French-speaking, should be able to obtain services in their language from federal institutions, whenever sufficient concentrations of population exist.

If we wish to keep the country united, we have a duty to those in the majority — and still more to those in the minority — to do them the courtesy of providing services in their national language, for their nation is Canada.

I am deeply convinced that Canada will remain united only if we continue to provide services to Canadians in both languages.

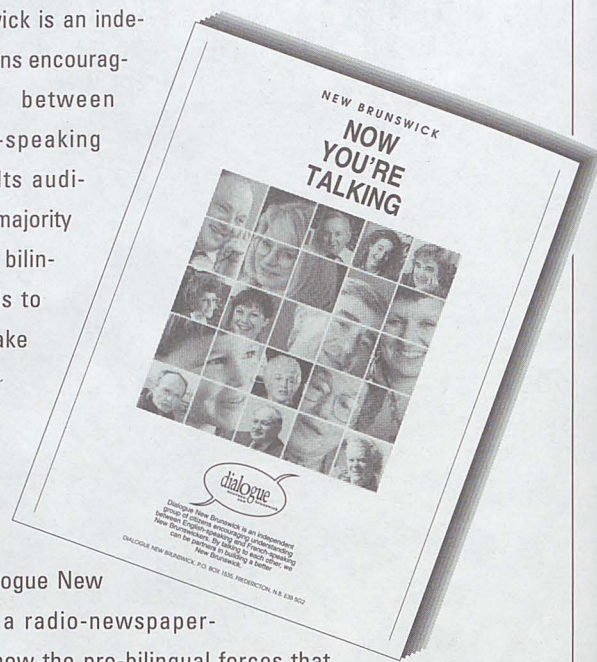
We need to have reasons to be accommodating to one another: the wish to remain Canadian, the desire to succeed economically and culturally, to maintain our high quality of life. In the present era of communications, wealth will flow to those who create links all over the globe. Success will result from the association of individuals and peoples. Our two national languages, together with our multilingual diversity, should enable the next generation to enter foursquare into the 21st century. ■

Victor C. Goldbloom

## "NEW BRUNSWICK, NOW YOU'RE TALKING!"

Dialogue New Brunswick is an independent group of citizens encouraging understanding between English- and French-speaking New Brunswickers. Its audience is the moderate majority which quietly favours bilingualism and its aim is to get that majority to make its support clear.

With corporate sponsors and help from the federal and provincial governments, in June Dialogue New Brunswick launched a radio-newspaper-poster campaign to show the pro-bilingual forces that they are indeed the majority and to detail the benefits New Brunswick derives from being Canada's only officially bilingual province.



New Brunswick, cont'd.

Canada," Premier McKenna says proudly.

In a number of cases it was the premier's personal intervention with businesses that resulted in their taking a closer look at New Brunswick, and sometimes a

nudge was required. In the case of CP Express and Transport the province granted the company \$440,000 to centralize its client service operations.

Such initiatives seem to be working, for the trend continues.

Early in June Purolator Courier announced that in October Moncton would see the opening of one of the four national telephone "supercentres" that it will establish in Canada. In the next three years Purolator plans to hire 400 people, and most of the positions are bilingual.

In addition, Unitel, which has just received permission to enter the long distance telephone market, is seeking a location in New Brunswick for its 400 employees,

a number of whom will have to be bilingual.

While factors other than bilingualism played a role in the decisions of these firms, the fact remains that they would not have come to New Brunswick had there not been a bilingual work force available. They chose the best location to offer their services to a clientele partly Anglophone and partly Francophone. Bilingualism pays dividends! ■

(Our translation)

