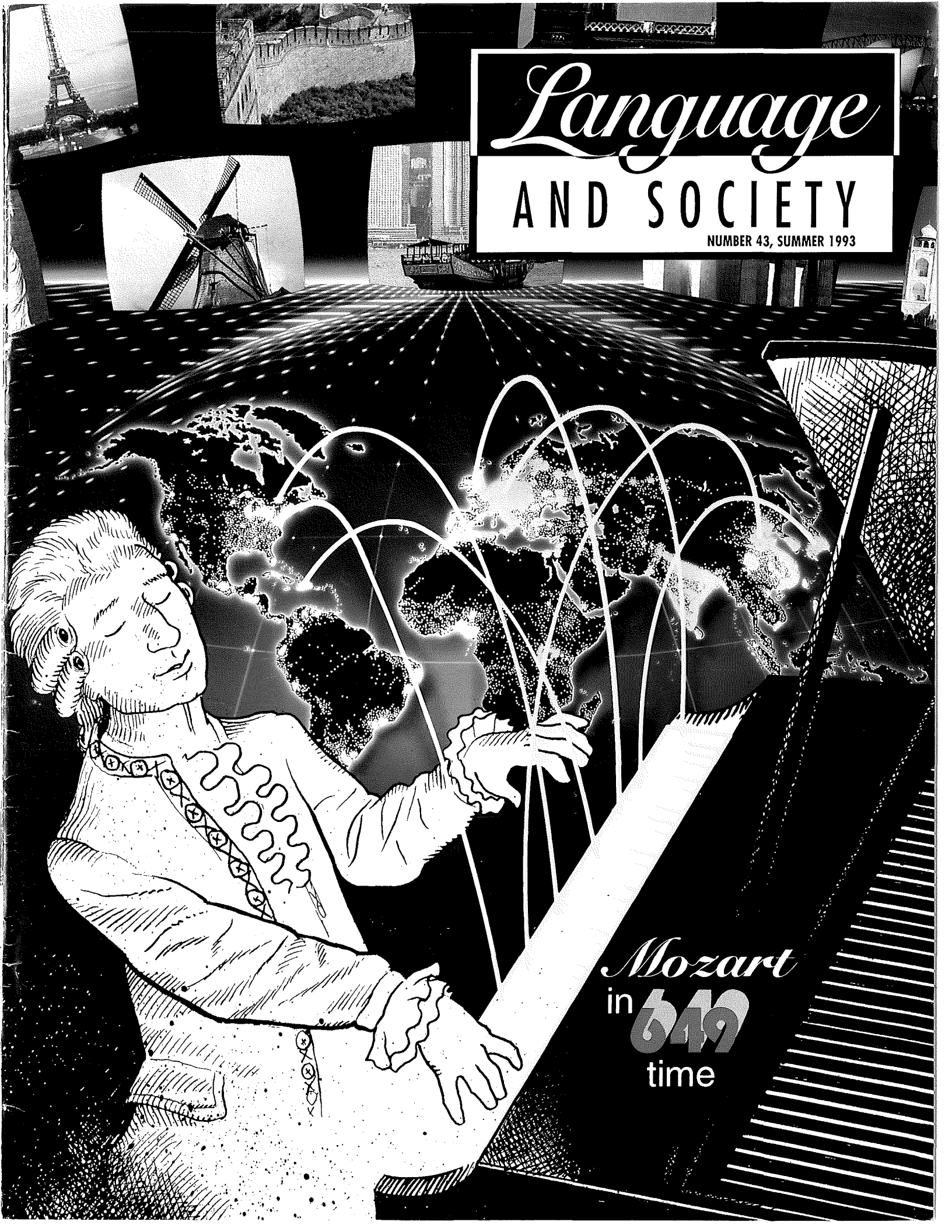
Language
AND SOCIETY
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Mozart
in
time

Language AND SOCIETY

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CONTENTS

3 Difficult questions, complex answers

4 Globalization and information technologies: Mozart in 6/49 time

8 Early French immersion and proficiency in English: Some long-range effects

10 Toasting Toastmasters

12 St. Isidore, Alberta: The little village that could

14 Quebec's Eastern Townships: English-speakers and the federal Public Service

15 Time to celebrate in Gravelbourg

16 A university partnership: Western Ontario and Laval

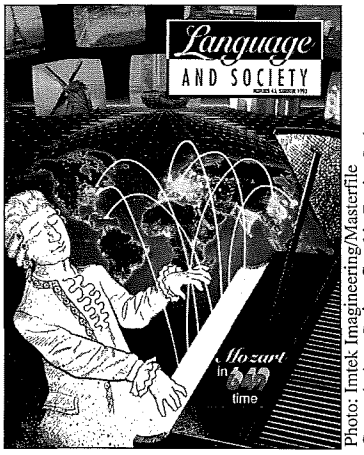
17 Raymond Bisson: Ensuring the future

19 Showing the way: New-Brunswick sets a linguistic example

20 Second-language evaluation: Spring cleaning

21 Telling tales

22 A judgment for all seasons



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COVER:
Information technology facilitates the globalization of human activity.

NOTICE

Language and Society analyses Canadians' concerns from the linguistic point of view and emphasizes the personal, national and international advantages of being a two-language country.

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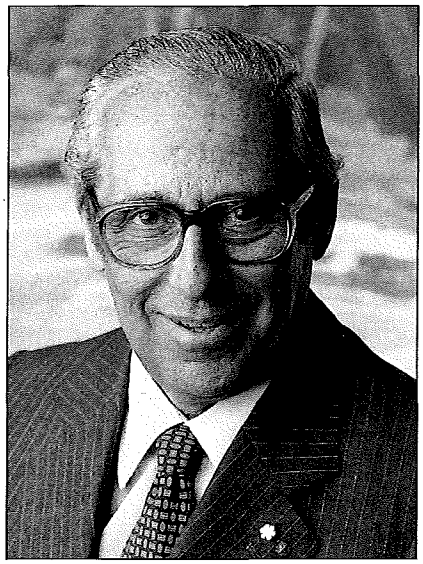


DIFFICULT questions, COMPLEX answers

"It will always be necessary to hone our language skills.... the ability to think clearly, to analyse problems, to find solutions and communicate them, is the foundation of information technologies."

In this issue we devote some of our pages to a consideration of information technologies. Remarkable techniques play an increasing role in the economic and industrial life of the planet. The combined advent of microelectronics and telecommunications leads us to the conviction that an ever-closer link is developing between languages and sophisticated work techniques.

What, then, is the societal challenge that will pose a crucial test for Canada as a whole in the coming decades? It is knowledge. What will it be necessary to know if we are to remain competitive, and to maintain and even improve our quality of life?

The capacity for thought, analysis and communication is much sought-after and will be increasingly in demand. In order to be effective in these areas it will always be necessary to hone our language skills. Since the ability to think clearly, to analyse problems, to find solutions and communicate them, is the foundation of information technologies, a thorough knowledge of language is a *sine qua non.*

In this context the presence and dynamic coexistence of linguistically different Canadians are very real assets to our country. One might say that the social fibre of Canada, enriched by different cultures communicating with each other in either or both of our official languages, is well suited to the era of fibre optics and to the technological revolution we are experiencing.

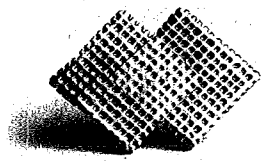
It is eminently reasonable to enhance our skills in our official languages at a time when so many are attempting to adjust to a world market economy. Labour forces require training, which can sometimes be difficult; companies modernize; and, willy-nilly, economics evolve.

None of us can rest on our laurels. If our collective future depends in significant part on our linguistic abilities, it is essential to recognize the importance of a sound education for our young people and the need for linguistic services adapted to the demands of today's world.

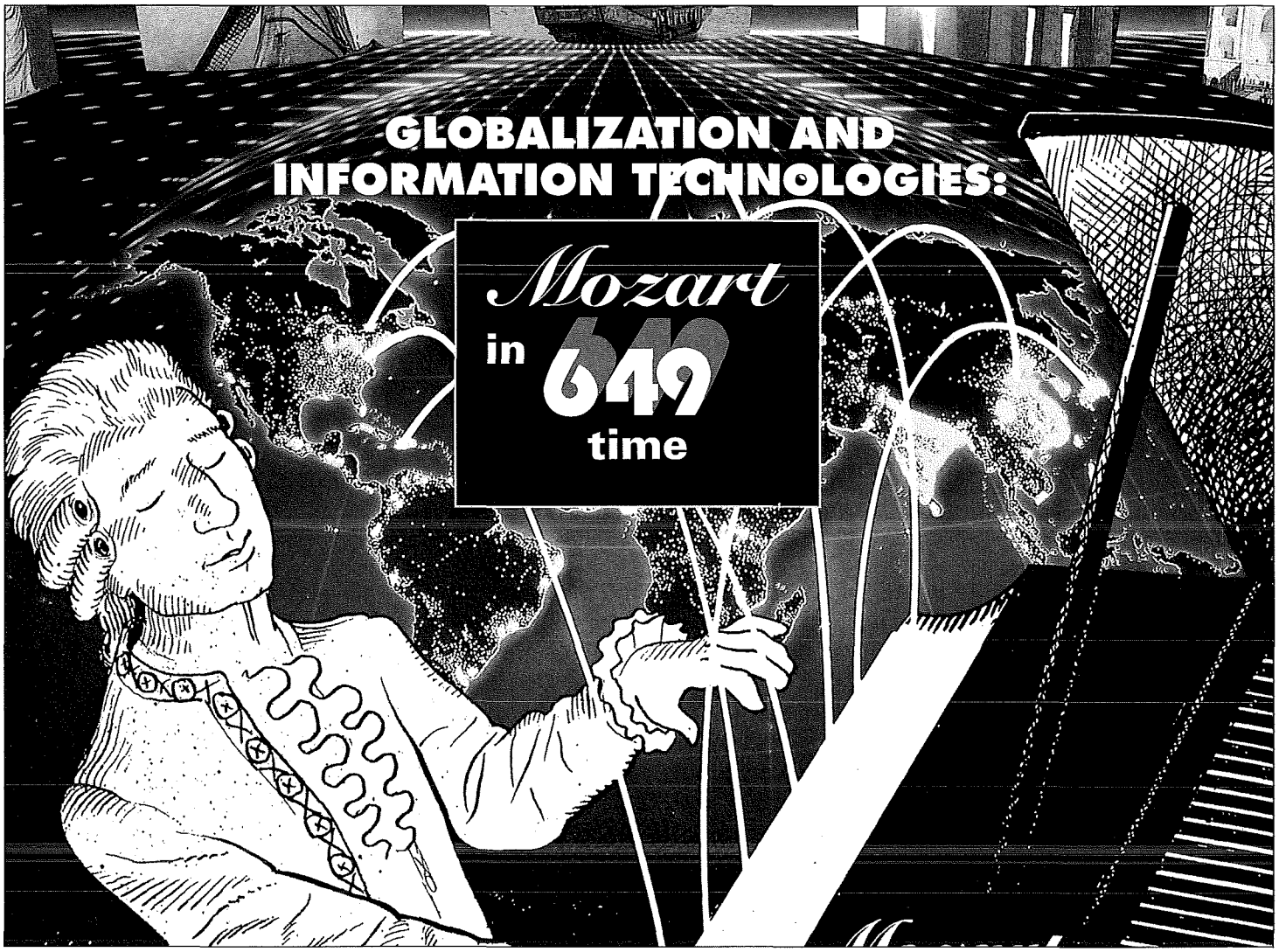
Victor C. Goldbloom

THE TEXTURE OF CANADA

A fabric is woven of many threads.
Those of us who speak English
and those of us who speak French
– ourselves made up of many
different elements –
have joined together to weave
a social fabric called Canada.



