Language AND SOCIETY

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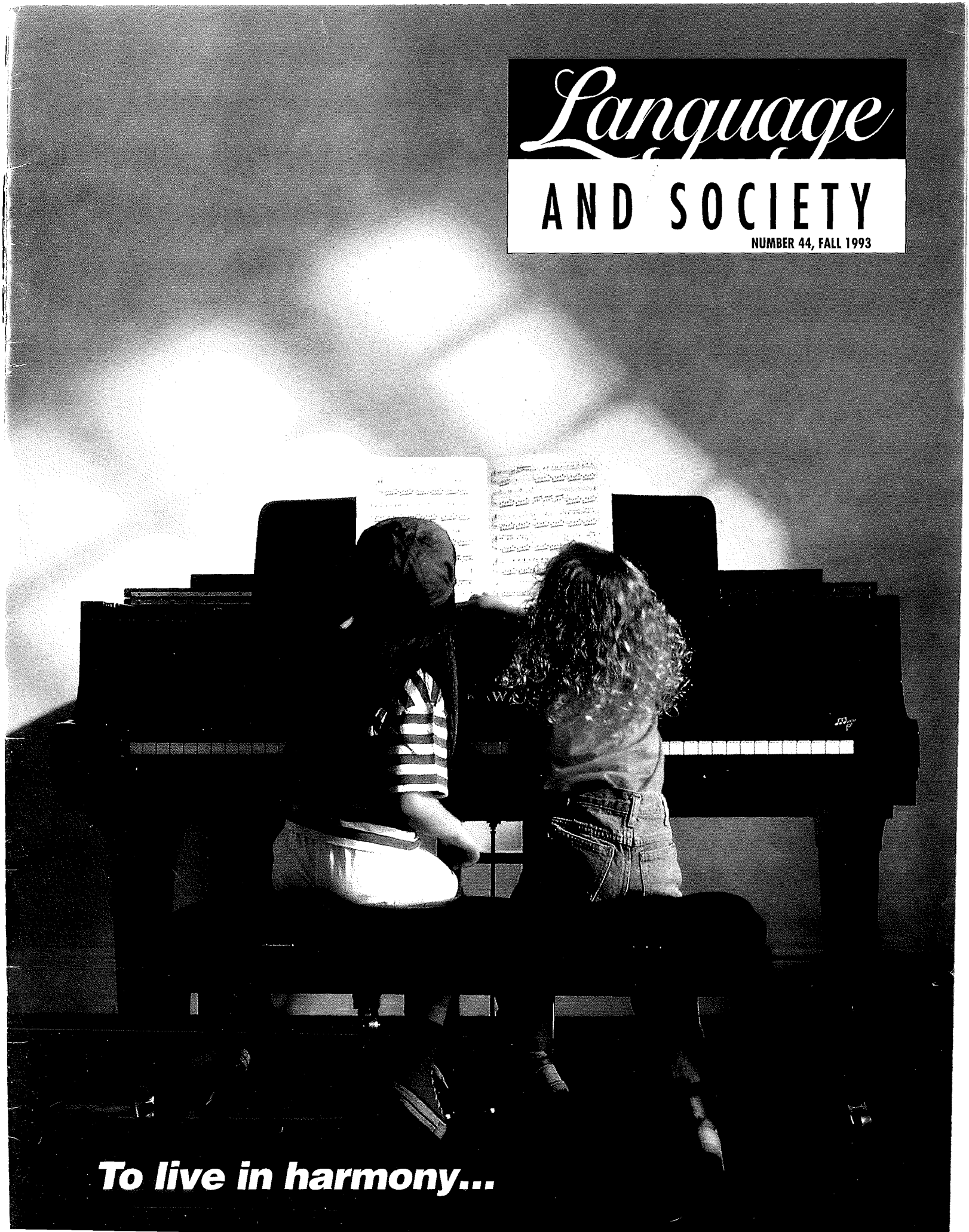

To live in harmony...

Language AND SOCIETY

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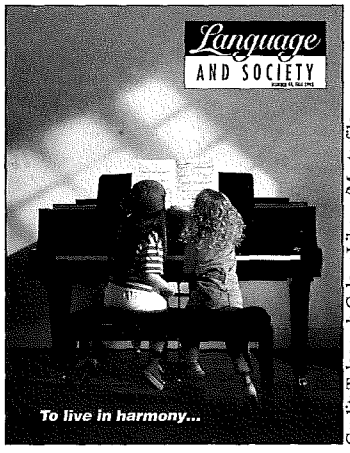

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COVER:

Harmony and a spirit of co-operation are born in us...

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.

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

THE LAW IS NOT AN ASS

Canadians want to be well served by their federal institutions; indeed, in a country like ours, that is a basic right.

Canadians want to be clearly and understandably informed by their federal institutions; that also is an undeniable right.

Canadians want to be clearly understood when they communicate with their federal institutions, whether they do so in person, by telephone or in writing, and they want to receive appropriate responses which confirm that they have gotten their message across.

Anything else, anything less, would be a denial of fundamental values and principles, an inappropriate exercise of responsibility on the part of those federal institutions, an unacceptable way to run this country.

Because most of us — some 19,000,000 English-speaking Canadians and some 4,000,000 French-speaking Canadians, according to the 1991 census — are unilingual, our federal institutions have to have some two-language capability. National offices, notably those in the National Capital area, have to be able to serve all Canadians. Elsewhere, two-language communication is provided only where numbers warrant, with federal regulations providing the criteria of measurement.

The law does not seek to make all Canadians bilingual; that would be unrealistic and unachievable. The law does not require the teaching of both languages; that is a provincial and indeed a school board decision. The law does not require all federal services to be bilingual, only those provided where concentrations of population make it sensible to do so. The law does not require all federal documents to be translated, only those in regular and widespread use.

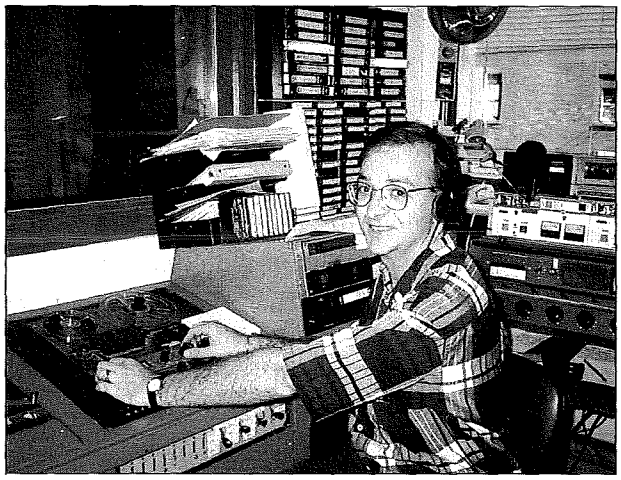
The law is reasonable. The law makes sense. Its only purpose is to ensure appropriate, understandable (and hopefully courteous and efficient) services to Canadian citizens. That surely is their fundamental, incontrovertible right.

Victor C. Goldbloom

ON THE SAME WAVE-LENGTH

*TOM SLOAN**

Marquis Bureau and Paul Rowsell do not know each other, live more than 2,000 kilometres apart and are highly unlikely ever to meet; and yet they have one important characteristic in common. They are both involved in a uniquely Canadian experiment, one designed to help shore up the country's official language minority populations in their struggle to survive and flourish. The experiment is now several years old, but it is recent in terms of Canadian history. It is minority official language community radio, organized by the unstinting efforts of the communities involved, with financial help from the federal and provincial governments.



Marquis Bureau of Radio Huronie in Penetanguishene, Ontario

Marquis Bureau teaches business administration in Barrie, Ontario, about 100 kilometres north of Toronto. He is vice president of CFRH, otherwise known as Radio Huronie, based in the nearby town of Penetanguishene and serving the French-speaking population of Simcoe County. Francophones account for about 1,500 of the town's population of 5,200, and about 10,000 of the county's population of 250,000.

Far to the north and east, Paul Rowsell is a former fisherman, now the owner of a general store in the tiny English-speaking village of Harrington Harbour on the lower north shore of the St. Lawrence River in overwhelmingly French-speaking Duplessis County. Harrington Harbour is one of a string of English-speaking villages stretching to the Labrador border, generally unconnected by roads and depending for communications on boat, airplane, telephone — and community radio. Rowsell is president of the board of CFTH.

The two communities are far apart and speak different languages, but they are faced with a common challenge: social and cultural survival. They have a common tool in the form of electronic communications designed to nourish their sense of collective identity.

They also have in common the problem of financing their stations, staffing them and finding appealing programming. Their solutions are often quite similar.