LANGUAGE AND SOCIETY

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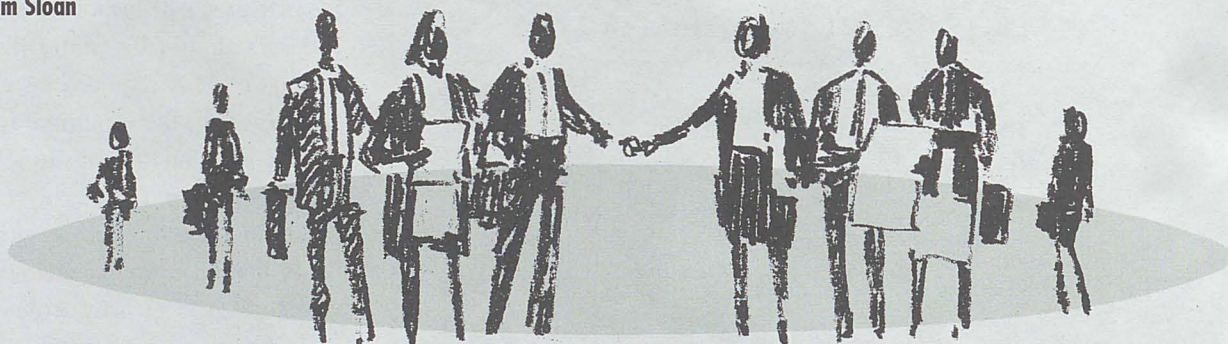
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# MONTREAL: BOARD AND CHAMBRE MERGE

Tom Sloan



After more than a century of going their separate ways the two major business associations operating in Montreal, Canada's second largest city, are now one. The predominantly Anglophone Montreal Board of Trade and the overwhelmingly Francophone Chambre de Commerce du Montréal métropolitain are now one large bilingual family, with a membership encompassing about 4,500 companies.

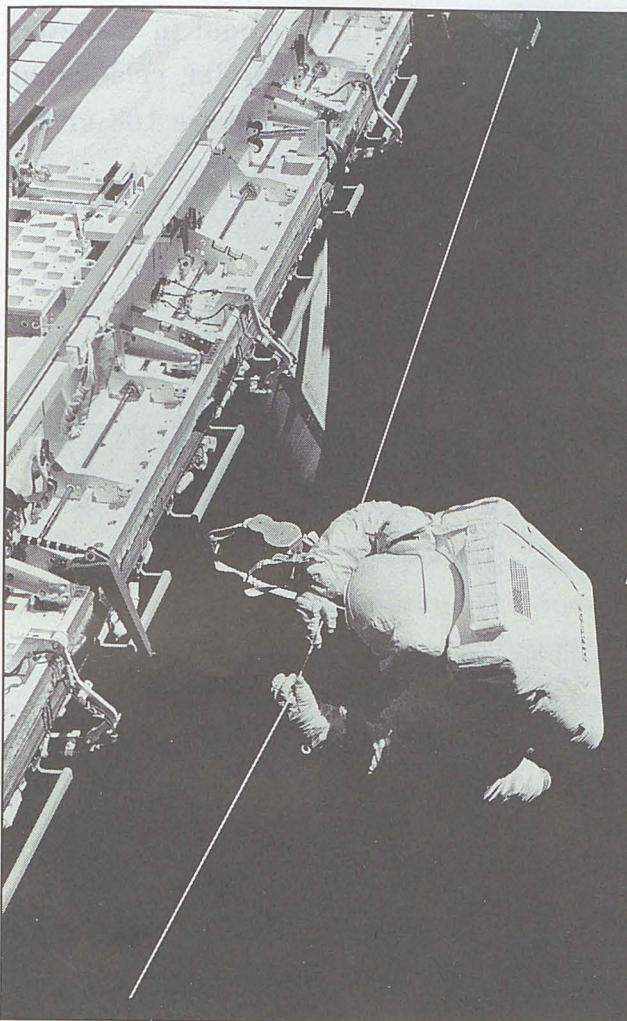
The Board of Trade was founded in 1822, when Montreal was still a predominately English-

speaking community. The Chambre came into being in 1887, as Francophone business people were becoming more prominent in the city.

The merger became a reality last June following passage of a private member's bill with all-party support in Parliament.

This was not the first time the two groups had discussed merger. A similar proposal failed in 1966 due to disagreement over the goals and workings of the organization that would have resulted. On this occasion, however, the friction vanished. Following





## A Canadian astronaut's LINGUISTIC SPACE

Pierre Simard

**JULIE PAYETTE, ALONG WITH THREE OTHER CANADIANS, WAS SELECTED FROM AMONG 5,300 CANDIDATES TO BE A CREW MEMBER ON THE NEXT FREEDOM SPACE SHUTTLE.**

With a master's degree in applied science (computer engineering) from the University of Toronto, she has worked in the research division of IBM in Zurich, Switzerland, and at Bell Northern Research Ltd. in Mon-

tréal. She is a polyglot, an enthusiastic pianist, concert flautist, soprano soloist and choral singer. In addition, she is a triathlete. *Language and Society* interviewed her.