Wearers of the emblem of the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages are signifying their commitment to fostering the best possible human relations between the English-speaking and French-speaking components of Canada's social fabric.



A friend returning from a trip to Europe recently told me of his surprise at the popularity in various countries of a type of lottery very common here: the 6/49. I then recalled that this lottery had existed for some time in Canada and that it was also to be found in many American states. Research revealed that this type of lottery, a Quebec invention of the late 1970s, had spread around the world in just a few years, that Loto-Québec acts as a technical adviser on it in many countries and that the computer equipment and software designed for this purpose in Canada have become valuable export products.

*** Ghislain Fortin is Associate Secretary General of the Executive Council, Economic Development Secretariat, of the Government of Quebec.**

The desirability of a government's using games of chance as sources of revenue could be discussed at great length, but, given the decision to establish a state lottery, it must be acknowledged that the one developed here some 12 years ago has been a winning formula on at least two levels: that of marketing, since it is an active lottery in which participants choose their own numbers, and in administrative terms, since most of the operating costs have been eliminated in favour of telecommunications and computerized data-processing hardware. It is also a good illustration of the process of globalization and of its main features.

The engine of globalization

Globalization is a process of convergence that affects various aspects of our individual and collective existence. The economy, society, culture and political environment in particular are affected.

By convergence is meant a reduction or gradual erosion of differences in values, cultures, attitudes, ways of life and political institutions between the peoples and societies involved in globalization.

The convergence of which we are speaking is far from affecting equally all the peoples on earth. It impacts mainly upon the most industrialized countries: the G-7, the small nations of northern Europe and two or three industrialized countries in the Far East — barely 15% of the world's population, but more than two-thirds of the world economy. In these countries, which include Canada, large industrial and financial firms develop global strategies. Their economic interdependence is increasing while borders are blurred and geographical distances appear to shrink.

The process of globalization, however — a change as spectacular as it is threatening for much of the world — is in fact only the reflection, the consequence, of a much deeper phenomenon. This is the technological revolution, whose breadth and scope rival in importance the industrial revolution that began more than 200 years ago with the invention of the steam engine. The engine of the changes underway in our so-called post-industrial societies is the astonishing development of information technologies, fuelled by the extraordinary advances in the microelectronics and telecommunications sectors.

Global information

It is easier to understand the nature of this phenomenon and its impact on human society if we look at the subject of the technological revolution: information. This is an immaterial, intangible, impalpable product that, in most cases, can be completely computerized. Consequently, the costs of information storage and use have been greatly reduced in recent years. More traditional products such as raw and finished metals, automobiles or lumber are transported at great cost by train, ship or air freight. This results in a friction or inertia that restricts trade to relatively limited areas. Pure information, on the other hand, is now transmitted instantaneously around the world electronically, by cable or satellite, at minimal cost to most users. All the products of human industry have an information content, and this content is especially great in products with high added value. As a result, the constraints of distance and geography have been eliminated in whole or in part for an increasing share of the products of developed economies. This is the basis of the economic dimension of globalization.

The concept of information, in many respects, is synonymous with that of knowledge. Information exists everywhere and affects every aspect of our life, like the air in which we move. Unlike the case with other commodities, it is not scarcity that determines its economic value. It acquires its usefulness and market price only when it is organized and structured for a specific use related to real needs.

Information technologies are tending towards specialization and ubiquity.

Information relates to countless topics. Some are ordinary, like a grocery list or last night's sports results. Others are strictly utilitarian, like a bank balance, a bus schedule or a weather forecast. Still others are matters of high sophistication, such as a poem or a piece of music or a mathematical equation that can deepen our understanding of the universe. A transcendant literary work outdistances its information content. Nevertheless, it begins with words, which are information elements.

Finally, information can be stored, communicated and circulated to individuals or groups in many forms: images, sounds, mathematics, the "coded" language of computers, as well as ordinary written and spoken language.

We can understand, therefore, why the process of globalization, as defined above, affects mainly the production and exchange of goods and services that have a high information content. Bankers, for example, record transactions via a medium that has become non-material and computerized in modern societies, namely, currency. In addition, when they make a loan they have to assess the borrower's ability to repay and secure the depositor, so that nearly all their activities can be regarded as exchanges of information between savers and investors. It is not surprising that the major banks are among the most computerized and the most globalized economic institutions.

More broadly, the development of a "world information sphere" affects all human activities that have a high information content, such as science, innovation, research and development, cultural activities like film, television and popular music, fashion, habits of consumption, political ideologies — in short, everything related to the field of ideas. Furthermore, the only people, groups or companies able to operate fully in the information sphere are those which have developed a high level of knowledge and have access to a modern telecommunications infrastructure. Only they are able readily to convey information, concepts or ideas of value or interest to others and to find ways to use the ideas that come their way. That is why, in the present situation, there are, unfortunately, many people who are excluded from or are losing out to technological progress, both within and without our so-called advanced societies.

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The strongest...or the best?

If, as we saw above, globalization is a process of convergence between societies which have always had distinct histories, cultures, languages and geography, pessimists will have no difficulty in seeing a tendency towards levelling down and towards the ascendancy of the strongest. From this to deploring the Americanization of other industrialized countries is a short step quickly taken by some.

It is true that the influence of the United States on popular culture in the world is considerable. If we look closely, however, we find that many other factors are at work in the shaping of our present and future. For example, modern management and industrial production techniques now come more often from Japan than from the United States.

The technologies we seek to introduce are often of German or French origin. Our system of government is of British inspiration and our model of a mixed economy and the welfare state has its counterpart in Europe, not in Asia or elsewhere in North America. In an economy in the process of globalization competition means that it is the *best*, not the biggest or the strongest, that prevails. With regard to state lotteries, the best concept and the best technology came from Quebec. The Quebec model prevailed because of its inherent merit, a merit which is all the more evident in that it is based largely on an astute use of telecommunications and automation.

If such is the nature of the process of globalization, we should be able to follow its progress by examining the major trends that characterize information technologies.

What is the future?

Let it be said, first of all, that the technological revolution, properly speaking, is far from complete, for two major elements of it are foreseeable in the near future. The first is the replacement, in the home, of coaxial cable by fibre

optics. This will open the door to truly interactive television and individual visual communications. The second is the development of a flat, inexpensive, portable colour screen. This device, which is now the subject of intense technological rivalry, is likely to eliminate much of the paper used to convey information. This is good news from an environmental perspective, but a potential nightmare for the many regions of Canada that depend on the paper industry.

In both cases, these advances will strengthen the two technological trends that, from the outset, have characterized the development of informatics, or the processing of information by electronic means.

Everyone is aware today that the size of computers has been reduced, their power has increased, their cost has fallen and their use has been simplified dramatically in the past 30 years. What is still more striking is that data-processing devices are spreading from computers to become common in automobiles, television sets, pocket calculators, kitchen ranges, etc. Communications systems are undergoing a similar transformation, with facsimile machines and cellular telephones, for example. In short, information technologies are tending towards specialization and ubiquity and are catching up with information on its own territory, which is everywhere around us.

Similarly, computer languages have gradually been simplified, stripped of their impenetrable jargon and democratized so as gradually to approach everyday language. Somewhat as among the ancient Egyptians, when writing was the province of scribes and initiates, informatics was until recently still the private preserve of the high priests of binary mathematics and machine language. Today, we communicate with computers in English or in French, using a keyboard and a few simple commands. Soon the computer will be able to recognize our handwriting or voice and without difficulty immediately translate our messages into another language.

Globalization, language and culture

There is a tendency to depict the "new computer wizards" as unwavering supporters of technology, a little fanatical and closed to anything unrelated to their passion. This pejorative stereotype of the future citizen of the global information sphere appears now to be wide of the mark, as indicated by the increasing use of word processing and modern means of communication by journalists, writers and other literati.

Similarly, it was wrongly thought that human language would one day be the servant of machine language, whereas the opposite is now occurring. In the foreseeable future spoken and written languages will continue to be incomparable, irreplaceable vehicles for information storage and transfer. Far from trivializing them or diminishing their importance, information technologies will increase their importance.

Is it inevitable that the process of globalization will eventually lead to the ascendancy of one language, namely English, over all others? This is a difficult question to answer. There are various levels of communication, however. For simple exchanges about commercial transactions, technology or tourist activities, for example, the use of a common

language known to some extent by everyone may have certain advantages. At the same time, communication on another level that requires knowledge of the language of the recipient is indispensable to many types of exchanges of information in economics, culture and politics. A knowledge of English may be sufficient to complete a currency transaction with a Zurich banker, but to set up a business office it is necessary to speak the local language. Since communication is first and foremost a matter of language, it is difficult to see how globalization and the technological developments that underlie it could diminish the importance of linguistic competence for Canadians.

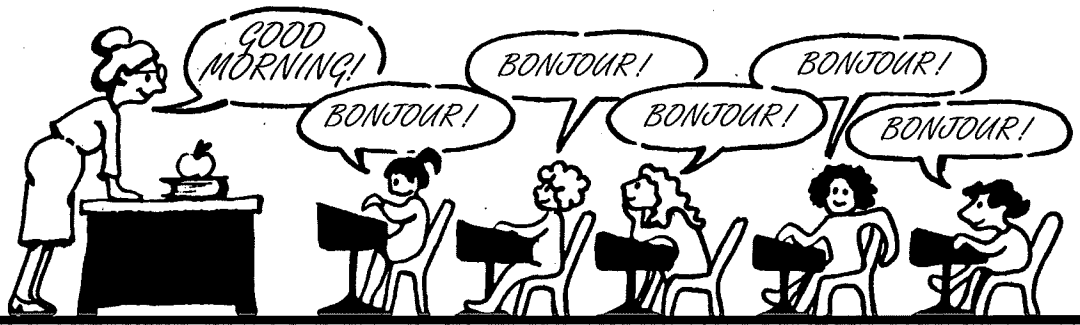
In my view, the forces of convergence have always been present within human societies. They have sometimes been obscured by wars, nationalisms or ideological or religious cleavages. They have always been hindered by linguistic differences, by distances and by limitations of methods of communication. It is precisely these constraints that are being eliminated.