In Penetanguishene, Radio Huronie broadcasts about 32 hours a week. It has three part-time employees and 50 volunteers. Its signal can be picked up only in the vicinity of the town but for 90 minutes a day, using facilities provided by the French network of the CBC, it can reach out to the whole county. About two-thirds of its programming is music — mainly country and folk music. It also broadcasts a wide spectrum of local news and other information of special interest to Franco-Ontarians, including a regular review of the French-language press and educational issues. Its annual budget is about $100,000, of which $25,000 comes in the form of a provincial government grant, for which it must apply each year. The rest comes from individual memberships, bingos, radiothons and commercials — mainly from Francophone businesses, but also from Anglophones anxious to tap into the French-speaking market.

In Harrington Harbour, with its population of less than 400, commercials play a minimal role in financing the operation. A provincial grant of $30,000 is a crucial element in the annual budget of a little more than $100,000. As with Radio Huronie, bingos, radiothons and membership drives are important. There is also a particularly local institution that comes into play. The station hosts its own "Lower North Shore Suppers", enabling residents to get together and to contribute to the operation at the same time. In addition to the musical staples of country and Newfoundland styles, CFTH, with two full-time staff, offers a diet of local information from newsrooms and

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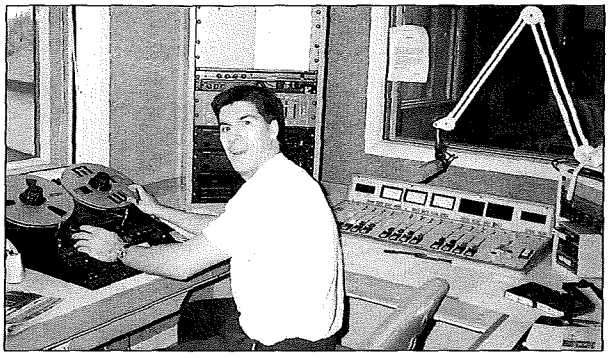
*** Tom Sloan is a frequent contributor to *Language and Society*.**



Francis Saulnier of Radio-Péninsule at Pokemouche, New Brunswick

neighbouring villages. While its two transmitters can regularly reach a population of 2,000 in five communities, for a few hours each day it links up with Quebec's only other English community station, at Saint Augustin near the Labrador border, to provide expanded coverage to the entire region. Wilson Evans, president of the Coasters Association, which represents English-speaking villagers, looks forward to the day when there will be a network linking 15 villages along the north shore, some 500 kilometres from Labrador to the village of Kegashka in the west.

Both in south-central Ontario and in northeastern Quebec the sense of accomplishment is palpable. With eight years behind it, including five actually on the air, Radio Huronie is one of the oldest French-language community stations and is seen as a valued institution to a community that looks back on a long history. "You can't be a Franco-Ontarian without being an optimist," says Marquis Bureau, who looks forward to a successful future. In Quebec, Wilson Evans sees the six years of Harrington as a good harbinger for the whole region. "We're operating on a fine line financially, but if we can just keep ahead we're here to stay."

Harrington and Penetang are just two examples of what is gradually becoming a nation-wide phenomenon, especially in areas where vibrant minority communities are active. Major credit for acting as catalyst for recent progress must go to the Fédération de la jeunesse canadienne-française which, for at least a decade, has been investigating the possibilities, encouraging the movement to take wing, and pressing governments for financial aid. It was at least partially in response to this campaign that in 1987 the federal government, through the Secretary of State, launched a five-year $5.6 million program to help minority official language stations to start operations. As a result, 18 French- and two English-language community stations are now on the air and another dozen are in the works.

So far, not surprisingly, New Brunswick has been the most active single centre of activity, with the largest operation being Radio-Péninsule, which serves the predominantly French-speaking population of the northeastern part of the province; but other operations, admittedly more precarious, have been springing up in several other provinces and in the Northwest Territories.

Where does community radio go from here? The federal financial aid program is winding down. Even at its height it had strictly limited objectives. The government helped provide for the capital costs of construction but explicitly ruled out any idea of dependence on federal funding for operating expenses. Even so, the initial financial help was crucial. A 1992 report to the Secretary of State from a Quebec consulting firm, Médiaherz, strongly suggested that there is still room for substantial government involvement in helping future projects.

There is special need in western Canada, where the situation of Francophone minorities is often precarious and where improvement in communications among and within the minority communities is seen by them as essential. French-language CBC makes an important contribution, but it cannot do much to encourage a local sense of identity. Where community radio has taken hold, the evidence suggests that this sense of identity has been solidified and, at the same time, the struggle against assimilation has been strengthened.

ARC Canada Alliance des radios communautaires

24 MEMBER STATIONS

NORTHWEST TERRITORIES
Radio Yellowknife
Radio Iqaluit

ALBERTA
Radio Falher-Rivière-la-Paix

MANITOBA
Radio communautaire du Manitoba Inc.

ONTARIO
Radio communautaire Cornwall-Alexandria
Radio de l'Épinette Noire Inc.
Radio Communautaire KapNord Inc.
Radio Huronie FM communautaire Inc.
Coopérative radiophonique de Toronto
Radio Prescott-Russell

NEWFOUNDLAND
Radio Labrador

NOVA SCOTIA
Radio Chéticamp
Radio Clare

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND
Radio Évangéline

NEW BRUNSWICK
Radio Beauséjour Inc.
Coopérative Radio Restigouche Ltée
Radio Coop. des Montagnes Ltée-Edmundston
Radio Coop. des Montagnes Ltée-Grand-Sault
Radio des Hauts Plateaux
Radio Miracadie
Radio Fredericton Inc.
RadioPéninsule Inc.
Société Radio Chaleur Inc.
Radio CKUM-FM

⇨

While for many years it was the Fédération that provided the initiative for French-language community radio, there was clearly a place for a more specifically focused organization. This gap was filled in 1991 with the creation of the Alliance des radios communautaires du Canada. The Alliance, whose aim is to co-ordinate the activities of Francophone and Acadian community radio operations to ensure the autonomy and the progress of the whole movement, has its headquarters in Ottawa. It has a membership of 24 operating and soon-to-be-operating community stations across the country.

Its founding president was Emile Hacault, a St. Boniface, Manitoba, teacher and president of the St. Boniface station when it took to the air two years ago. To him, one of the essential contributions of the whole community radio movement has been as a psychological boost. "Our minority communities have started taking their destinies in their own hands; they aren't as dependent as they were on constant government subsidies." Nevertheless, he believes that there should be continuing availability of funding to help stations to get started. "They are an extremely valuable tool, among other things, for encouraging good language usage."

Alliance secretary-general Rina Thériault notes in Ottawa that in 1992 the organization put forward a proposal for continuing financing over the next few years, including some help in the field of operating costs. "You can't expect a station to go on the air and to start to totally finance itself immediately," she warns. Certainly, however, "They must become self-dependent as quickly as possible."

Thériault is enthusiastic about the results so far. Community radio "is a major instrument for maintaining French language and culture outside Quebec." However, she insists, "The job is just half done. We have to finish it." ■

British Columbia's FRANCOPHONES

*SYLVAIN TELLIER**

LINGUISTIC PROFILE

British Columbia has experienced a sustained growth of its French-speaking population. In 1991 the number of Francophones reached 58,680; with an annual growth rate of 2%, it now exceeds 60,000.

These figures look encouraging, but it is also in British Columbia that we find the highest assimilation rate in the country — around 75%. According to the 1991 census, 25% of Francophones use their mother tongue at home, a figure which includes those reporting more than one mother tongue; the national average is much higher. This phenomenon is attributable to the geographic dispersal of the population, the distance that separates Franco-Columbians from the major Francophone currents in Central and Eastern Canada and to the highest rate of exogamous marriages in the country (between 59% and 71%, depending on age group).