**You speak French, English, Italian, Spanish and German. Would you say that being multilingual has helped you in your career?**

*Julie:* Speaking more than one language is an asset. It allows us to communicate with people with whom it would otherwise be difficult to communicate. You can establish a

relationship with strangers and when you know their language it pleases them a great deal.

**In the view of the business world, is knowing a second language now a technical skill that complements a university diploma?**

*Julie:* Yes. In choosing between someone who is unilingual and a person who is bilingual, employers will prefer the bilingual candidate. And if you are not only bilingual but polyglot, that is something that counts in your file.

six months of negotiations there was a unanimous vote for unification last March 23, and three months later it happened. The new group intends to focus lobbying efforts on issues such as municipal taxation and public transportation deficits.

Of course, there has been co-operation between the two groups in the past. In 1984 they worked jointly and successfully against a municipal development plan in central Montreal and in February 1992, together with the Board of Trade of Metropolitan Toronto, they presented a joint brief to the Beaudoin-Dobbie constitutional committee.

Now, however, they have gone beyond co-operation; they are one organization and linguistic co-operation is front and centre. In the words of the act passed by Parliament: "The new corporation shall carry on its business and affairs in the official languages of Canada." Both groups had already taken important steps. The Board declared itself bilingual in 1973 and in 1990 the Chambre embarked on a five-year bilingualism program of its own.

During the past summer the emphasis has been on integration of staff, publications and other operations, with the first annual meeting to be held September 17. Elections in September 1993 will

choose a 30-member board, 15 members from each association, which in turn will elect a presiding officer. In the meantime, the co-chairs are Luigi Libertore of the Board and Jean Guibault, former head of the Chambre, who were instrumental in bringing about the amalgamation. Executive vice-presidents are Alex Harper, former Board president, and Luc Lacharité of the Chambre.

Officials concede that the merger represents a major challenge for all concerned. To the Board's Harper it will be to "respect the past of both organizations while looking to the future." He describes the merger as "a strategic alliance for the good of all members." The Chambre's Guibault agrees. "French-Canadians," he told the *Montreal Gazette* last spring, "probably have enough self-assurance and autonomy to feel perfectly at ease with Anglophones."

As of this writing, the organization was still deciding on the best location for the new, expanded offices. There is to be simultaneous interpretation equipment available, but the Board's Harper, for one, doubts that in the present bilingual climate within the Montreal business community it will really need to be put to much use. ■

**Some people claim that with English you can get along anywhere in the world. Why learn another language?**

*Julie:* That is not true at all. It is sometimes difficult and very complicated to make yourself understood, even in English. In my experience, learning a second language not only eases communication but enables us to broaden our horizons and pays enormous dividends. Even if you cannot use it every day there will certainly come a time when the knowledge will be useful.

**How do foreigners look upon us linguistically and as a people?**

*Julie:* French-speaking Europeans are aware of the existence of French in Canada but certain others and the inhabitants of more distant countries have no knowledge of the French fact in Canada. Canada has an excellent reputation abroad. We are seen as a neutral nation that does not interfere in the affairs of other countries. Canadians are less flamboyant than other tourists. When they travel they give the impression of being peaceful and quiet people and this wins them a great deal of sympathy.

**Are young people aware of the importance of learning languages?**

*Julie:* I'm not sure about that. I think young people in Canada are more aware of languages than those who live in unilingual countries. Since there are two languages here, everybody is aware of the fact. Then, since we live in a vast country and the language spoken by the majority, English, is the language most widely spoken in the western world, we are in a position of strength. Only when people are confronted with other cultures and with unilingual people speaking languages other than French or English do we feel the need to open new channels of communication.

**What would you say to young Canadians?**

*Julie:* Learning languages is not easy. It requires a great deal of effort. Immersion is therefore a good way to learn because it enables you to live temporarily in a natural environment that allows you to discover the other culture. Travelling is very useful for laying the foundations of a language. I learned languages in the streets while travelling and I later continued to study them more formally. Once a language is learned well it stays, and when you return to an environment where you can practise it it comes back. ■

(Our translation)

# EFFORTS WELL REWARDED

Lyne Ducharme

**LEARNING A LANGUAGE IS ONE THING, USING IT IN A NATURAL SETTING IS ANOTHER.**



Sarah Peterson, a grade 9 French immersion student at Stratford Secondary School in Edmonton, enthusiastically agreed to serve as interpreter for her father. He was the official photographer for the president of the Special Olympic Games in Albertville, France, held from March 25 to 30, 1992. What an opportunity! The 15-year-old surely never expected that her knowledge of languages would lead to such a rewarding experience.