Globalization is a process of convergence that affects various aspects of our individual and collective existence.

At the end of the 18th century an operatic pinnacle was reached when a play by a French writer, set in Spain, was sung in Italian to the music of a German-speaking composer before the Emperor of Austria.

Tomorrow, no doubt, we will be able to attend a performance of *The Marriage of Figaro* given at the Metropolitan Opera House in New York by singers from various countries, broadcast worldwide by cable and satellite and reproduced faithfully on a large, high-definition screen in the homes of millions of delighted music lovers. Mozart's music will not be different. It will simply have an audience worthy of it. ■

(Our translation)



EARLY FRENCH IMMERSION AND PROFICIENCY IN ENGLISH: SOME LONG-RANGE EFFECTS

*GERALD NEUFELD**

Because of a combination of concomitant factors in the 1970s, interesting but impossible to explore within the confines of this brief discussion, Canadians throughout the country hastened to implement early French immersion programs in English language schools, in- and outside Francophone communities. Based on the positive results of experimental efforts in Montreal, Toronto and Ottawa, it seemed that young school-age children could gain command of another language in school while suffering no losses whatsoever from linguistic, intellectual, academic or social standpoints. Published reports, bristling with charts, tables and statistics, left little room for doubt about the overall benefits of carefully planned intensive second-language instruction in the early grades.

Although barely discernible in the din of enthusiastic voices of researchers, school administrators and many parents, some cautionary souls did manage to raise a question or two about the repercussions of these programs. How would English-speaking children whose first years of schooling were in French compare in their mother tongue with their Anglophone peers who had only an hour per day of exposure to another language? Would English at home suffice to maintain normal linguistic and psycholinguistic development? How well would immersion children speak French after five years of instruction in an acquisition context that involved few native-speaking models? Would children who had first to learn a new language be able to catch up to the academic achievement levels of their English and French non-immersion counterparts by age 11? Finally, and most troublesome for some, what could be said about the quality of Canadian elementary education programs for Anglophones that could so easily accommodate several years of absence from the English curriculum?

As pointed out in a variety of critical review papers, researchers have unearthed no deficits resulting from early French immersion, either with respect to academic performance or reading, writing and speaking English. Until recently, however, scholars have been unable to examine any long-range effects of intensive exposure to another language at school since few immersion pupils had reached adulthood. Many are now at university, enabling specialists in the field to take a much more in-depth look at potential repercussions, positive or negative, of undertaking study of another language prior to attaining linguistic maturity in the mother tongue. Of primary interest in the research summarized here are the long-range effects of early immersion programs on what we referred to as "high level psycholinguistic functioning" in L1 (English), functioning that is unlikely to be triggered or accessed in standardized achievement tests administered at school. More specifically, how do young native English-speaking adults whose initial education was in French compare with their non-immersion Anglophone counterparts in their capability to 1) detect subtle ambiguity in statements, 2) identify non-standard deviations in English grammar, 3) perceive nuanced differences in meaning in vocabulary, 4) produce synonyms for low-frequency words and 5) spontaneously generate meaningful, well-formed utterances, frequently involving abstract concepts and figurative speech?

Two groups of English-speaking students at the University of Ottawa served as subjects for the research summarized here. These groups were very carefully matched, the only significant

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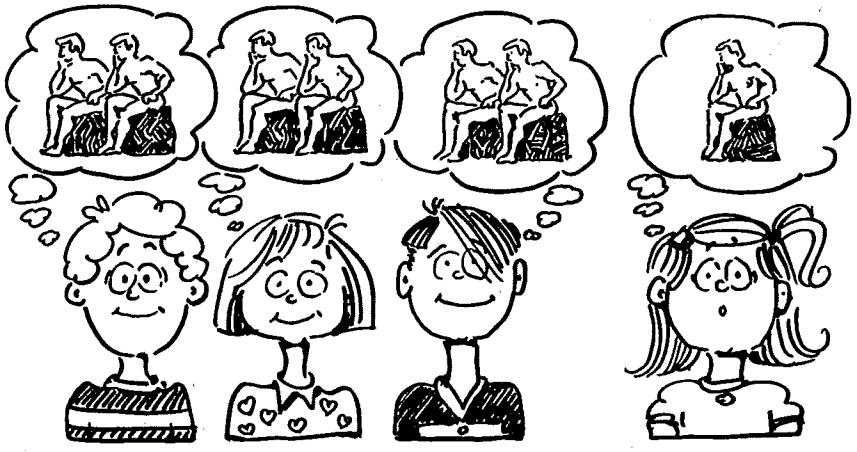
difference between the two being that 20 had completed early French immersion programs and the remaining 20 had been instructed in what is known as Core French, normally involving about one hour per day of the target language. At issue here was whether or not disruption in development of the mother tongue that must result in any intensive second-language program undertaken between the ages of five and 10 inhibits the growth of psycholinguistic skills requisite for the use of language in complex thinking in adulthood. While any number of approaches might be adopted to explore this abstract program, the method employed in the present study was to test subjects in essentially four areas, including vocabulary richness, sensitivity to multiple meanings in statements, tolerance for non-standard structures in grammar and ability to rapidly construct well-formed, meaningful utterances on a variety of topics, many of which involved abstract concepts and ideas.

Some cautionary souls did manage to raise a question or two about the repercussions of intensive second-language instruction.

To be sufficiently discriminating, the measures had to be demanding. In terms of vocabulary, for example, respondents either had to supply synonyms or actual meanings for words like *innocuous*, *vapid*, *insipid*, *acerbic*, *perfidious* and *venial*. In the Sentence Ambiguity measure, subjects were timed and scored on their ability to isolate statements that contained more than one possible interpretation, e.g., "The police stopped drinking at midnight", "The doctor told his colleague that he would have to operate", "Two examiners marked six papers" and "Maxine took off Max's shirt". In the measure for tolerance of non-standard structure or meaning in utterances, subjects had to identify statements that they would either accept as plausible or consider inadmissible. Some examples of stimulus utterances were "Buzzing flies, tolerate I simply cannot", "Very comfortable is that couch I'd say, even if it is new", "City dwellers in countryside rarely go", "The logs drifted awkwardly down the river" and "Dry raindrops washed the sunlit sand". Finally, subjects were shown three-word sequences in random order from which they were to plan and actually articulate well-formed, meaningful sentences, sentences which must include some form of each of the three stimulus words. Examples of some sequences were "appear fruit rock", "wave tree majestic" and "yellow cigarette tooth".

What do Canadians think?



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

On virtually all of the measures the two groups of subjects performed identically as determined by in-depth statistical analyses. If the tests employed genuinely constitute a measure of "high level psycholinguistic functioning", then the results of this study, somewhat to the surprise of the authors, corroborated earlier findings that early French immersion produces no adverse effects, neither immediate nor long-range. In one area, and very dramatically so, the immersion and non-immersion groups differed in their response to figurative or metaphoric language. In the tolerance for non-standard deviation test most of the immersion group were inclined to accept statements like "The logs drifted awkwardly down the river" while their non-immersion counterparts rejected such utterances as "bizarre". Their predisposition for metaphor was likewise reflected in the sentence creation task in which substantially more utterances of a figurative nature were produced by immersion subjects. For the stimulus string

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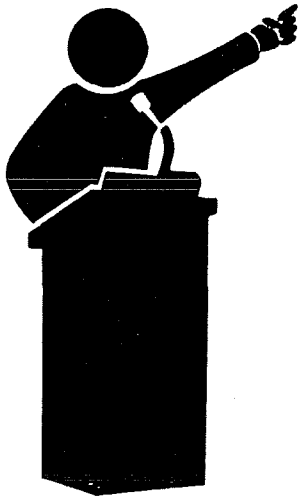
"appear fruit rock", for example, more than half of the immersion graduates generated sentences like "the rock appeared like a piece of fruit", "The rock was fruit-like" and "Rocks can sometimes appear like fruit, especially at dusk". Non-immersion subjects, on the other hand, were more inclined to produce sentences like "The rocks appeared all around the fruit trees", "The fruit appeared to mingle with the rocks" and "The fruit appeared to be damaged by the rocks below". Had the data on response to figurative language been limited to the perception test for tolerance of non-standard usage, these findings would have been interesting but not compelling. When combined with the results of the oral production measure, however, there can be little doubt that the immersion group, for whatever reasons, were more figurative or metaphoric in their use of English.

Until recently scholars have been unable to examine any long-range effects of intensive exposure to another language at school.

Although there is yet no obvious link between what occurs during early French immersion instruction and the use of metaphor in the mother tongue during adulthood, many will interpret the findings of this pilot study as positive indication of the linguistic and cognitive benefits of learning another language early in school. While much more work remains in this area, the idea that acquisition of a new language can promote poetic use of one's own mother tongue is provocative and certainly worthy of further scrutiny. ■



Toasting Toastmasters

JOE A. HOLMES*

Toastmasters clubs in eastern Ontario, Quebec and parts of northern New York State make up what is called Toastmasters District 61.

Created in 1957 District 61 has grown over the past 35 years from three original clubs to close to 70 today. About half of them are French or bilingual. District 61 is one of about 75 Toastmasters Districts worldwide but it is the only one which is officially bilingual and bi-national.

Toastmasters International, with over 180,000 members of 8,000 clubs in 52 countries and headquarters in Mission Viejo, California, is a worldwide non-profit organization dedicated to improving one's public speaking and communication skills. There are hundreds of clubs all across Canada. Over the past 60 years three million members around the world have benefited from Toastmasters training and experience.

Each club has about 20 to 30 members who meet weekly or every two weeks and take turns presiding over meetings. A business portion provides an opportunity to practise parliamentary procedure. During "Table Topics", participants speak impromptu for up to two minutes on an assigned topic. Two or three members give prepared speeches on a variety of themes, which are then evaluated to provide constructive feedback. Meetings are both entertaining and educational and a great place to make new friends and contacts. Since everyone is a volunteer, membership and course fees are inexpensive.