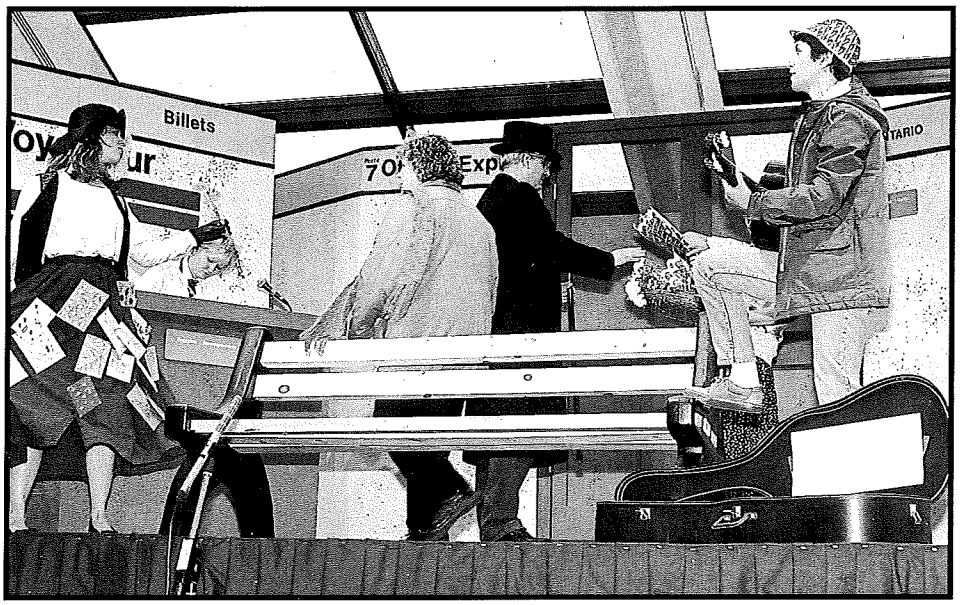
Language and institutions

The federal government plays an important role in preserving French life on the West Coast by supporting Francophone institutions and providing services in French. However, as affirmed by the Commissioner of Official Languages, the Official Languages Act has not been applied with as much vigour as might be desired.

The Commissioner's regional office noted a slight increase in complaints in British Columbia between 1991 ar 1992. The departments, agencies Crown corporations most often ide fied are Canada Post, Employment a Immigration (unemployment insur ance), the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, Consumer and Corporate Affairs, Revenue Canada (Taxation), the national parks and Air Canada, a former Crown corporation that is still subject to the Act. "In British Columbia, departments and Crown corporations are a little slow to understand and respond to the Act," says Deni Lorieau, head of the regional office, "because of a lack of information and awareness." The past year, however, has seen efforts to rectify matters "through the issuance of reminders."

British Columbia has the fifth largest Francophone linguistic group in Canada.

* Sylvain Tellier is a communications adviser for PRIN International in Vancouver and co-author of a study on British Columbian Francophone culture and its integration into the curriculum of the province's French schools.



walk-on parts with one or two lines 12 people could play all the roles.

Webber, who performed in both productions, found the comedy as enjoyable an experience as the drama, mainly because of Olsen. Although she has no theatre experience, Olsen combines enthusiasm with teaching ability. Webber says, "Jenifer is just an excellent director. She keeps us going, keeps us working, keeps our interest up and gives us the shots when we need them, but no matter how bad we were, and we were bad at times, she always gave us encouragement."

Selecting *La Déprime*, a play containing popular French dialogue, had some unexpected benefits, according to writer Marianne Spaull. "We all agreed that it definitely made it easier to understand the people on the elevators because they tend to use a lot of expressions you don't learn in language training."

Like others in the production, Spaull found the experience much more rewarding than regular classes.

"At the end you really do have a sense of having accomplished something. You're doing something a little more visible."

By the time the cast gave the last of its two matinee and two evening shows in May over 600 people had seen the play and had given the cast standing ovations. Statistics Canada officially recognized the value of the project by awarding Olsen a merit award given out each year for the originality of a project and the impact it has.

For 1994 Olsen hopes to present another comedy. If enough other government departments and agencies copy the idea, Olsen says, "Maybe, one day we'll have festivals between the departments." The enthusiastic response of the participants and the many cast members who plan to return for another year confirm the success of learning French through theatre. ■

Putting on a production is a lot of hard work for both the cast and the director.

SERVICES FOR CANADIAN FORCES FAMILIES

*GILLES LAFRAMBOISE**

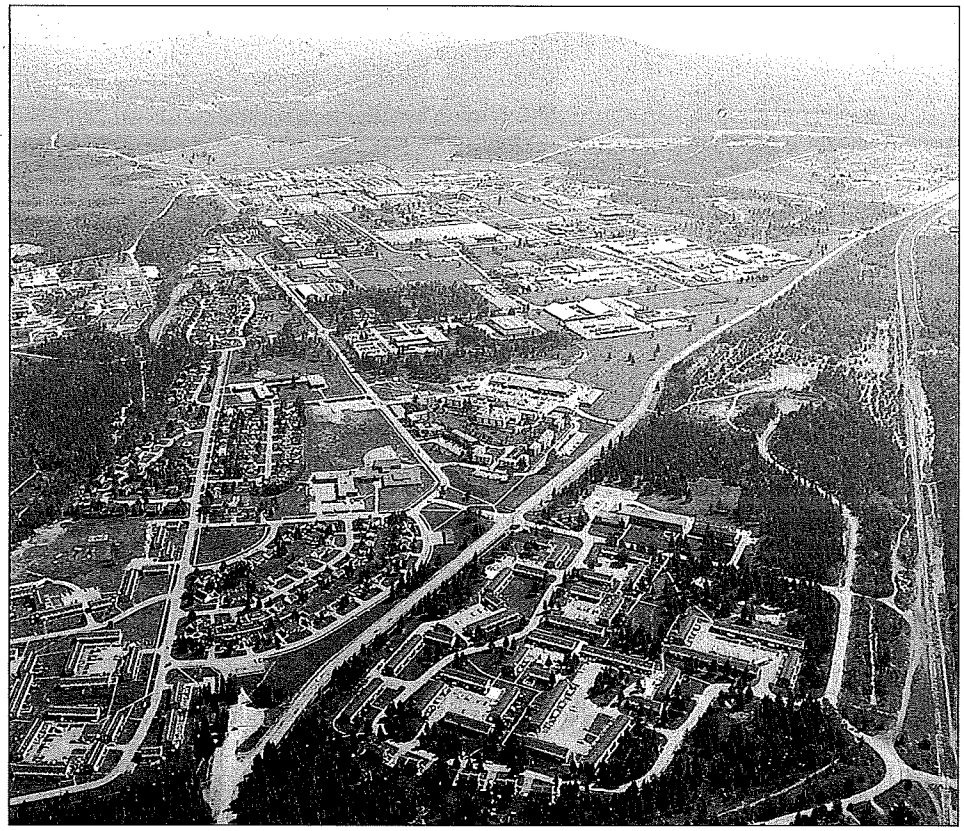
The Department of National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces accord the same language rights to the families of service members as they do to the men and women who are in uniform.

In regions designated bilingual, this, of course, ensures bilingual services for their spouses and children. If the family has to consult a social worker, for example, the Armed Forces are committed to providing this service in the language of choice at a bilingual base.

If the same family suddenly finds itself at a base designated unilingual, it loses this right. It can rely only on the good will of base commanders to obtain certain services in the language of its choice.

CFB Valcartier near Quebec, for example, is designated unilingual French. There are approximately 4,600 Regular Force members at the Base, some 10% of whom list English as their mother tongue. According to a study carried out in the spring by the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages, the bilingual capacity of the great majority of services is very good, but bilingual documents are rare and the Base newspaper at Valcartier is unilingual French.

If the wife of an English-speaking service member wished to obtain an English version of the procedure to follow in case of fire, for example, she would have to rely on the good will of the military authorities. Her "right" to an English document is not recognized by the Armed Forces because her husband is posted to a unilingual French base.



Canadian Forces Base at Valcartier

The families of French-speaking service members experience similar treatment at unilingual English bases, the Office of the Commissioner reports. At Esquimalt, British Columbia, the Maritime Command Base is unilingual English. It has some 3,000 members, 14% of whom have French as their first official language.

Francophone families may have access to some services in French, but social services, day-care services, the library, the community centre, the base newspaper and the base exchange

* Gilles Laframboise is a freelance journalist.