It was Sarah's job to assist her father and the media during the various sports activities. Although she found a difference between the French spoken in France and what she learns at school, Sarah says she had no problems.

The Special Olympics are usually held after the regular games. Some 20 countries participated in the 1992 games. While English was the language most widely used, Sarah says that being able to express herself in French enabled her to speak to more people and meet people from all over the world. In addition, she felt no barriers between participants of various origins. She noted that the athletes differ from those in the regular games because their primary objective is to have fun and meet athletes from other countries. They did want to win but, above all, they wanted to make friends.

The people she met at Albertville felt that Canadians are privileged to have two official languages and to be able to learn English and French from a very early age; they should be proud of this. To foreigners, Canada is a welcoming country for immigrants.

They envy our multicultural character. However, there are false impressions as well. Thus, because Sarah speaks French it was automatically assumed that she comes from Quebec. There was much concern about the future of Quebec within Canada. Why does Quebec want to separate? People hear all sorts of things about the situation in Canada and about the speculation that, if Quebec separates, the rest of the country might become part of the United States.

When we asked Sarah for a message that she would like to convey to her fellow Canadians she replied, "Learning a second language is marvellous. I feel privileged to know another language and be able to benefit from all the advantages that go with it."

The value of cultural exchanges can never be overestimated. ■

The first full-immersion secondary school in Canada, Collège Béliveau in St. Boniface, Manitoba, celebrated its 10th anniversary last spring. There were 108 grade 7 to grade 9 students in the immersion program at the beginning; today there are more than 500.

# IMMERSION AND PROSPERITY

Lyne Ducharme

Robert Kent, president of the Parent Association, and Jody Langhan, a 1987 graduate of the Collège who holds a Bachelor of Commerce degree from the University of Manitoba, emphasized the value of a second language in the business world, particularly in this age of global marketing.

The following are excerpts from their remarks made at the 10th anniversary celebrations.

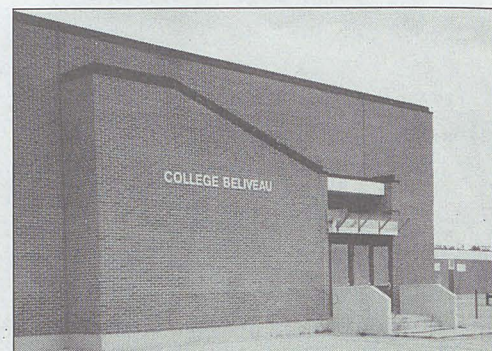
## ROBERT KENT

"Now, in 1992...the need for learning and living in more than one language is even greater....Today, many are realizing that Canada's economic security and prosperity...is now dependent upon us thinking internationally.

"...Most likely, your future jobs will be linked, in some way, to international trade, international communications and international co-operation. And so, one of your economic advantages for the rest of your lives is that all of you can function in two languages, some of you in three."

## JODY LANGHAN

"It was only recently that I realized the true value of an immersion education.



"There are obvious benefits to being able to speak in both of Canada's official languages. As a recent business school graduate, I learned very quickly...that the ability to speak French is a very real advantage....In fact, I can tell you that the ability to speak French is definitely one of the reasons why I am employed today.

"...The ability to speak both of Canada's official languages provides each of you with a little bit more freedom." ■

**GOOD BUSINESS**

"Satisfied customers are good for business", a practical guide to assist National Capital Region businesses in providing English and French services, is available from

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**CANADA IS NOT A DOCUMENT,  
IMPORTANT AS A CONSTITUTION OR A CHARTER  
OR AN ACCORD MAY BE.  
CANADA IS HUMAN BEINGS.**

## The human dimension of majority/minority relations

It is a human characteristic to be more comfortable in homogeneity than in diversity. By and large, countries which have tried to harmonize diversities have not done, and are not doing, very well.

We in Canada have tried to show that it can, however, be done. We live, as a result, with certain tensions — but most of us like our country, and are proud of it, the way it is.

Those tensions are augmented by a fundamental fact, a difficult human reality: to an important degree, we do not know each other.