New members give a series of 10 speeches, at their own pace, on various themes from the "Toastmasters Communication and Leadership Program" manual. Each theme emphasises a particular aspect of speech-making, such as organization, vocal variety, working with words and inspiring an audience. Once this series has been completed members earn the title of "Competent Toastmaster (CTM)" and move on to more advanced manuals. Some clubs offer a course to the general public called "Speechcraft", which teaches basic public speaking skills.

* **Joe A. Holmes is the Public Relations Adviser for Toastmasters District 61 and a member of the Capital Toastmasters club in Ottawa. He works in the Office of the Auditor General.**

International Toastmasters Director Harold Usher, District 61 Governor Jane Stuart and Lt. Governor of Education Jacques Borne

A large number of District 61 clubs are concentrated in the Ottawa and Montreal areas, with many others stretching from Deep River and Kingston, Ontario, in the west, to Chicoutimi and Rimouski, Quebec, in the east. Massena and Watertown, New York, clubs are also part of the District.

Over the past 60 years three million members around the world have benefited from Toastmasters training and experience.

A Who's Who of private corporations and government departments have sponsored Toastmasters clubs over the years, contributing to District 61's enormous growth: Atomic Energy, Bell Northern Research, Canada Post, Canadair, Computing Devices, National Defence, the Ottawa Civic Hospital, Statistics Canada and the Treasury Board, to name a few, all have Toastmasters clubs.

Jack Fawcett, the president of Nepean, Ontario's, Computing Devices, says, "We're one of Canada's most successful high technology companies and I really believe our people set us above the competition. We're constantly looking for new ways to improve our level of professionalism. Toastmasters is a great way for people to practise their presentation techniques in a fun and supportive atmosphere. It is a very cost-effective way to improve communication skills."

Although English is the major language of clubs worldwide, interest in Toastmasters among Francophones has recently exploded. At a fall 1992 information session at Place du Portage in Hull, Quebec, over 115 Francophones turned up to learn what Toastmasters has to offer. Many have since joined local French and bilingual clubs. In 1992, for the first time there were enough Francophone Toastmasters in the Ottawa area to run a French, as well as an English, public speaking contest.

All Toastmasters educational materials and courses currently in English are being translated on an ongoing basis into French by a Quebec City committee. These materials are then marketed through Toastmasters International for use by French clubs worldwide.

Teresa Beauregard of the Ottawa club is governor of the Southern Division of District 61. She works as a parliamentary interpreter and oversees 18 English and French clubs in the Ottawa area. She says, "Toastmasters is a fun and inexpensive way for people of both language groups to develop their public speaking skills. It is also an opportunity to meet people from all walks of life and professions."

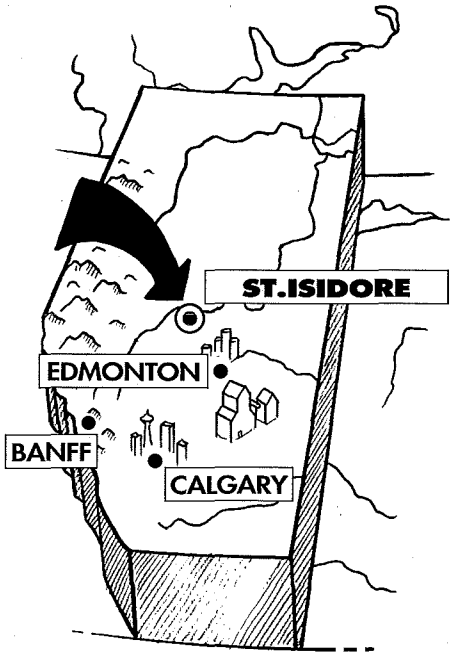
Some members of one language background have developed their second-language skills through Toastmasters. For example, Jane Stuart of the Kanata, Ontario, club is the District 61 governor. Although she comes from a British background and has made many speeches in English, she says, "I recently completed my 10th speech in French. My goal this year is to visit all the clubs in the district and to converse with members in either language."

As well, immigrants whose mother tongue is neither English nor French have improved their official languages skills through Toastmasters and have made new friends.

Seniors also find Toastmasters an excellent vehicle for remaining active and making new friends. Jacqueline Richer joined the Dorval City club near Montreal three years ago. She has made speeches on Quebec history and on a recent trip to Italy. "I joined Toastmasters to meet lots of nice people and to practise my second language skills," she says.

Club Banner parade at the recent District 61 conference in Pembroke, Ontario

For more information on Toastmasters, call (514) 866-3494 in Montreal, or (613) 235-9231 in Ottawa, or consult Toastmasters International in your white pages. ■



ST. ISIDORE, ALBERTA: The little village that could

*ELIZABETH MARSHALL**

Members of the Committee of employees and directors (from left to right): Richard Rhodes, Luc Fortin, John Hartenberger, David Hargraves, Shannon Campbell, Annette Bouchard, Anette Aubin and Joanne Sasseville

As the snow swirls across the prairie on a bitter December evening, 45 employees and directors of the Coopérative de Saint-Isidore meet at the Centre culturel to study a series of overheads presented by Hargroup Management Consultants of Edmonton. This is the moment of truth in a human resource planning project launched last spring by the major employer in this village of about 250 Franco-Albertans determined to preserve their language and culture in an Anglophone environment.

Founded in 1953 by seven families of self-starters from the Lac St. Jean region of Quebec, St. Isidore has always been a community that marched to its own drummer. The fertile plain of the Peace River, 15 kilometres east of the town of Peace River and some 450 kilometres northwest of Edmonton, offered these large Quebec families homesteads with enough land for all the members to continue their long farming tradition.

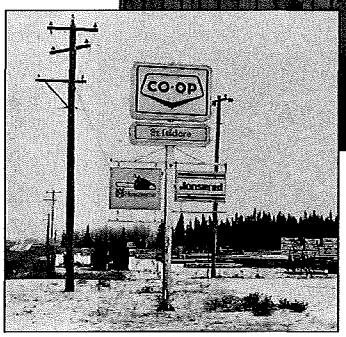
"We had only a few neighbours when I arrived in 1954," Léopold Bergeron explained. "We had little contact with them. We didn't speak English and they didn't speak French!" Thus began a tradition of meeting their own needs. Through the years the village has provided its own store, health clinic, seniors residence, fire hall and cultural centre. It is also thanks to the persistence and hard work of the farmers of St. Isidore that Francophone children from the entire Peace River area gather to attend kindergarten to grade 12 at the regional French first-language school, l'École Héritage, in the hamlet of Jean Côté, some 60 kilometres to the south.

Cultural activities have always been a priority. "Les Tisserandes", a group of women weavers, have become famous throughout the area for their distinctive handicrafts. Folk-dance groups, skit nights, a social club and a winter carnival known to Francophones across the country have been instrumental in preserving the language and culture which accompanied the original group from Quebec.

Also essential to the survival of the community is the local Co-op store, which provides 25 full-time and 12 seasonal jobs. So, when its management approached the Canada Employment Centre in Peace River early in 1992 to request assistance in obtaining training courses for staff, CEC manager Bonnie Nelson was quick to listen. It was important to preserve these jobs, especially at a time when incomes from farming, forestry and the oil and gas industry in the area were all declining. She suggested that the store consider Employment and Immigration's Industrial Adjustment Service, which would help them identify their needs more specifically. Enter IAS Consultant Shannon Campbell from Edmonton.

* **Elizabeth Marshall is with the Commissioner's Regional Office in Edmonton.**

"My first impression was of a group of people used to solving their own problems and determined to do whatever was necessary to keep their store viable. It was a challenge that appealed to me. And, although I couldn't personally give them service in French, the Co-op asked me to handle the project, with help from bilingual CEC staff. I'm glad things turned out that way. I've had a fascinating and unique glimpse into what it's like to be part of the official language minority in Alberta, and the enthusiasm and determination of these people have made my work with them a pleasure."



Luc Fortin

The committee of employees and directors formed to see what needed to be done soon came to the conclusion that the assistance of outside experts was required. Tenders were requested and the committee members found both the expertise and the understanding they required in an Anglophone company in Edmonton.

"French is a very important aspect of this Co-op," consultant John Hartenberger of Hargroup Management Consultants of Edmonton stressed as his work with the committee ended. "The bilingual nature of the business strengthens the identity of the store and meets a community need which should not be ignored. We heartily support and encourage this business in maintaining its unique service in French."

During the course of its self-examination management hired a new general manager for the store. Unexpectedly, their choice as the best person for the job was not a member of the Francophone community. Richard Rhodes, who had been their liaison with Federated Co-ops, the mother organisation, moved his Anglophone family to the tiny community when he accepted the position.

"I see great advantages for my children in this opportunity to understand another language and culture," he explained. "My wife and I can't wait for our tutor to be selected so that we can get started on our French lessons." While Richard knows that his selection has not been without controversy in the community, it is evident that he gets along very well with employees and directors alike and that he shares their goal of keeping alive the only French-speaking co-operative store in Alberta.

The temperatures outside have little influence on the enthusiasm which greeted the consultant's report. The encouragement which it expresses for the future of the business and the community is a well–deserved testimony to the determination, flexibility and resourcefulness of the Franco-Albertans of St. Isidore. ■

Quebec's Eastern Townships: English-speakers and the federal Public Service

*SHARON MCCULLY**

Marjorie Goodfellow

Kevin Riti, a 22-year-old English-speaking Quebecer who found full-time employment with the federal Public Service in his native Eastern Townships, is the most tangible evidence that the Concertaction Committee's efforts have borne fruit.

Marjorie Goodfellow, head of a Townshippers Association committee striving to introduce more young English-speakers to federal departments and agencies, sees Riti's hiring as a beacon for others.

Goodfellow sounded the alarm nearly a decade ago, alerting members to a disturbing trend in the Townships. Forecasts of a declining number of English-speakers in federal offices prompted the lobby group to initiate a study and, as Goodfellow put it, "get some action going". That action included debunking the myth that Anglophones didn't speak sufficient French and that they were more interested in high-profile industrial jobs, Goodfellow said. English-speakers in the area were already underrepresented in the Public Service at 6.3% in 1986, when Townshippers expressed fears that unless immediate and concerted action was taken the numbers would continue to plummet.

"Our data showed that most English-speaking public servants were over 50, and few were under 30," she said. "We predicted within a few years there'd be a dramatic drop." As predicted, the numbers continued to drop — from 6.3% in 1986 to 4.9% in 1988, then 4.6% in 1989 and 3.9% in 1990 in the Eastern Townships. As in the rest of Canada, budget constraints limited the ability of federal organizations to ameliorate the situation.

With multiple retirements on the horizon, Goodfellow and her Committee set about replenishing English-speakers' ranks by painting the Public Service as an attractive career choice for young bilingual Townshippers.