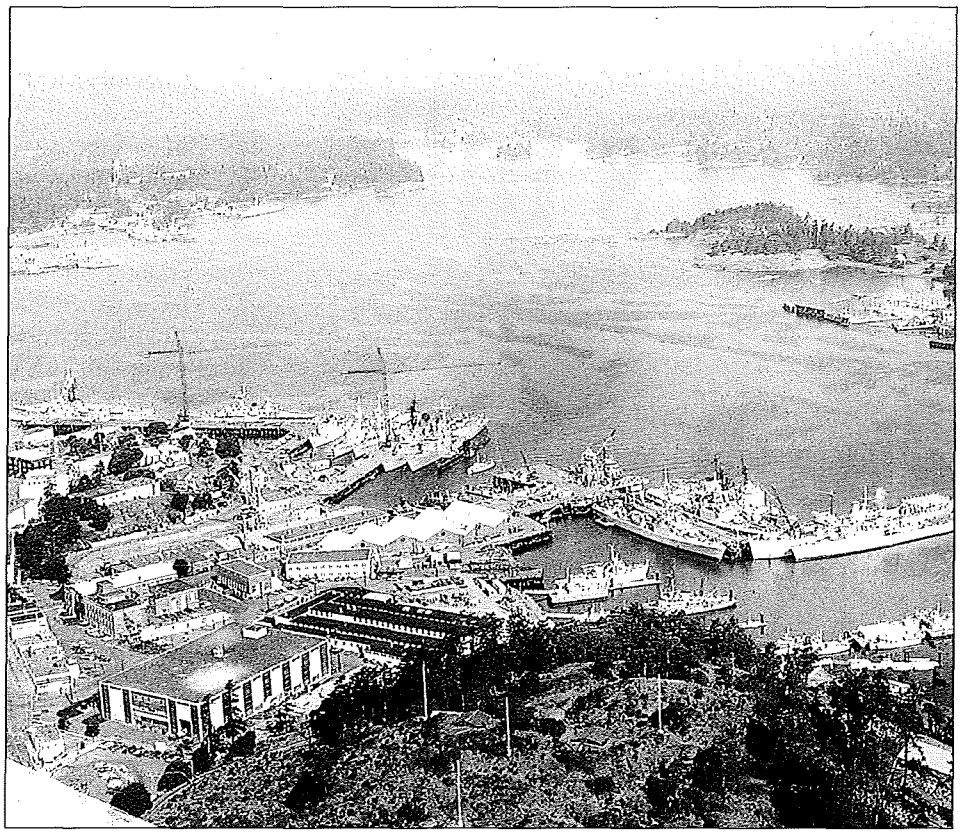
provide service in English only, according to the Office's investigation.

A moral obligation

The Director of Official Languages for the Department of National Defence, Jacques Magny, confirms that the Department and the Armed Forces "do not recognize a legal obligation, but rather a moral obligation, to provide bilingual services to the families of service members."

In a recent interview with *Language and Society* Magny pointed out that the families are regarded as members of the general public. It follows that, regardless of their number or percentage at a unilingual (English or French) base, these families cannot take advantage of the rights accorded to employees of the Armed Forces; that is, they must forego bilingual services at a unilingual base.

This does not mean that bases designated unilingual provide no bilingual services, according to Jacques Magny. "In fact," he remarks, "we feel that we still have a moral obligation towards the family."



Canadian Forces Base at Esquimalt

"While it is not the primary mission of the Armed Forces to provide services to the families of service members, we nevertheless recognize that these families are placed in a very special situation."

Accordingly, each base tries to do what it can when it comes to serving the members of a family belonging to the official language minority. "When we have to hire civilians at a base in the West," Magny explains, "we make an effort to find bilingual civilians, but we cannot make that a requirement."

He adds that "while it is not the primary mission of the Armed Forces to provide services to the families of service members, we nevertheless recognize that these families are placed in a very special situation."

To broaden the range of services available in both languages the Department of National Defence plans to exploit new technology. "Even if we were obliged to make all our services bilingual, we could not do so because of our limited resources," Magny says, "so it is worthwhile to see how we can use the new technologies to go forward."

He gives as an example a centralized information service that would be accessible everywhere in Canada and would not be too expensive to use. The family of a French-speaking service member in British Columbia, for example, might dial a toll-free number in that province to obtain information from a clerk who would answer from CFB Valcartier.

A different approach

For its part, the Office of the Commissioner hopes that the problem is not solved in this way, on a piecemeal basis, one unit at a time. At the conclusion of the language audit conducted this year it was recommended that the Department of National Defence and the Armed Forces recast their official languages policy so as to consider services provided to family members as services provided to the public.

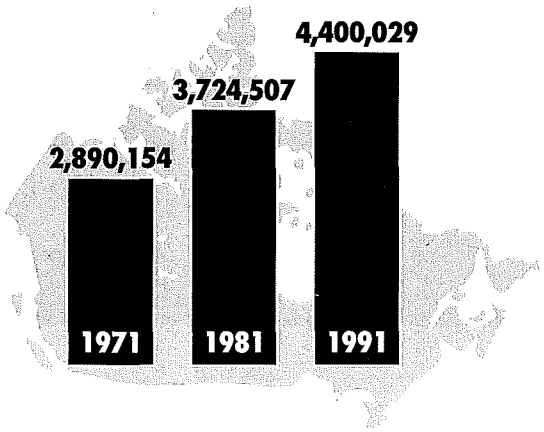
Families would then be able to take advantage of real rights instead of making do with arbitrary treatment that differs in various parts of the country. ■

(Our translation)

Let's talk

*CARL COSMAN**

ENGLISH-FRENCH BILINGUALISM IN CANADA



The bilingual nature of Canada depends not only on the presence of Anglophones and Francophones in the country, but on the ability of our citizens to talk to one another and to work together.

Although Canada's language policy is essentially about providing federal government services in the appropriate language, more and more Canadians have come to value the benefits of knowing a second language. Today, in all sectors of society, Canadians are more able to communicate with each other, regardless of their language background.

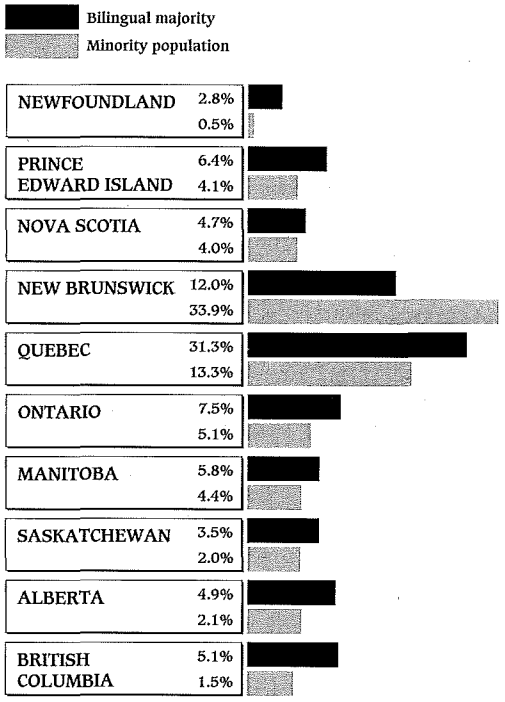
While some would argue that the growth of the percentage of bilinguals throughout the country over the past 20 years has been slow, the actual numbers are quite impressive. The number of bilinguals in Canada increased by about 50% from 1971 to 1991.

The rate of bilingualism is growing in most provinces and in the territories; a relatively small decrease of 0.3% in bilingualism in Ontario can be explained by high immigration during the period 1986-1991.

Understandably, the Francophone communities across the country are the most bilingual. Nova Scotia Francophones have the highest rate, 91.6% having a knowledge of both English and French. In Quebec 31.3% of Francophones are bilingual. Just under 40% of the Francophone population in Canada is bilingual.

Quebec English-speakers are the most bilingual of Canadian Anglophones, at 58.4%. Outside Quebec the Anglophone community in New Brunswick is the most bilingual

BILINGUALISM OF THE MAJORITY COMPARED TO THE SIZE OF THE MINORITY POPULATION



Note: All statistics courtesy Statistics Canada.

*** Carl Cosman is an analyst/research officer in OCOL's Policy Branch.**

at 12% and just over 8% of the Anglophone population of Canada is bilingual.

In all provinces except New Brunswick the bilingual *majority* population outnumbers the total minority population.

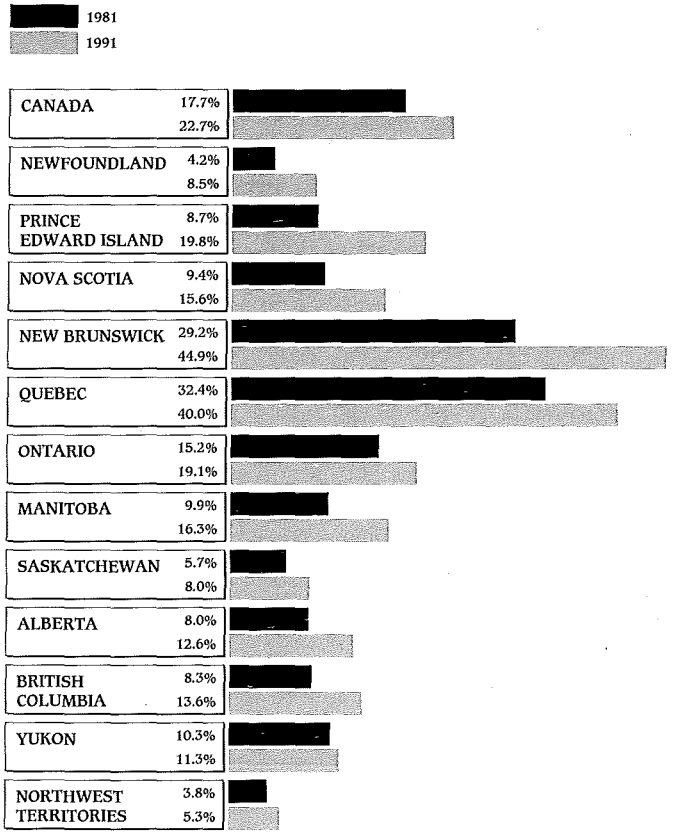
More and more of Canada's youth are embracing the idea of learning a second language. The numbers speak for themselves.