Those of us whose ancestral roots go back no more than four centuries generally know very little about our Aboriginal brothers and sisters. Those of us who live in one region generally have a sense of the political positions taken in the name of those who live in another part of the country, but not of the historical perceptions and thought processes of those human beings. Those of us who work in Ottawa do not always try sufficiently to make ourselves aware of what people across Canada really think. Those of us who speak English and those of us who speak French, having (most of us) an additional barrier between us, often have difficulty in understanding what the other person wants, and why.

The sheer size of our country, and the uneven linguistic distribution of our population, make it all the harder

for us to know each other, to perceive each other as human beings.

Governments therefore have special responsibilities for promoting good human relations — for enhancing our ability to live together.

Governments must represent the best that there is in human nature. They must guard against, and resist, becoming the expression of antipathies, particularly those which religious or linguistic or ethnic or cultural differences tend to evoke.

I am distressed, as I go back and forth across the country, by the amount and intensity of the negativism which differences arouse, especially difference of language. I know that this ungenerosity (and sometimes downright nastiness) is not a majority attitude; but the size of the minority disquiets me.

A country, or a federation, or a common market cannot be built on bitterness, nor held together by hatred. If we care about each other, and I am convinced that in large majority we do, we must design our future in a spirit of generosity.

That means that we must try to understand each other. Quebecers need to understand why western Canadians — not governments, human beings — are so concerned about the composition and function of the Senate, for example. English-speaking Canadians need to understand why French-speaking Quebecers — not political parties, human beings — have such intense concern about the distinctiveness of their society and the future of their language.

It is a legitimate desire of each community, whether in majority or minority status (but with special concern if it is a minority), to maintain its vitality, to sustain its institutions, to retain and educate its young people, and to grow — or at the very least, not to wither away.

These legitimate aspirations must not be bargained away. Majorities must not be so preoccupied with their own legitimate concerns that they disregard the more fragile situation of their linguistic minority. One can be generous without diminishing one's own strength.

If we are to stay together, we must evolve together. We must therefore leave our minorities room for growth. Birth rates being so low,

we must allow for recruitment, and we must be fair regarding school enrolment and school governance. If we are to evolve together, we must not limit ourselves to protecting existing rights; we must not lock the door on our minorities' future.

I have the impression, despite the negativism and nastiness to which I referred above, that the human beings who make up this country are in large majority generous in spirit, especially when they understand the issues and their human impacts, and would want their governments to manifest that generosity on their behalf.

I am concerned that the linguistic minorities, towards which I have a special responsibility, are in disagreement with proposed texts concerning them, and I urge that they be listened to carefully, considerately, constructively and generously.

I borrow, from a highly respected organization with which I worked ecumenically for many years, a motto which can be a watchword for us all: *La personne humaine avant toute chose. The human being is more important than any thing.* ■

*Victor C. Goldbloom*

## THE OTHER SIDE OF THE MOON

Jane Brierley



People often seem to be asking for the moon, but few — apart from space scientists and the odd poet — take an interest in the dark side of that pearly satellite. In other words, we often covet the things we know but are less prone to explore the unfamiliar.

There was a time when Canada's two major cultural communities didn't read much literature from "the other side". Indeed, it was only in the 1960s that ordinary Canadians began to develop a genuine

awareness of homegrown literature beyond L.M. Montgomery and Mazo de la Roche. The growth of Canadian-owned publishing in the last three decades has helped change our attitude, however. There is now a wide variety for readers to explore, including fiction and poetry, biography, books on the historical and social aspects of our several cultures, and thoughtful appraisals of issues beyond our borders.

Many people depend on translations to discover the other side of

the Canadian literary moon. Since the early 1970s, when the Canada Council instituted a grant-in-aid program for translating works by Canadians into French or English, the craft of literary translation has become a recognized aspect of creative publishing in Canada.

The question of what gets translated often puzzles the average reader, however. I occasionally have to point out to friends that literary translation isn't a kind of cultural sausage machine, designed to produce translated versions on demand.

Potentially good translation projects see the light of day as the result of business decisions and artistic initiative on the part of publisher and translator. Often it's a question of fascination with the subject, or literary affinity between author and translator. That's why you'll find a major Canadian novelist and hockey buff like Matt Cohen translating the Kafkaesque stories of Gaétan Brulotte and the biography of hockey great Guy Lafleur.