With the help of the Montreal regional office of the Commissioner of Official Languages, the first meeting of the Concertaction Committee was held in 1987. "We brought people together who could give us information about hiring practices," Goodfellow said. "We started with the 'Big 5' hiring departments in the Eastern Townships: Customs and Excise, the Agricultural Research Station in Lennoxville, Correctional Service Canada, Employment and Immigration and Revenue Canada (Taxation)." The Canada Centre for Geomatics was added later. The Committee formed alliances with educational institutions and federal department heads.

"It was a unique experience where everyone who had a role to play was present at the table," said Andrée Dubois, who joined the Committee in 1989 as the newly appointed regional director of the Public Service Commission. "What began as a pilot project in the Townships is being done across the province today," said Dubois, who is now a regional director general of the Department of Supply and Services. "People at the table were complaining they couldn't get recruits, so I suggested taking a full page in local newspapers to explain how to apply for a public service job."

Another initiative of the committee was to allow English-speakers to take the government's language test to assess their own level of bilingualism. "We visited communities, allowing anyone and everyone to try the test without any commitment," Dubois said, adding that over three quarters of those tested met the standards without difficulty.

Dubois said she could sense a shift in attitude once people stopped being defensive about why they didn't have more English-speakers.

* **Sharon McCully is a journalist with the Sherbrooke *Record*.**

The first glimmer of light flickered on in 1991 when the percentage rose for the first time in five years. Denis Gélinas, a Committee member and Chief of Personnel for Revenue Canada (Taxation) in Sherbrooke, said that's when a work experience program assignment designed to give young English-speakers a foot in the door began to work. "Three students came and two were hired to stay on," Gélinas said.

Kevin Riti was one of them.

A graduate of Massey Vanier's 18-month professional training program in accounting, Riti began a two-month stint with Revenue Canada in November 1991. "In January I was asked to stay for another two months," Riti said, "and from there I was hired full-time."

The young English-speaking Quebecer, who learned enough French during two years in a high school French immersion program to get him a shot at the job, is no different from hundreds of young English-speakers who are leaving Quebec.

"I could speak French, but not perfectly," said Riti. Now, after 18 months on the job, Riti considers himself bilingual — so much so that he has applied for a promotion with Revenue Canada in Chicoutimi.

"I've been accepted on the job very well," Riti said. "In the beginning, everyone helped me out if I couldn't think of a word in French. I've made quite a few friends at the office and everyone is very receptive."

While Riti's story is encouraging, it's still not the norm.

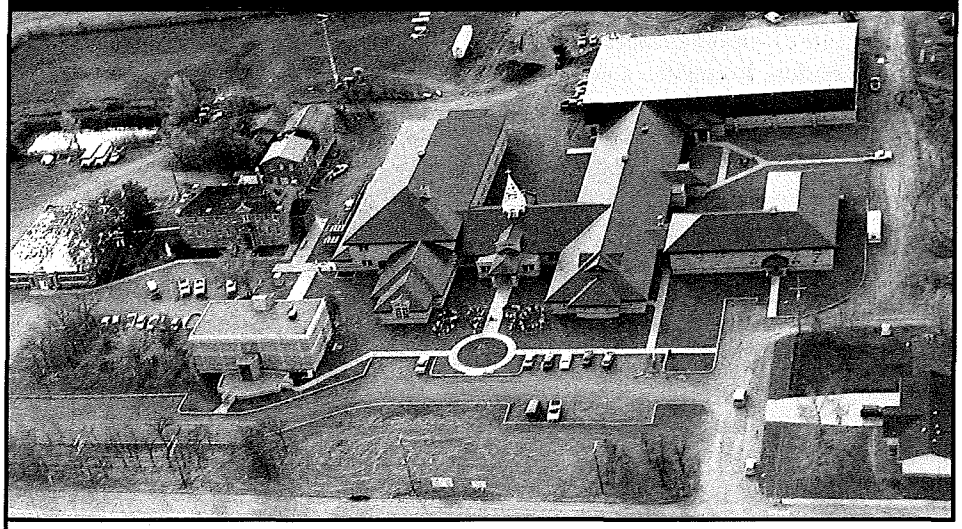
"I use Kevin Riti as an example of what could be," said Mary Rayes, head of the professional training program at Massey Vanier and a member of the Concertaction Committee. "Unfortunately, he's the exception."

Rayes says that, of all the institutions accepting graduates, the federal Public Service has the worst record for retention. "It's discouraging because students see classmates placed in private industry and they are very, very often kept on. In government it's the exception," she said. "The students who do a work experience program assignment in a government department are usually given an excellent report but, for one reason or another, they aren't kept on," she added. "The program is a good initiative but there are just too many stumbling blocks."

Since 1991 there's been a steady increase in Anglophone representation from 4.3% to 5.1%, and that increase came at a time the federal government was reducing the size of its departments.

"We've arrested the decline for the moment," Goodfellow said. "But I don't suppose the work of the Committee will ever be finished." ■

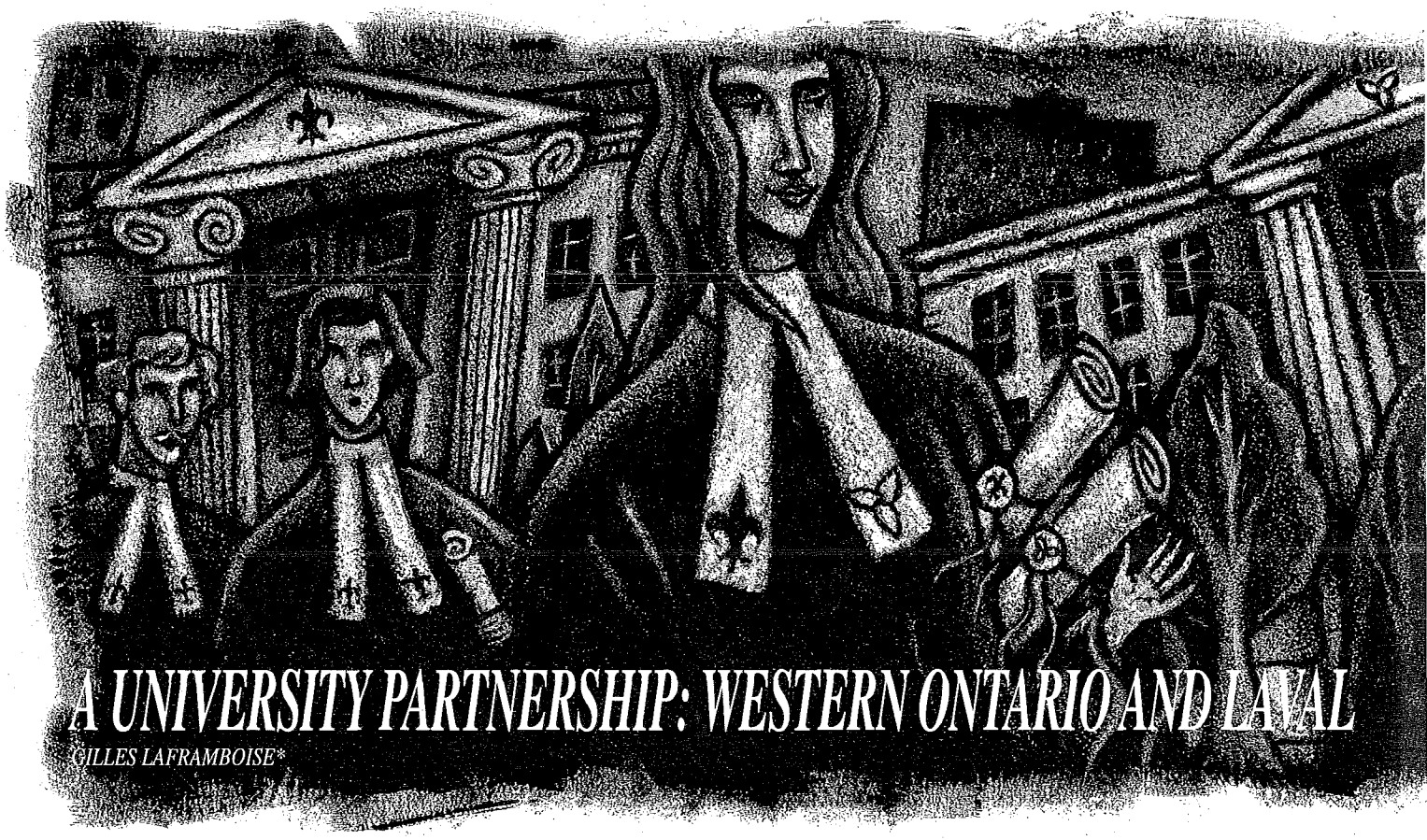
Time to celebrate in GRAVELBOURG



Graduates of Collège Mathieu will celebrate two major events in Gravelbourg, Saskatchewan: the 75th anniversary of Collège Mathieu and the 50th anniversary of the Collège's alumni association. The festivities will take place during the largest gathering of Fransaskois, the 14th Fête fransaskoise.

Three important churchmen have left their mark on the history of the Collège and of Gravelbourg: Msgr. Olivier Elzéar Mathieu, Archbishop of Regina; Fr. Charles Maillard, parish priest in Gravelbourg; and Fr. Pierre Gravel, colonizer and founder of Gravelbourg. It is appropriate that the celebration of the anniversaries will take place on a Sunday, August 1, and that it will begin with a 75th anniversary Mass. Approximately 2,000 participants will be able to see a historical pageant, to be presented four or five times during the celebrations, take part in the banquet and attend an entertainment by the alumni. Other events are planned for December 11 and 12 to close the year of celebration.

The most recent issue of the *Revue historique*, a publication of the Saskatchewan History Society, is devoted to these anniversaries and will appear as a supplement to *L'Eau vive* and Gravelbourg's *La Tribune*.



A UNIVERSITY PARTNERSHIP: WESTERN ONTARIO AND LAVAL

*GILLES LAFRAMBOISE**

The faculties of law of the University of Western Ontario and Université Laval have joined together to offer their students "the best of both worlds" — the opportunity at the completion of their studies to obtain a diploma in common law and in civil law.

Nearly all lawyers in Canada have only one of these degrees. Lawyers practising only in predominantly English-speaking provinces have a common law degree, while lawyers practising in Quebec must have a diploma in civil law because of the legal system used there.

Thanks to an initiative taken by the University of Western Ontario in London and Université Laval in Quebec City a handful of students will now be able to practise law anywhere in Canada and embark more easily on a career in international law.

This complementary program involves an exchange of students between the two universities. It enables students at the University of Western Ontario who wish to obtain a bachelor's degree in civil law to attend Université Laval. Conversely, students enrolled in the bachelor of civil law program at Université Laval who have spent a term at the University of Western Ontario can do a fourth year in law at that Ontario university and obtain their bachelor of common law degree.