Over the last decade the rate of bilingualism among teenagers (15-19 year-olds) remained stable or rose in all provinces and territories. In every case there was a significant increase in the absolute numbers. In Newfoundland and Prince Edward Island the increase was more than 100%. Among young adults (20-24 year-olds) the rate remained stable or increased for all provinces over the same 10-year period, except in Alberta and the two territories.

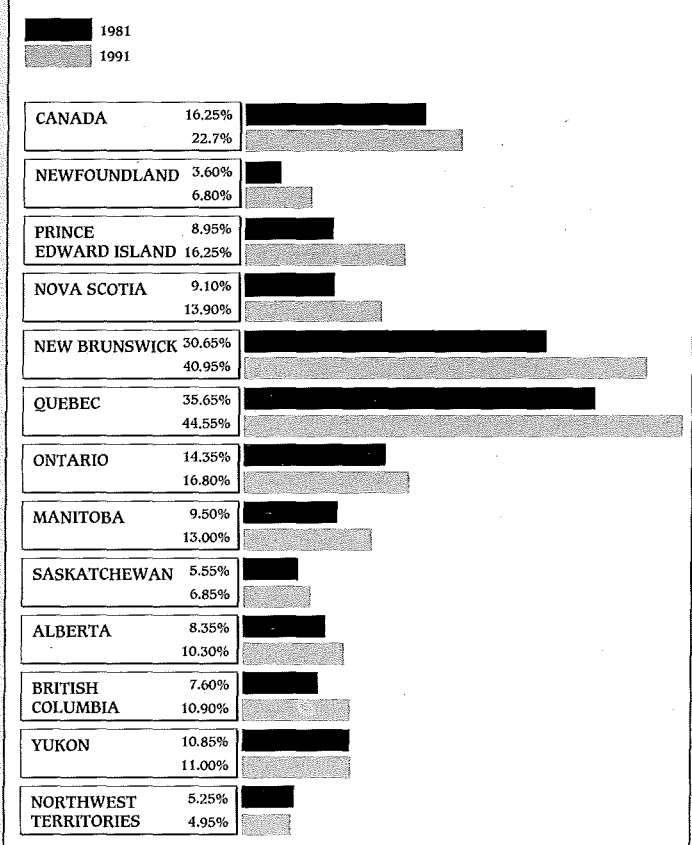
Overall, the growth in the number of bilingual youth over the last 10 years is impressive. What motivates these young people? Some learn English or French to improve their marketability in an increasingly international workforce, while others learn just for the joy of exploring another culture. Some feel it improves their ability to understand, serve and unify Canada. Whatever the reason, the fact remains that Canada's younger generation continues to see the benefits of learning a second language.

While few would contend that a knowledge of both our official languages is a panacea, being able to talk to our neighbours certainly breaks down barriers and helps foster greater understanding. ■

PERCENTAGE OF BILINGUAL TEENAGERS, 1981 AND 1991



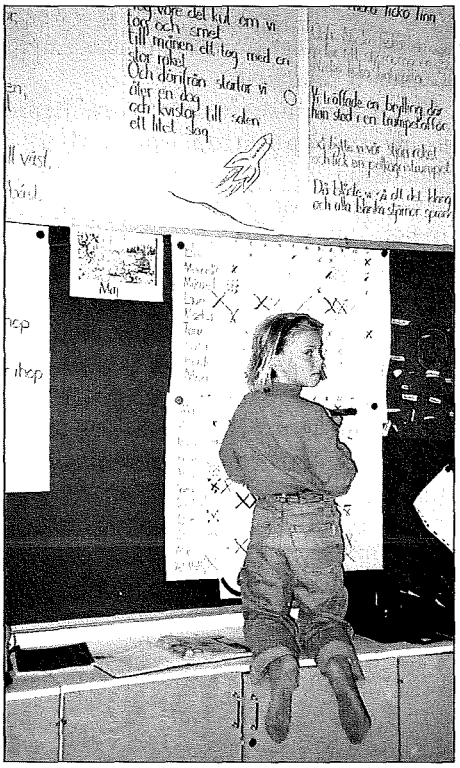
BILINGUALISM OF CANADIAN YOUTH (15-24 YEAR-OLDS), 1981 AND 1991



CANADIAN IMMERSION:

Alive and well and working in Finland

*KATHRYN MANZER**



Jaana Jakobsén's grade one immersion class

Vaasa is a lively, attractive city of 53,000 people on the west coast of Finland. It is located at the narrowest point on the Gulf of Bothnia, the body of water which divides Finland and Sweden. This makes the city an important link between the two countries and explains in part why, with Swedish substituted for French as the immersion language, Vaasa has become a hotbed of Canadian immersion.

It is not surprising that Finland should have looked to Canada for language-teaching models. The two countries have as much in common in their national language policies as they do in their winter weather. Although Finland's 300,000 native Swedish speakers amount to only 6.4% of the country's five million inhabitants, Finnish and Swedish have equal status as Finland's official languages. Public services are offered in Finnish and Swedish in areas where the Swedish minority accounts for at least 8% of the population. When more than a given number of students speak the minority language an education in that language is guaranteed to them. All Finnish-speaking children in "regular" school programs begin to learn Swedish at 13 or younger.

Nor is it surprising that it was a research group from the University of Vaasa who imported Canadian immersion. Finland's Swedish-speaking population is concentrated in urban areas and in communities along the west coast. Vaasa, positioned at the edge of an archipelago so crowded with islands that one can almost walk to Sweden, has, at 27%, a much larger proportion of Swedish speakers than does the country as a whole.

Immersion began in Vaasa in 1987 and followed the most successful and popular of the Canadian models: Finnish-speaking children begin total immersion in Swedish in kindergarten at six years old.

Entering an immersion classroom in Vaasa is so much like visiting a Canadian immersion class that it is a continuing surprise to see Swedish rather than French on blackboards and at seat work. The teachers exude energy and enthusiasm and the classrooms have a feeling of vitality. Walls are vividly adorned with the children's projects — bright blue puppets in one classroom, a multi-coloured dragon in another — and the atmosphere is busy, productive and friendly.

The University of Vaasa Continuing Education Centre has primary responsibility for training Finland's immersion teachers. Training involves a one-and-a-half-year course on first- and second-language acquisition, immersion methodology and orientation to bilingualism and a bilingual society. Short courses on specific aspects of immersion teaching are also offered.

Twice a year the continuing Education Centre presents a two-day international seminar on immersion issues. Canadians have been peripherally involved in teacher training in Finland both as resource people at these semi-annual seminars and as individual mentors. In 1990 Vaasa immersion teacher Marita Heikkinen spent 10 days in Ottawa visiting immersion classrooms and talking to teachers and administrators under the guidance of now-retired Carleton School Board principal Spencer Stanutz. Marita observed the variety of programs (partial, early, late), schools (immersion centres and dual-track schools) and age groups that the Board offers. She returned to Vaasa with new insights and ideas; her only disappointment was the lack of time to share her Canadian experiences and observations fully with colleagues.

The lead immersion classes in Vaasa, like those in Canada, have been the subjects of extensive research. When Vaasa's

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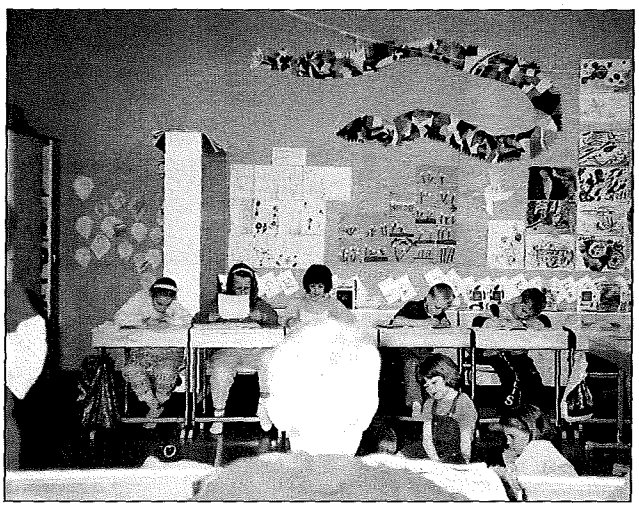
*** Kathryn Manzer is Immediate Past President of Canadian Parents for French. She participated in a two-day immersion seminar in Vaasa, Finland, in May 1993.**

lead class was taken on an outing to the theatre one little girl looked around with interest when spotlights came on at the beginning of the production. "Oh!" she said, "The researchers are here, too!"