Literary translation hasn't only helped Canadians to know their

own writers. It has also stimulated interest from outside the country. Our French-language writers, for instance, have acquired a window onto the American market, where there is a modest but growing curiosity about our various literatures. On the other side of the coin, Canadian works translated into French are being co-published by Canadian and European houses to reach a wider readership.

A good translation has literary value in its own right. Although funding assistance is still fairly limited, Canadian publishers and translators are beginning to explore projects involving important works from other countries and cultures. For example, this year's John Glassco Translation Prize (awarded annually by the Literary Translators' Association of Canada for a first literary translation) went to Montrealer Bruno Guévin for a Mark Twain novel. Here is a work by a classic American writer, translated for the first time into French and published right here in Canada.

How's that for exploring the other side of the moon? ■

# A tradition is born

Tom Sloan



Elie Thimot is not exactly a typical Anglophone. In fact, he's an Acadian from Nova Scotia. Yet here he is on a bright spring morning, part of a group of English-speakers who have volunteered to serve Sunday brunch to 150 of their French-speaking neighbours.

The scene is Gloucester, an eastern suburb of Ottawa, where a considerable Franco-Ontarian community lives together, works together, plays together with an English-speaking majority and where, in a manner of speaking, some of them go to church together.

The church is Annunciation of the Lord/Annonciation du Seigneur.

From the start this has been a fully bilingual operation, with about 45% of the 1,400 families belonging to the parish having French as their first official language and 55% having English. Today there are

four Sunday services, two in each language. On weekdays all services are bilingual.

On this Sunday morning, a French-language service just ended, some 150 men, women and children are filing into the small parish hall where they are greeted by violin music and a sumptuous buffet stretching the length of one whole wall.

Behind the buffet table the tall figure in the chef's hat slicing an impressive-looking ham is Monsignor Peter Schonenbach.

Mgr. Schonenbach explains how the brunches began. At the start it was pure pragmatism. Five years ago a minor crisis arose surrounding the traditional spring "Francofête", when several people realized it was not quite fair that those who had laboured hard to organize the event also had to work right through it.

"We didn't really want to go out for professional catering so we asked for volunteers from our English-speaking parishioners." The response was immediate and overwhelming, and a tradition was born. In May the Anglophones regale the Francophones and on a Sunday in October it is the turn of English-speaking parishioners to take their places at the festive table.

The enthusiasm for the event is clear among all concerned. "It's really a fun thing for me," says the Acadian Anglo/Francophone Elie Thimot. For Bill Stevenson, who was a recipient of Francophone hospitality last October, "It's a great idea and really helps relations." Stevenson concedes his French isn't perfect, "but it's enough to get by and to answer questions."

There are benefits for everyone in events such as this, says Mgr. Schonenbach. "It lets both groups be themselves," while giving them good contact with each other.

Martin Dionne, who, with his wife, has just finished eating, couldn't agree more. They have

invited their daughter, her husband and two children from Wakefield, Quebec, to join them this Sunday morning. "It's a really good atmosphere," he says. That sums up the state of relations between English- and French-speaking parishioners.

When do they actually get to sit down together though? At weekday services, of course, but also increasingly at bilingual social events, Mgr. Schonenbach says. When the planned renovation and expansion of

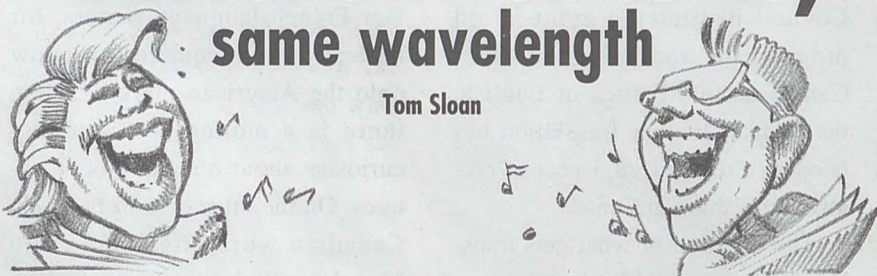


the parish hall is completed there will be space for a wider variety of social activities, many of which, by the nature of the parish, will be bilingual.