According to Nathalie Desrosiers, a professor at Western Ontario and director of the exchange program in London, the Anglophone students definitely wish to add civil law to their attainments, "but they also wish to learn another language and get to know Quebec society better."

"In the present context," she adds, "a stay at Université Laval has even greater significance." Law graduates are no different from other university graduates; they have increasing difficulty in finding jobs in the current economic climate. "The fact that a student has a bachelor's degree in civil law and can speak French is an advantage on the labour market," Professor Desrosiers says.

Ready for the world

According to the University of Western Ontario professor, students who participate in the program can reap important benefits if they decide to pursue studies in international law. "A number of countries, including Mexico, with which Canada has just signed a free-trade agreement, use civil law rather than common law," she explains.

Listing the possession of two degrees and bilingualism on a curriculum vitae can tip the balance in one's favour when two candidates for a job are evenly matched, Professor Desrosiers says.

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

There is also praise for the program in Quebec. According to Jacqueline Roy, an education information officer for the Laval Faculty of Law, students are delighted with their stay in Ontario.

"Not only do they return here with a second degree, but they have also had the chance to discover a culture different from their own, and this can only be to their benefit," she says.

Does this exchange cause administrative problems for the two universities? "Certainly, we have to devote all the attention to the program that it deserves," Jacqueline Roy says, "but it has become such a part of our respective structures that when an Ontario student decides to come here to study for a year he or she becomes our student and we award the grades." ■

(Our translation)

Raymond Bisson: Ensuring the future

GILLES LAFRAMBOISE

The President of the Fédération des communautés francophones et acadienne du Canada, Raymond Bisson, says he is "encouraged" by the recent decision of the Supreme Court of Canada confirming for Francophones in Manitoba the constitutional right to have their children educated in French in their own schools.

In a recent interview with *Language and Society*, the outgoing president of the Fédération points out that the decision was an incentive for the hundreds of Francophone and Acadian communities that are waging a difficult battle against assimilation.

"We must not be naive and think that everything is fine, but neither must we conclude that there is no future for Francophones living outside Quebec," says Bisson, who has directed the FCFA for the past two years.

Difficult times

Invited to comment on his term as head of the Fédération, Bisson says he is optimistic about the future of Francophones and their associations. Referring to the failed constitutional accords, he does not hesitate to characterize the past two years as "particularly difficult". The associations representing the Francophone minorities were counting a great deal on a constitutional accord to obtain recognition of their rights to school governance.

"It would be wrong to think we have lost everything because the Meech Lake and Charlottetown Accords failed," Bisson observes. In his view, the FCFA has clearly not achieved all the goals it had set for itself, but "we have nevertheless made major progress in a short time," he says.

"Before the start of the first constitutional negotiations, only a minority of the provincial premiers were aware of us. After the defeat of the Charlottetown Accord, everyone knew and respected us."

This, in his opinion, is an important gain. In the future Canadian politicians will have to reconsider the constitutional question and "at that time we will definitely be invited to take part from the outset and to take our rightful place instead of imposing ourselves, as we have had to do."

A successful campaign

In Bisson's view the Francophone minorities are now more credible because they have made themselves more visible. They went to the public to explain themselves, to take stands as they rarely had in the past and to force all those involved in the issue to take a position.

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FÉDÉRATION DES COMMUNAUTÉS FRANCOPHONES ET ACADIENNE DU CANADA

The success achieved by the FCFA is attributable to the strategy adopted by the Fédération in the past two years, according to the outgoing president.

"We could have shouted and carried placards, but we preferred to develop a constructive dialogue, to encourage effective discussions with representatives of the federal and provincial governments."

This strategy bore fruit "since, today, we are well placed to follow up on favourable developments such as the Supreme Court decision on [governance of] French schools in Manitoba or the adoption of Bill 88, which puts Acadians on an equal footing with the rest of the population of New Brunswick."

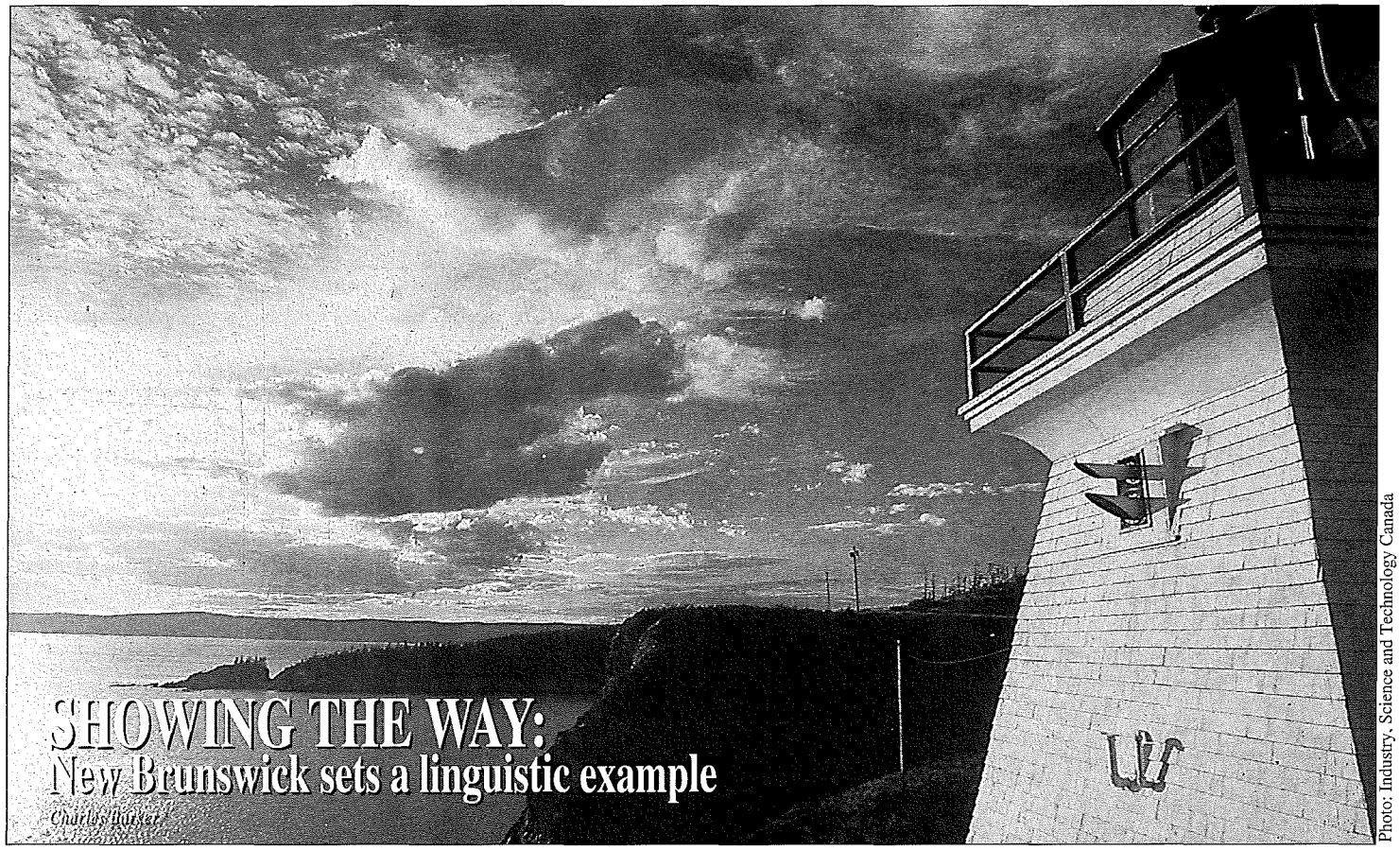
Powerful tools

When asked about the recent census figures, Bisson acknowledges that the number of Francophones living outside Quebec for whom French is the primary language in the home has decreased in the past 10 years. "We could follow the advice of certain defeatists and wait for their predictions to come true — that there will not be a single Francophone living west of the Outaouais or east of Quebec," he asserts.

He hastens to add that this prediction will never come true, "because, with the legislative tools that we have today and those we will seek in the future, we will slowly but surely succeed in reversing the momentum.

"When I see that the 50,000 Franco-Manitobans now have some 70 associations of all kinds, I refuse to believe that they will soon disappear from the map of Manitoba," says Bisson, who was president of the Société franco-manitobaine before taking the helm of the Fédération des communautés francophones et acadienne du Canada in 1991. ■

(Our translation)



SHOWING THE WAY:
New Brunswick sets a linguistic example

*Charles Barker**

Photo: Industry, Science and Technology Canada

Only one province is mentioned in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms: New Brunswick. Since the adoption of the Charter in 1982 New Brunswick has been specifically mentioned in Sections 16 to 20, which state that English and French are the province's official languages. Now, since March 12, 1993, there is more. Thanks to the entrenchment in the Constitution of the principles of the Act Recognizing the Equality of the Two Official Linguistic Communities in New Brunswick (Bill 88), the two "have equality of status and equal rights and privileges" and especially the right to "distinct educational institutions and...cultural institutions". In addition, the Act confirms the role of the legislature and government in preserving and promoting the equality of status of the linguistic communities and their institutions.

These provisions have been a part of our Constitution for the past several months because the province's Legislative Assembly and the federal Parliament each adopted a special resolution to entrench them. Following the defeat of the Charlottetown Accord, which incorporated the same principles and received the support of 61.7% of the voters in New Brunswick last October, Premier Frank McKenna submitted a resolution to the Assembly to entrench these elements in the Constitution. The resolution received the support of all the Liberal, Conservative and New Democrat MLAs (but not of the Confederation of Regions Party) and was then adopted by the federal Parliament with the support of the great majority of MPs.

The entrenchment is a fine example of social activism. The legislation that inspired it protects both the province's 471,000 Anglophones and its 243,000 Francophones. It promotes the development of English-language institutions such as the University of New Brunswick and Mount Allison University, and of French-language ones such as the Université de Moncton. It protects the cultural institutions of each language community: the Lord Beaverbrook Gallery or the Land of La Sagouine, for example. Finally, it also protects separate local institutions, such as schools and community centres, which are so important to the development of any cultural community.