There are Canadian connections to many of the immersion studies undertaken by University of Vaasa Professor Christer Laurén's research group. Researcher Siv Björklund did not find even the temporary learning lag behind other students identified by Canadian researchers.

Researcher Riitta Gustavsson has patterned her work on that of Canadian researchers Sandra Weber and Claudette Tardif, using the Canadians' "shy four-year-old puppet who doesn't understand the immersion language" to test six-year-olds' second-language listening and speaking skills. The puppet solicits advice from the children on understanding and speaking Swedish.

Student researcher Hanna Pensas has written her undergraduate thesis on attitudes towards immersion in Finland's press from 1986 to 1992. Her research was based solely on letters to the editor in national and regional newspapers, in which she found an interesting pattern. The introduction of immersion and every expansion thereafter generated negative letters which, in turn, inspired pro-immersion responses. The negative letters disappeared between program expansions. The exchange of letters included frequent contributions from a small anti-bilingualism group. Many of their pronouncements would sound familiar to Canadians: "This is a new way to make Finnish-speaking children Swedish" and "Why prevent Finnish children from learning their own beautiful language?"



Britt Kaskela-Nortamo's grade two immersion class

It is uncommon in Finland for parents to be actively involved in their children's schooling, but parents have played an important part in the development of immersion in Vaasa. They, as well as researchers and teachers, have been in contact with Canadian Parents for French since the very early days of Finnish immersion and have benefited from the Vaasa researchers' organizational membership in CPF. The CPF influence is apparent in brochures and other information as well as in Vaasa's emphasis on parental involvement.

Vaasa parents have used CPF local groups as models in forming their own association but have modified the Canadian example to meet their own circumstances. The Vaasa Immersion Society has a slightly different membership base — the group has a larger proportion of education and researchers among its active members — and its immersion-only mandate is less inclusive, but its members' objectives for their children and their commitment to achieving those objectives are very much in accord with those of CPF members.

The Vaasa Immersion Society spring picnic was reminiscent of CPF outings: a cottage, a lake, ball hockey, food (Finnish sausages are better than Canadian hot dogs!) and lots of immersion children and their pre-immersion siblings. The happy confusion was interrupted for an hour of immersion questions and answers in the large lounge area of the cottage. Questions about Canada were interesting and varied: What is the distribution of English and French in Canada? How do you choose the best location for an immersion program? The program here is doing so well, but what traps lie ahead? What are the advantages of forming a national organization?

Immersion Parents Panel at Vaasa seminar. Left to right : Elsa Kangas, Esbo; Tuula Huhta, Kokkola; Pekka Nyman, Vaasa; Eeva-Kaarina Aaltonen, Pietarsaari; Pirkko Nuolijärvi, Helsinki.

This last question is one which Vaasa parents have been considering very seriously. For three years Vaasa was the only city in Finland with immersion but Helsinki and three of its satellite cities have introduced programs since 1990, as have Turku and two coastal towns north of Vaasa. The final session of this spring's two-day seminar was a panel discussion on "The Role of Parents in Immersion", with parents from five immersion communities as panelists. The discussion dealt with the general need for parental support for teachers and with community-specific concerns and initiatives, but circled back repeatedly to the possibility of forming a national organization. Opinions ranged from the tentatively supportive to the very enthusiastic and there was general agreement that a meeting should be held within the next few months to pursue the subject.

Canadian immersion has been valuable and successful in the Finnish context. It would also be gratifying to export to Finland the Canadian concept and framework of a national parents's organization to support the immersion venture. ■

BABEL REVISITED

It may be too late to apply modern management techniques to solving the language problems encountered at the Tower of Babel, though we are given to believe that some organizations wouldn't balk at the prospect. This, at least, is what may be surmised from the results of a fax poll conducted last March by the magazine *Communication World*, published in San Francisco by the International Association of Business Communicators. Findings indicate that major organizations worldwide are designing their communications activities to meet the needs of a multilingual environment.

Though pollsters recognize their study is not scientific in nature, they nonetheless make some enlightening observations which relate strongly to a major trend of our time, namely globalization. Briefly stated, of the 34 organizations consulted (21 of which have headquarters in the United States, seven in Canada and one each in Denmark, France, Japan, Mexico, Spain and South Africa), over the past year 64% had used the services of translators or interpreters and 12% had purchased translation or interpretation software. Half the respondents stated that their organization had adapted its documents to accommodate the use of more than one language over the previous year and others had done so previously. Over half the organizations provided language training to their staff. Thirty-nine per cent provided English-language training and 33% offered French classes. Language training was also provided in

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Spanish (27%), German (15%), Danish (6%), Italian (6%), Japanese (6%), Chinese (3%), Dutch (3%) and Portuguese (3%). Seventy-nine per cent of respondents confirmed that English was the most frequently used language at headquarters and 27% stated that French was also used, followed by the other languages mentioned. For external communications, 24% of organizations used two languages other than those commonly spoken at headquarters. Astoundingly, just as many stated they used over five other languages in their external communications.

A need to manage communications functions had caused over a third of the organizations to designate one or more languages as official, either English or English and one or more other languages. A majority of organizations taking this direction recognized a second official language in addition to English. This is the case of the seven organizations headquartered in Canada and of the South African organization. The other organizations used English as an official language, although the concept of an official language was given various definitions. Far more organizations developed style and design guides than recognized official languages.

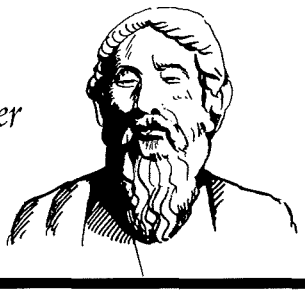
In a similar vein, the Commissioner of Official Languages dealt with the correlation between competitiveness and language proficiency in Part II of his 1992 Annual Report. The Report highlighted initiatives underway in Europe, Australia and Japan, among other areas, to make the linguistic content of school curricula one of the underpinnings of successful business and demonstrated that conditions were particularly favourable to similar initiatives in Canada. The Commissioner supported statements made by the Steering Group on Prosperity, for whom the language and cultural content of school curricula is critical to economic prosperity. ■

The write stuff

*ROSEANN RUNTE**

In *The Songlines* Bruce Chatwin explains that the Aboriginal populations of Australia sing their universe into existence.[1] Each hill, each outcropping of rock has its name and its own story. Language and landscape are one. Culture, oral literature and tradition reside simultaneously in the song, the word, and are inscribed in the geographic features of the countryside and in the memory and hearts of the people.

When Rousseau recounted the coming-to-life of the sculpture Pygmalion, he described simultaneously the birth of language and human identity, the distinction between Self and Other.[2] The discovery of self was an oral venture, and the ego (I) was the first to bear a name. Language and identity are in this vision inseparable and interdependent, the self requiring a name to distinguish or confirm its identity. Gide, in his *Symphonie pastorale*, describes colour to a blind person by evoking a symphony.[3] Similarly, language can be described as a series of words or notes. The literary text can be a concerto or a rock opera.


Homer

In France there is a place called Vimy Ridge. It is a First World War battle site where many brave Canadian soldiers lost their lives. "Vimy Ridge" evokes the entire history of a war and of a generation. The word has a significance much greater than the simple site would evoke today in someone who has no knowledge of history.