In the meantime, the brunch is a roaring success. Just outside the hall there are two hand-painted signs that say perhaps all that needs to be said on this occasion. "Good Neighbours, Bons Voisins," says one. The other says: "La paroisse en fête." ■

## Different circuits, same wavelength

Tom Sloan



Charlotte Diamond and Lennie Gallant are two Canadian singers who live at opposite ends of the country and perform different kinds of music, but they have something in common. They both have deep feelings about Canada and both perform in English and French.

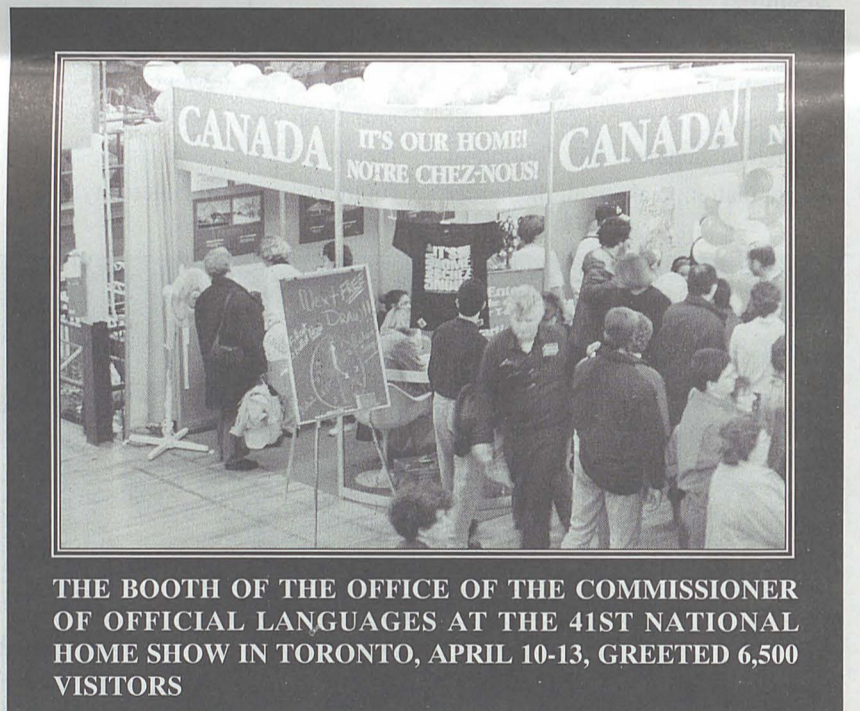
Charlotte Diamond is a Vancouver-based singer specializing in writing and performing songs for children. She is an Anglophone and a Francophile who once taught French and who spent a summer learning to speak the language in Quebec City. Since that time she has acted as a self-appointed ambassador for Canadian unity.

So far she has recorded one album entirely in French and whenever she gives a concert she

includes several selections in French. Visiting central Canada last spring, she noted that one of her goals was to show that "western Canadians are not sitting here thumbing our noses at Quebec." During that tour she gave her first exclusively French-language concert at a school in Montreal.

While her accent may retain vestiges of her West Coast upbringing, Diamond is enthusiastic about singing in French. When she does so, "for me it's pure pleasure. I like the music, like the rhythm, and I like the passion."

For his part, Lennie Gallant is a native of Rustico, a tiny village on the north shore of Prince Edward Island. Although his background is Acadian — his grandparents were



THE BOOTH OF THE OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER OF OFFICIAL LANGUAGES AT THE 41ST NATIONAL HOME SHOW IN TORONTO, APRIL 10-13, GREETED 6,500 VISITORS

both French-speaking — he was brought up in English. Unwilling to lose his heritage, he decided to recover his French. It took time, but the 36-year-old Gallant is now bilingual, singing and writing in both languages. For some of his songs he writes two versions, one in English and one in French.

A tour last winter took him as far west as Winnipeg, performing for both English- and French-speaking audiences on the same bill as the popular Winnipeg-based folk rock group, Crash Test Dummies.

One of the most popular songs with both English- and French-speaking audiences is "Destination", dealing with relations between

Canada's two official language groups and written while travelling on a train along the St. Lawrence River east of Quebec City. The view of the provincial capital from across the river he found especially impressive. "From that viewpoint it looked pretty distinct."

Diamond and Gallant are on very different performance circuits and neither is solely preoccupied with national or linguistic issues. But each believes strongly in Canada and in bringing languages and people together for purposes of understanding as well as enjoyment. Their contributions may be on different circuits, but they are on the same wavelength. ■