As with many innovative reforms, entrenchment was not favourably

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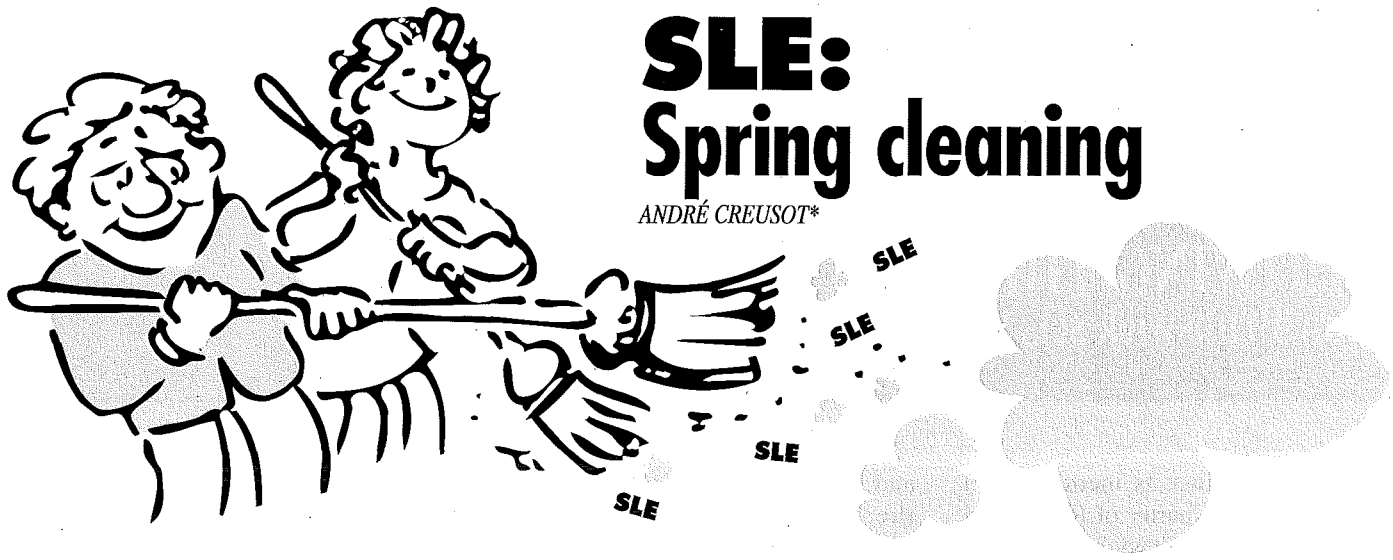
* **Charles Barker is an analyst in OCOL's Policy Branch.**

received everywhere, but most commentators, both Anglophone and Francophone, were sympathetic or even enthusiastic. The Saint John *Telegraph-Journal* called the new Act a "significant achievement", while *L'Acadie Nouvelle* spoke of "social justice". The Moncton *Times-Transcript* stated that this was "a welcome and long-overdue move." The Société des Acadiens et Acadiennes du Nouveau-Brunswick called the adoption of the resolution a "historic moment." A recent poll showed that 77% of New Brunswickers support the concept of the equality of the two language communities. According to Mr. McKenna, this new constitutional arrangement is an additional protection needed by minorities, even in a democratic country. Nonetheless, the legality of the entrenchment has been contested and one individual, Deborah Coyne, has brought the matter before the courts.

In our view, congratulations are in order to the government and people of the province for adopting a course that shows such vision and consideration for all its citizens. There is no doubt that New Brunswick now has constitutional guarantees that will serve it well in the 21st century. ■

(Our translation)



SLE: Spring cleaning

*ANDRÉ CREUSOT**

The Second Language Evaluation system, which rules the linguistic lives of public servants, has just been the subject of some spring cleaning by the Public Service Commission.

SLE used to have two validity periods: three years for employees meeting the required level for the first time and five years for those who stayed at the level for their position or improved on it. Effective April 1 there is now only a single five-year validity period. This period will be extended indefinitely as long as an employee remains in the same position with the same linguistic level.

In the past an employee who obtained an SLE score of 51 out of 55 in writing was entitled to take another test for exemption from all future testing. From now on anyone who obtains this score will be granted such an exemption automatically.

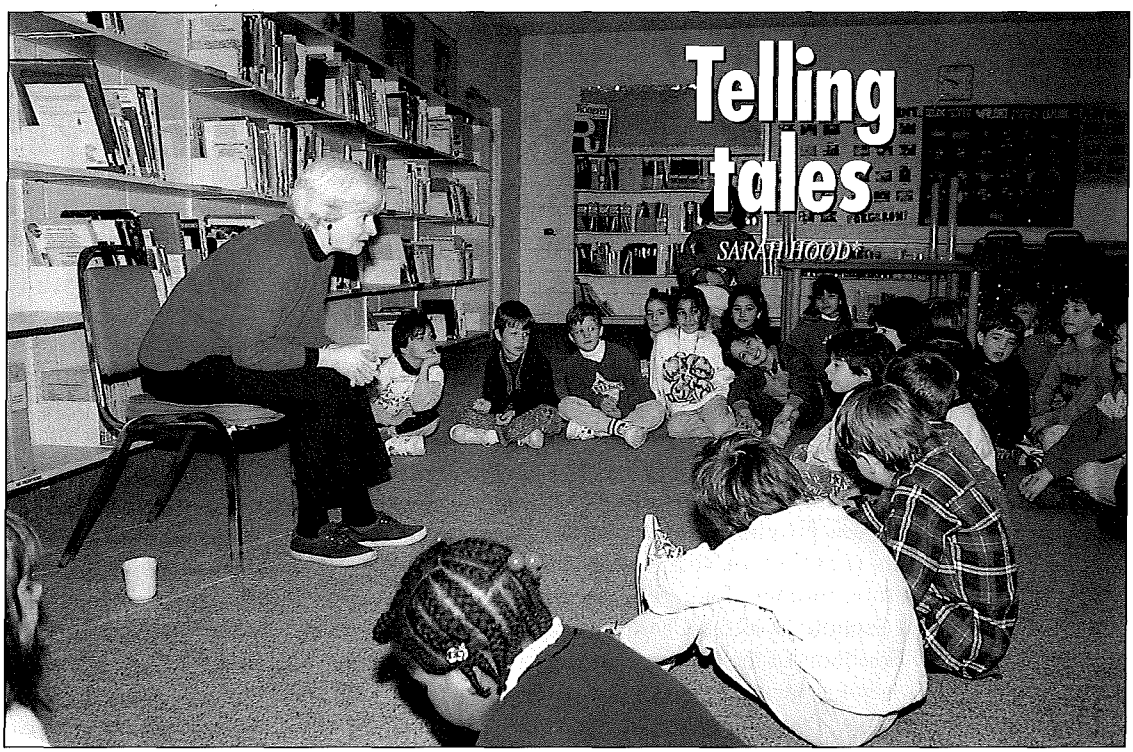
These changes result from studies done by the Commission that showed that between 95% and 98% of candidates met or exceeded the previous standards. The studies were carried out as part of a comprehensive review of the effectiveness of central agencies.

The oral interaction test will now be evaluated by only two Commission offices instead of six and use of the telephone to test the oral skills of public servants will become general.

These changes should not have a negative impact on quality of service or the accuracy of our knowledge of the language skills of public servants. It is important to note, however, that they will reduce by more than 40% the number of SLE tests administered. This will result in an annual saving of some $3.3 million — which goes to show that it is possible to test and to save money at the same time. ■

(Our translation)

*** André Creusot is Chief of OCOL's Policy Secretariat.**



Telling tales

SARAH HOOD*

Marylyn Peringer didn't study French until she was in her mid-twenties. Now she makes her living speaking French — or, at least, "telling" it.

Peringer is a storyteller who mines the rich and relatively little known body of French-Canadian folk tales, fairy tales and legends. Since the late 1970s she has "told" at schools, museums and festivals in eight provinces. She is affiliated with the Toronto Storytelling School and has given performances outside the country at events like Artpark (Lewiston, New York) and "Le Renouveau du conte", a 1989 storytellers' conference in Paris.

As with many unusual careers, Peringer's began almost by accident, at the suggestion of a classmate in a French language course. "I never set up to become a storyteller at all," she explains. After returning from a year spent in France with her husband, she says, "I took a course with a girl friend to bolster my French." While searching for a topic for a half-hour class presentation, "I remembered I had books with French-Canadian legends and folklore. My husband had bought them. When I did my presentation I was very enthusiastic and I went on longer than half an hour. One of the women in the class said: 'Did you ever think of doing a program for schools?'"

"I never set up to become a storyteller."

The chance suggestion, says Peringer, "came at a time of my life when I was looking for something to move on to." Without knowing exactly how to go about it, Peringer began to create a career for herself. She read all the source material she could find, especially in the extensive collections at the University of Toronto's Robarts Library. She also discovered Laval University's archives of folklore, many of which are available in published form.

"I started in my local school," Peringer recalls, "where the principal was willing to let me try it." Her first efforts were in English, "but the French kept coming in." Gradually she expanded into schools with which she had had no previous connection. When she first approached an immersion school, "the principal said, 'I don't know....Do you speak like a native? Could you fool a French-Canadian?' I said I didn't know."

When a teacher phoned to find out more, Peringer was quickly engaged. "I was very nervous to be telling in front of people I didn't know," she says, but her worries were unnecessary. "The kids liked the stories. That was the basic thing....They're very good stories!"

Since that time Peringer has found herself increasingly in demand. She tells stories about the *lutin*, the mischievous elf; about the *loup-garou*, the unfortunate soul who takes on the form of a beast as a consequence of missing seven years of Easter observances and, of course, about the mysterious stranger dressed all in black who comes to tempt away unsuspecting souls. Her version of the story of Rose Latulippe, the girl who danced with the devil, is published in Dan Yashinsky's collection of work by Toronto storytellers, *Tales for an Unknown City* (McGill-Queen's University Press, 1990). She is also featured in an upcoming second collection, *Next Teller*.

Although her audience consists mainly of children, Peringer is deeply aware of the serious side of the tales she tells and always tries to put them in context for

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* Sarah Hood, a Toronto-based freelance writer, is co-founder of Cadmus, a communications and public relations firm.

her listeners. She thinks of her work as "an attempt to present something very essential about French-Canadian culture," she says. Without trying to romanticize a golden age when "everybody did nothing but tell stories", Peringer is very much aware of the use of these traditional tales as "a way of keeping some of the most important values in society."

She points out that, although they are also filled with humour, many of the folktales and legends exhort the listener to avoid heavy drinking and swearing and to keep the sacraments of the Church. She also reminds her audiences that for decades after the Conquest, Francophones were not allowed the use of printing presses. "Everything was transmitted orally."

When the French-Canadian literary movement began the traditional folktales were an important source for authors. Rose Latulippe, for instance, was given her name by Philippe Aubert de Gaspé in his *Le Chercheur de trésors*, an 1837 publication considered to be the first Quebec novel. Even now, authors such as Michel Tremblay call on the traditional sources for material, as in Tremblay's 1990 play, *La maison suspendue*. The house of the title is "suspended" from a rope let down by a ghostly canoe in the sky, a familiar motif in Peringer's stories.