Language is much more than words. It is meaning. It is a reflection of our heritage, traditions and scientific knowledge, of our sentiments and our souls,

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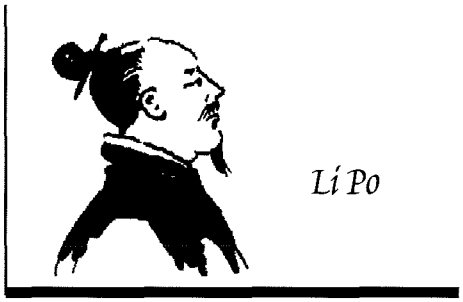
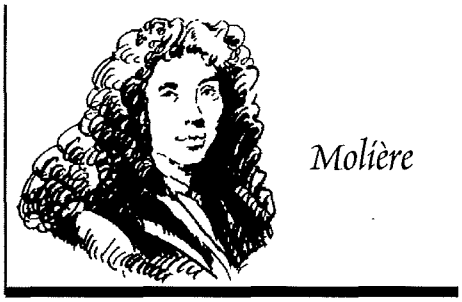
* **Roseann Runte is Principal of Glendon College of York University, Toronto.**



Lí Po

our culture. Already in the eighteenth century, the *Encyclopédie* defined language as the totality of all national customs and usages employed to express thought and communicate ideas.[4] It is impossible to separate language from culture, just as it is impossible to separate grammar from language.

I feel the same way about divorcing literature from language. Alfred North Whitehead said, "It is in literature that the concrete outlook of the humanities receives its expression."[5] Language exists, it *is* to be spoken, sung and heard. It is to be written and read. It is newspaper texts and novels. Language is nursery rhymes and poetry. It is all of these forms of expression, and without them our lives are impoverished. Voltaire said that the greatest accomplishments of civilization are its artistic creations.



Molière

Like Shelley's Ozymandias, our great constructions will eventually return to dust, but our words will live on in the minds of generations to come, at least occasionally! We all recall Abraham Lincoln, who wrote his famous Gettysburg Address on a brown paper wrapper on the train, stating an innocent untruth: "The world will little note, nor long remember, what we say here." Words can last a long, long time indeed!

In another text, *In Patagonia*, Bruce Chatwin describes indigenous people in South America. They define the entire universe by their surroundings. Having no experience of any external life, they have developed an intricate language which one cannot learn unless one understands their logic and their legends.[6] By the same token, I recently spent a week in an Inuit camp. The Inuit have dozens of words for snow. These words describe not only the size and density of the crystals but refer also to specific events or ancient tales and wisdom for survival. I was reminded of people who still recall the hurricane of 1954 or the snowstorm of 1929. These experiences become part of the vocabulary against which all winds and all snowfall are measured. Our students should know literature not only to avoid answering the question, "How do you like Chateaubriand?" with "medium rare", but to offer them the richest possible linguistic experience.

Language is more than putting words together. It is a whole philosophy of life, a way of seeing the universe, of thinking.

Language is more than putting words together. It is a whole philosophy of life, a way of seeing the universe, of thinking. If we successfully possess this other way of seeing and thinking, then we have truly mastered a second language. This different *Weltanschauung* comes only from much reading of words in the second language and it becomes a skill which enables us to enter another's thought patterns. It allows us, for instance, to become consummate negotiators. We can see and understand how others think and comprehend their logic. In this fashion, we can conceive of more than one way to achieve our goals and to achieve understanding.

The Latin etymons of *livre* and *libre* are homonyms (*liber*), and knowledge is indeed, more than ever, freedom (liberty).

At a recent conference organized in French by American scholars on the question of the core curriculum, the by now over-debated issue of the canon, of what we should *really* be teaching, the European scholars averred that this issue does not exist in Europe.[7] They explained that, contrary to North American ways, Europeans are being educated for life, not for jobs, and that reading is part of their education and culture. Europeans will continue to read after completing their formal schooling, whereas North Americans will not. Possessors of a video culture, North Americans, they hinted, are allowing television to replace the printed word, a significant linguistic loss and an eventual handicap for individuals as well as for nations. The choice of

what our students read becomes critical, the French said, as our students may never read again after graduation. These sad comments infuriated me. I found them totally unjustified. I had splendid teachers who inspired me to read and to write. However, the remarks cited do rejoin the question under discussion. If we divorce reading from speaking, literature from language, will we indeed produce a nation of culturally deprived individuals? Our former students may be able to read a menu but not ever be capable of enjoying *Astérix* because of its literary and cultural references. Robert Maynard Hutchins, deploring the reluctance of colleges to train people to think, asked, "Are we educating our children for the wrong future?"[8] Since we will never know the future (until it is too late), I think the far better question is, "Are we truly educating our children?" For me, this signifies understanding literature and using language to enjoy the full gamut of cultural symphonies.

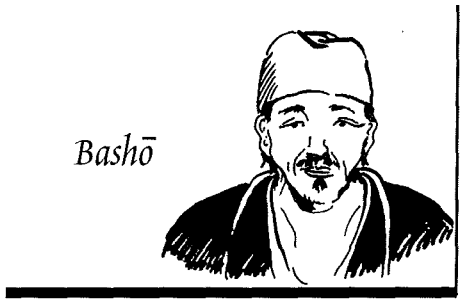
In the days when North America was divided into colonies, wealth was determined by the possession of land rich in natural resources which could be exported. Later, wealth and power were the domain of those who had access to and control over trade routes. Industrial centres sprang up along the paths between mines, rivers and ports, between the great forests of the West and the coast, between the grain fields and the rail centres. Chicago and Calgary grew up alongside the cattle yards and rail lines.

Today we are living in a post-industrial age and wealth and power belong to those who possess knowledge/information and the ability to communicate it. It matters little whether one lives in Toronto or Timbuctu, Vancouver or Pond Inlet. With computers, faxes and ever developing means of communication one's home can be one's office and one can choose to live anywhere. Yet, despite all this technological progress, there has been no sign that a universal language will develop. Indeed, languages remain firmly entrenched in the identity of peoples everywhere. Thus, there will always be a need for us to hone our linguistic skills, and with the proliferation of computing resources it is ever more evident that we can be part of the Information Age wherever we reside.

If we divorce reading from speaking, literature from language, will we indeed produce a nation of culturally deprived individuals?

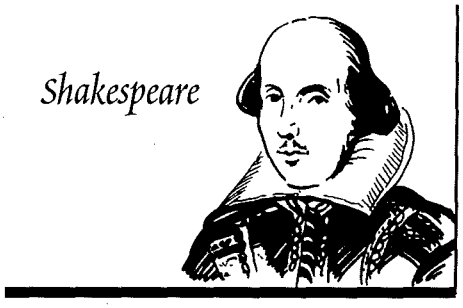
Knowledge and communication will be the commodities of value in the future. Those who can read and understand a text and who can express themselves clearly, succinctly, in a language rich in the metaphors of the people, who will in turn be persuaded by the text, will be our future leaders.

In recent times many linguistics graduates have found rewarding careers in the area of software creation and the composition of instructions. The skills the students gain in analysing language are most useful in mastering the techniques of making machines "talk" and in translating our needs into a series of commands comprehensible to a piece of machinery. The language



required for these machines is highly sophisticated and culturally charged. Even machine viruses bear the names of Renaissance artists. The creation of a program is a literate composition and the better structured for a knowledge of rhetorical devices and cultural and literary matters.

However, going beyond the merely monetary argument for studying language and literature, I would like to recall the non-essential, the enjoyment and the pleasure which come from the possession of a rich and varied culture. Too often we tend to forget how important it is for our students to possess this background. It is necessary to prove false the accusation that North Americans use language only to read *TV Guide*. If our students enjoy reading in our classes, they will continue to seek to repeat the experience. Literary pursuits are also necessary to offer a



Pushkin

common cultural ground on which to exchange with others.

Janet K. Swaffar said, concerning second-language acquisition, that "research supports the findings of cognitive psychologists for first-language learners: students acquire greater language proficiency when they study subject matter presented in the second language *per se*."[9] The growth of the programs in Canada where Anglophones take all of their courses in French and Francophones in English bears witness to the success of this concept. Studying literature is a way of using the language, of making it alive and lively, and of helping the students become really proficient.

The only horizons which can be broadened are in our minds.

Cervantes

In past centuries humankind had new continents to explore and ever expanding horizons. Even in the recent past we had the dream of space to offset the limitations of our crowded planet. Today there are no new lands on Earth to be discovered. Space appears more often to be a nightmare, certainly not accessible during our lifetimes. The only horizons which can be broadened are in our minds. We have yet to eliminate the boundaries of our prejudices and traditional thought patterns.

It is my hope that future generations who will have been able to study Descartes in French and Hume in English will discover new ideas, new patterns of thought, making life on this planet more satisfactory and stimulating.

We all have an important role to play in this future and, to put it simply, in educating our students to think through understanding literature. And, certainly, literature will help us all understand each other! Undoubtedly, that's the write stuff. ■

Notes:

1 Bruce Chatwin, *The Songlines* (New York: Penguin, 1987).

2 Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Œuvres complètes*, ed. Bernard Gagnebien and Marcel Raymond (Paris: Gallimard, 1964).

3 André Gide, *La symphonie pastorale* (Paris: N.R.F., 1919).

4 Diderot, D'Alembert, *et al.*, *Encyclopédie ou dictionnaire raisonné des sciences des arts et des métiers* (Paris: Briasson etc., 1751), vol. II, p. 264.

5 Cited by Henri Peyre, "On the Humanistic Value of Foreign Language Study", in *Profession 80* (New York: Modern Language Association, 1980), p. 32.

6 Bruce Chatwin, *In Patagonia* (London: Pan Books, 1977).

7 Cited in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* (June 1992), p. A37.

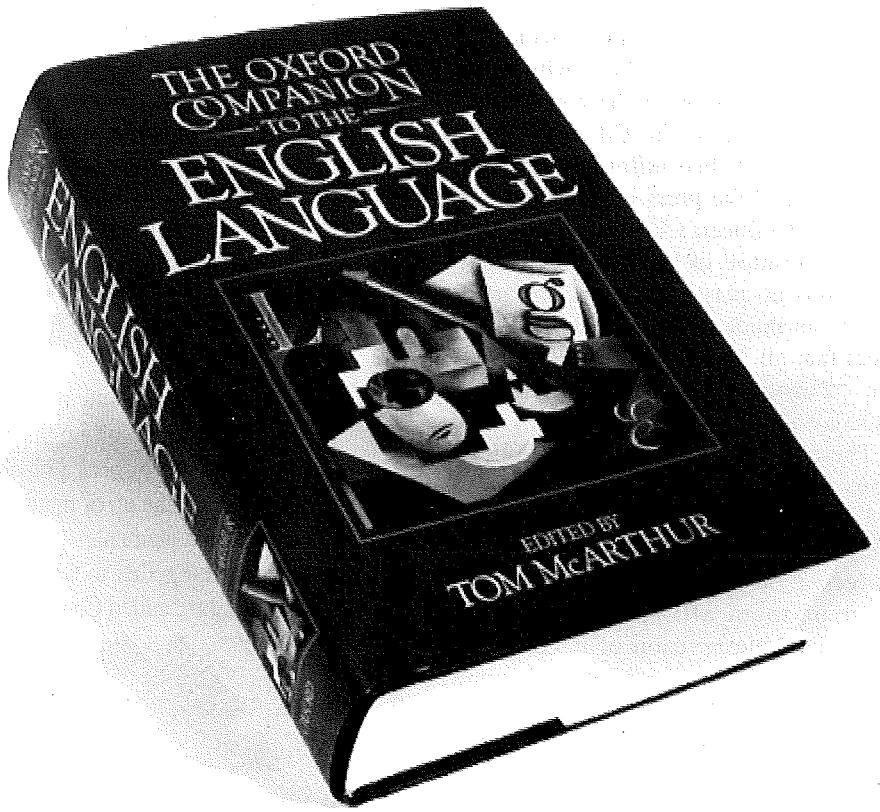
8 Cited by Henri Peyre, "On the Humanistic Value of Foreign Language Study", in *Profession 80* (New York: Modern Language Association, 1980), p. 30.

9 Janet K. Swaffar, "Curricular Issues and Language Research: The Shifting Interaction", *Profession 89* (New York: Modern Language Association, 1989), p. 35.

NEITHER FISH NOR FOWL

*CHARLES HAINES**

The Oxford Companion to the English Language.
Edited by Tom McArthur, Oxford University Press, New York, 1992.



The question is: Who will use this *Companion*? and why? Whom did the Oxford University Press people have in mind when they commissioned it?

There is a lot of information in its 1184 pages. There are articles on subjects as various as, for example, the great vowel shift, Malta, plagiarism and farce. Each article is signed — there are 96 contributors — and inevitably some articles are better, even much better, than others. The two pages on Style, by Katie Wales of the University of London, and the 1 1/2 pages of Plain English by Tom McArthur, the editor, are useful and interesting. It is painful, though, to be told by a patronizing scholar that Jacques Cartier is the "name of a well-known French explorer" (p. 186: even a non-Canadian who might use this *Companion* in the first place must know that), and that Pascal was French (p. 251). Along the same line, it is not easy to understand why the volume would start its entry on New York with the information that New York is "A city and port...a major city of the US and the English-speaking world...."

Some of the articles are too short and thin to be useful to virtually anyone: Lisp, Sign Language, Language Learning among them. Others are on subjects, or about persons, that seem at best out of place here: Gaeldom, Ambrose Bierce, Mary Wollstonecraft among these. Bierce was a witty writer, but so was Evelyn Waugh, and Waugh's not in.

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Neither are Dashiell Hammett or Raymond Chandler. Mary Wollstonecraft was an intelligent and influential person, but so was, equally, Elizabeth Gaskell, and she's not in. Probably in a compendium on language, as opposed to literature, none has a place.

Editor McArthur has tried — his effort is almost obvious — not to be dated or stuffy. He has regularly let go by the word "negative" in its now blanket sense of "unwelcome", "displeasing". He has included long articles on computing and computer usage; he has separate entries on, for example, Electronic Mail, Mouse, Menu. He was not able, though, to underline his with-it-ness by soliciting or approving a long and scholarly piece on the four-letter word: 3/4 of a column is all that is here on the subject, with no separate entry for the ubiquitous F-word where one might perhaps have found, authoritatively recorded, its etymology. Inevitably, a number of the articles here will go quickly out of date, particularly those on computers and language-and-technology. Interestingly in this connection, the otherwise well-done entry on Book (by William W. Barker of Memorial University) fails to mention the development of the railway as a 19th-century technological/ scientific force of the greatest possible importance for books and therefore for language.

The *Companion* is troubled also by the question of social class, as class ties in with educated use of language. "Upper class" and "lower class" are terms avoided these days in much English-language publishing, and here too: "...accent... identifies the speaker as a member of the middle or upper classes....Because it is class-related, it is socially and politically controversial and can lead to embarrassment when discussed" (p. 851). The article on U and Non-U English (by McArthur) is short and vague. The article, also by McArthur, on Good English is even shorter. The *Companion* has been rooted in the descriptive and not the prescriptive camp. On p. 198, for example, "Whom did you nominate?" is designated formal, and "Who did you nominate?" more usual and not wrong. The *Companion* does not, incidentally, favour British English (BrE) over American English (AmE), does not sink, or rise, to an extended and enlarged tomayto/tomahto debate.

Similarly, English-speaking Canadians are not encouraged here to favour either BrE or AmE, though the inevitable is recorded: "...CanE sounds very much more like AmE than like BrE" (p. 180). Canada is well served by the *Companion* — perhaps too well: there is an entry on Quebec (by the editor and Margery Fee, Queen's University) that gives 36 lines to the Meech Lake Accord, bringing in Elijah Harper and Clyde Wells, which is perhaps a little much for a *Companion* to language. The Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages is mentioned, and there is a 21-line entry, by McArthur, on the magazine in which this review is being published. Altogether, there are a dozen pages that touch directly on Canada. In the Canadian Press entry Margery Fee unfortunately gives no history of the press in Canada. Leslie Monkman (Queen's University) in Canadian Literature in English inexplicably mentions no playwrights; and the implication is made on p. 181 (by Margery Fee) that all Torontonians say "Trawna" or "Toronna", and all of us say "Oddawa".

There are about 30 Oxford Companions in print, and on a gaudy variety of subjects: chess, gardens, animal behaviour. *The Oxford Companion to English Literature* may still be the best of them all — through in the 1985 Drabble revision of it Lampman, Gallant, and Frye are out, Carman, Atwood, Wilson Knight are in (Frye is in the language *Companion* and Knight is not). One wonders about the genesis of this English language *Companion*. Is it here because a *Companion to the English Language* is a genuine need, as is a *Companion* to theatre, film, music, painting? or because Oxford University Press wants to expand what is probably a profitable line? In yesterday's English, speaking of this *Companion*, who needs it? Experts will not be informed by much here, casual readers will perhaps not be profoundly interested in clause analysis, the link hyphen or cataphora.

The Companion to the English Language is probably here for the language buff, the enthusiast now ready to move on from crossword puzzles and palindrome creation; or else it is here as a sort of tribute to what is, unarguably, a marvellous, forceful, expressive medium. As a tribute only: the *Companion* does not say how English can be preserved, strengthened, improved.

Troublesome as it may be to move the "u" in and out of "colour" and "neighbour"; to remember that "shift" in New Zealand means "move"; to continue to section up Canada politically into ridings; different as the sound of speech in St. John's is from the sound of Cockney, Editor Tom McArthur (on p. 590) is probably right: "...the prognosis that one day AmE will become as distinct from BrE as Spanish is from Italian does not appear at present to have much foundation." ■