These days Peringer is comfortable telling her tales in French, English, or a mixture of both, although "it takes longer to tell a story bilingually," she admits. She feels out each audience to decide on the correct proportions, "depending on how much French the kids have and their level of maturity. I try to make the flow from French to English as seamless as possible, so people don't care what language it's in...they just want to know what's going to happen!"

Four tapes of Marilyn Peringer's French and English storytelling are available by mail from Unit 13, 2 Withrow Avenue, Toronto, Ontario M4K 1C9 (416) 465-4327.■

A judgment for all seasons

*STEPHEN B. ACKER**

On March 4 of this year, just three months after hearing arguments, the Supreme Court of Canada handed down its decision in an important case involving French-language education in Manitoba.

The litigation began in 1986 when the Fédération provinciale des comités de parents (FPCP) took the government of Manitoba to court for failing to implement Section 23 of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms in the province, in particular for not allowing Francophone parents to manage their own schools. To expedite matters, the FPCP agreed to have the province's Attorney General refer certain constitutional questions directly to the Manitoba Court of Appeal.

In February 1990 that Court handed down its judgment, which generally went against the FPCP and its allies. On the central issue of management and control, all five of the judges who sat on the reference found that Section 23 of the Charter did not include the right of the minority to manage its schools. Chief Justice Alfred Monnin, however, did find such a right but grounded only on Section 15 of the Charter, the equality rights section.

The FPCP, which had been given party status by the Chief Justice, immediately appealed this decision to the Supreme Court of Canada. The appeal was held in abeyance, however, while negotiations proceeded between the province and Francophone groups, on the basis of the Supreme Court's landmark decision in Mahé *v.* Alberta. That decision, issued in March 1990, a mere month after the Manitoba Court had ruled, finally and conclusively recognized the right of minority language communities to manage their schools, subject only to the "numbers [of children] warrant" test.

Following the Mahé judgment, the province set up a task force headed by Edgar Gallant to consult with minority groups and other interested parties and to recommend a management structure in keeping with the guidelines set down by the Supreme Court. The task force issued its report in June 1991. It called for a single province-wide school board to manage all French first language (FL1) schools in the province. Since this governance model was in keeping with the wishes of the major Francophone organizations, it appeared at the time that there was no further need to pursue the appeal.

The province cannot design a system that ignores the wishes of the people it serves.

This optimism was short-lived. Based on information that many Francophone parents, primarily from rural communities, might oppose the notion of a province-wide board and prefer to remain within existing boards, the government announced its intention to allow these boards to continue to offer FL1 programs. In other words,

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Francophone parents could choose to send their children to schools run by the new board or remain with the status quo. A consultation and implementation group, to be headed by former Chief Justice Monnin, was asked to determine the wishes of Francophone parents and provide advice on setting up the new board. This change of policy angered the FPCP (and other Francophone groups), which quickly reactivated the Supreme Court appeal in the hope of frustrating the province's plan to permit two possibly competitive FL1 streams.

The appeal was heard by the Supreme Court on December 3, 1992. While the formal questions before the Court were the same as those referred to the Manitoba Court of Appeal, the central issue in dispute was whether the government could proceed with its two-stream plan or, as argued by the FPCP and others, whether the Francophone rights holders had the "exclusive" right to the governance of FL1 schools, leaving no role for existing majority-controlled school boards.

The Attorney General of Manitoba argued that this "extraneous" question was premature and bereft of the necessary factual basis for a judicial determination. Because the constitutional questions before the Court had been answered in Mahé, which had the effect of implicitly overturning the findings of the Manitoba Court of Appeal, the Attorney General contended that the appeal was moot. (Before the hearing of the appeal, the FPCP had turned down the Attorney General's offer to consent to a judgment based on the broad principles laid down in Mahé.) For its part, the FPCP asked the Court to issue far-reaching remedies making clear the exclusive nature of Francophone parents' Section 23 rights and enjoining the province from taking any steps that might infringe those rights.

The judgment, written by Chief Justice Lamer for a unanimous Court, was a small masterpiece of compromise and conciliation. (While technically an "advisory opinion" responding to questions referred to it, such answers are normally treated by governments and other litigants as binding pronouncements — hence the reference throughout this article to the Court's "judgment".)

The Court said flatly that the appeal was not moot. Mahé did not deal with the situation in Manitoba and the Manitoba Public Schools Act was still in force and susceptible to interpretation. Finally, the Court stated that the opinion of the Manitoba Court of Appeal was in conflict with the Court's judgment in Mahé and ought expressly to be overturned.

If community representatives do not co-operate with provincial authorities the latter may consult directly with parents.

Before answering the constitutional questions posed, the Court briefly discussed some of the principles of interpretation relevant to Section 23. In line with Mahé, the Court stated that "the general purpose of s.23 is to preserve and promote the two official languages of Canada, and their respective cultures, by ensuring that language flourishes, as far as possible, in provinces where it is not spoken by the majority of its inhabitants." Accordingly, minority language schools serve as "community centres" where the culture of the community can be expressed and preserved. The bundle of rights contained in Section 23 provides the community with a "sliding scale" of institutional arrangements to satisfy the cultural purpose of the section. The nature of these arrangements depends, in any given case, on what the "numbers warrant". Given the remedial nature of Section 23, however, and as Mahé determined, pedagogical considerations should outweigh financial ones in determining what arrangements are warranted by the number of students in a particular case.

In addition to endorsing a purposive and remedial approach to interpreting the rights in Section 23 the Court emphasized that "different interpretative approaches may well have to be taken in different jurisdictions, sensitive to the unique blend of linguistic dynamics that have developed in each province". Finally, harking back to the cautious note sounded in some pre-Mahé linguistic litigation, the Court emphasized the "fruit of political compromise" nature of language rights, stating that "while positive obligations were placed on governments to alter or develop major institutional structures, prudent interpretation of the section is wise." Thus holding aloft the twin and somewhat conflicting banners of "prudence" and "remediation", the Court moved on to tackle the questions posed in the reference.

The first question asked whether the right to have one's children receive instruction "in minority language facilities" included the right to instruction in a distinct physical setting. In line with the cultural purpose of Section 23 and the "sliding scale" analysis in Mahé, the Court concluded that there is a "general right to distinct physical setting(s) as an integral aspect of the provision of educational services." What would be required in any given geographic area would depend on the pedagogical and financial considerations in that area.

The second question was the familiar one of whether Sections 23 and 15 grant any right of management or control. The Court said this issue was largely disposed of in Mahé, although the issue of how much management and control was warranted in Manitoba remained to be determined. The Court said the degree of governance required was to be

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determined "by reference to both actual and potential numbers." The number put forward in evidence by the FPCP was 18,975, while that of the province was 5,617. According to the Court, even the lower number would fall on the high end of the sliding scale of entitlements. It therefore concluded that "in some areas of the province, at a minimum, these warrant the establishment of a separate Francophone school board." The Court then noted that the province had already committed to setting up a single province-wide board, "with the proviso that Francophone parents may choose to keep their children in existing *français* (French first language) programmes." Since a minority language school board was warranted by the numbers, the Court added that "[t]here is a positive obligation on the province to discharge that obligation, and it must, if it is to comply with its duties under the Charter, deliver the system without delay." This stern call for quick action appears to have been heard by the province, which has stated its intention to table its long-promised legislation in the current legislative term.

The final question, dealing with the deficiencies of Manitoba's Public Schools Act in the light of Section 23's right to governance, came closest to presenting the Court with an opportunity to pronounce itself on the government's proposed plan.

To the government's great relief, the Court, heeding its earlier invocation to caution, refused to rule on the constitutionality of the two-stream or opting-out proposal. Echoing its reluctance in Mahé to spell out legislative details best left to departments of education and legislatures, it said, "[t]his Court should be loath...to detail what legislation the Government of Manitoba *must* enact in order to meet its constitutional obligations." But the Court did not refrain from providing the province with some pointed guidelines to assist it in framing legislation consistent with the requirements of Section 23.

First of all, it stated that "[a] proper implementation will require the fullest understanding of the needs of the French-language minority. The participation of minority language parents or their representatives in the assessment of educational needs and the setting up of structures and services which best respond to them is most important."

Second, the Court emphasized the individual nature of Section 23 rights. "Their entitlement," it stated, "is not subject to the will of the minority group to which they belong, be it that of a majority of that group, but only to the 'numbers warrant' condition." As such, even if a minority of a given community wished to join the new Francophone school administration the province would have to accommodate that minority, assuming their numbers so warranted.

Third, there is an obligation on the province to actively offer the new educational services to "make them known and accessible to minority language parents so as to provide a quality of education on a basis which, in principle, is one of equality with the majority."

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the province is to avoid any "[a]rrangements and structures which are prejudicial, hamper, or simply are not responsive to the needs of the majority." Only "measures which encourage the development and use of minority language facilities should be considered and implemented." In a key sentence whose brevity and simplicity might well require further judicial interpretation, the Court attempted to put certain limits on the extent to which the province could institutionalize opting out. "For instance," the Court stated, "if the province chooses to allow minority language parents a choice of school for instruction in the minority language, this should not be at the expense of the services provided by a French-language school board or hamper this board in its ability to provide services on a basis of equality as described above."

Both parties saw the judgment as a victory.

While inferentially declaring in this statement that the new board could not have "exclusive" control over FL1 education, the Court seemed to be cautioning Manitoba that too much opting out, or making that option too attractive or too easy, would almost certainly hamper the efforts of the Francophone-controlled board to carry out its mission.

In explaining why the Court could not, in the context of a reference, invalidate or rewrite legislation, or otherwise grant far-reaching remedies, the Chief Justice commented on the conflicting principles that had led the Court to navigate carefully between the positions taken by the parties. "This case reveals," he wrote, "the tension between the remedial aspect of Section 23 and the need to avoid interfering in legislative discretion or implementation."

Both the province and the major Francophone associations in Manitoba saw the judgment as a victory for their respective positions. While the judgment clearly did not state that the proposed Francophone board should have "exclusive" control over all FL1 education in the province, it did, directly or implicitly, circumscribe the scope of FL1 teaching outside that board. The notion of parental choice has been preserved, but the province is to do all it can to favour the growth and vitality of the new Francophone administration. Moreover, unilateral action in the absence of real consultation with the community would offend the principles of Section 23.

Making good on its promise, the Province introduced a comprehensive bill on May 17, 1993 to create a French-language school division. While an intense period of consultation lies ahead, the long governance struggle in Manitoba appears headed for a happy conclusion. ■