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Editor's Note

A major topic of discussion for anyone interested in languages is how to learn them. This is especially so for Canadians who live in a country with one of the better language teaching systems in the world. This is the view of one of the leading lights in the field, Dr. H.H. Stern, Director of the Modern Language Centre of the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, who discusses learning languages through immersion schooling in our lead article.

Pointing out that children in immersion not only progress in their second language better than their non-immersion peers but also do as well as, if not better, in other curriculum subjects, he adds that immersion may be good but it is not perfect.

The next article looks at the way Quebec's Bill 101 aims to make French the language of work in Quebec. Michel Guillotte, Director of the *Centre de linguistique de l'entreprise* (Business Linguistic Centre) in Montreal, suggests that there must be a radical change in the attitudes of Francophone as well as Anglophone Quebecers to fulfill this provincial government objective. In his article, he takes us step by step through some of the francization programs being implemented today.

Our third article deals with the 1976 dispute over bilingual air traffic control in Quebec which, according to York University's Professor Sandford Borins, was one of the most divisive situations in our recent history. He is publishing a book on the subject this year and gives us an advance look at some of his findings and conclusions.

On the international scene, Professor Josiane Hamers, a Belgian now teaching at Laval University, unravels the tangled web of Belgium's linguistic history. Last, but of course, far from least, one of Canada's most independently-minded journalists, Allan Fotheringham, gives his own ineffable views on Westerners, the Official Languages Act and Murphy's bridge in British Columbia.

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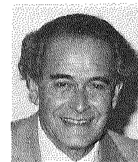
There are many ways of learning a second language, but one of the best, according to the author, is learning through immersion. The method, however, still leaves some unanswered questions. What is the best age to start? What is the quality of the French children learn?



H.H. Stern is director of the Modern Language Centre of the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE). He founded OISE's on-going project to monitor the effectiveness of bilingual education and has also evaluated, for the federal government, immersion schooling against other forms of language training. He is currently writing a book, *The Conceptual Basis of Second Language Teaching*, to be published next year.

Immersion schools and language learning

H.H. STERN

Language training has behind it a disconcerting history of ups and downs. In a long cavalcade of hope and disappointment, the French immersion experiment in Canada stands out as a shining exception — one of the few language teaching innovations that has not been discarded after a year or two. On the contrary, it has gone from strength to strength and is flourishing today. Its implications for language training in quite different situations are important and anyone interested in language questions, in Canada or elsewhere in the world should at least know what it is all about and gain some appreciation of its scope, nature, and relevance.

What is immersion?

In a typical French immersion class all or a major portion of the educational program of an English-speaking school is offered in French to children whose home background is English. The teacher is a Francophone or has a native-like command of French and teaches the subject matter of the curriculum, e.g., art, music, mathematics, history, or physical education, in French. Immersion is not really a language program in the strict sense because French is not taught as a separate subject. The expectation is that French should be learnt through being used in a practical way for some other purpose than learning the language. It is a case of killing two birds with one stone or getting two things for the price of one. A school subject is studied but a second language is learnt at the same time.

The immersion principle can be applied at any level of education from kindergarten to the end of schooling and could (and sometimes does) occur at university level and in adult education. The prototype and pioneer effort has been the "early immersion" program which typically begins at kindergarten level or in grade one. The teacher consistently conducts her classes entirely in French so that the children hear French in use without necessarily using it themselves. Ideally this teacher would be bilingual so that she can attend to the children's needs which in the early stages may be expressed in English or French e.g. :

Child: We made a train.
Teacher: Avec la neige?
Child: No, with people.
Teacher: Que fait le train?
Child: Choo choo.

This teacher would be trained in methods of early childhood education and have an informed understanding of language acquisition and bilingual development in children. The techniques of the immersion class are not principally those of the conventional language class. Immersion is a regular educational program transmitted in a second language without forgetting that the children in the immersion class are not native speakers of the target language. The immersion into the new language is therefore gentle and not brutal. At the same time it is total, that is, everything by the teacher is done in French. It continues in this fashion from kindergarten to grade one and two, and even reading and writing are first learnt in the second language. While these children are thus exposed to French as a second language, their informal mother tongue education in the home and street continues. The total effect of home and school combined is one of a bilingual education,

provided through what has aptly been called "a home-school language switch". Moreover, as the early immersion program continues through the grades it becomes increasingly bilingual schooling, some subjects being offered in English and others in French. The proportions between the languages may vary over the years, as the child progresses through the elementary school. In many school systems an enriched French program or one or two subjects in French are offered to "post-immersion" students as a follow-up to immersion.

The encouraging research reports which began to come out of the St. Lambert studies from about 1969 influenced the spread of immersion.

Variations on the immersion idea are possible. In some school systems French is introduced from the outset on a *partial* basis; for example, morning activities are conducted in the second language and afternoon activities in the native language. Another variant is to introduce immersion later in the school career, for example in grades three, four or five (*delayed* or *middle immersion*), in grades six, seven or eight (*late immersion*) or in a high school (*bilingual high school*), and to apply it totally or partially for one, two or three years as full or partial immersion programs. Thus the distinction can be made between early full immersion, early partial immersion, delayed or late full or partial immersion. These programs are usually offered to parents and their children as an option. Apart from one or two local systems where all schools offer partial immersion across the board, children are never compelled to go into immersion if their parents have a preference for a unilingual English education.

How immersion began

One of the most interesting aspects of the immersion movement has been how it came about. The impetus did not come from professional educators but from English-speaking parents' groups who had strong and positive feelings about bilingualism in Canada. Parents' groups have continued to play a major role in the advancement of French.

In recent years many of these groups have come together in a nationwide association, Canadian Parents for French, a society which advocates better teaching of French generally, not only immersion, although this body has strongly promoted the immersion solution as an important way of improving the knowledge of French among the English-speaking population.

The immersion approach was first thought of and advocated by such a parents' group in St. Lambert in the Montreal area over 15 years ago. They managed to persuade the Quebec Ministry of Education and a local school board to initiate an immersion-type experiment in one of the schools under its jurisdiction. In addition, this parents' group had the unusual good sense — setting a very rare example in educational experiments — to demand research and evaluation of these experimental classes. It was furthermore fortunate that they found a receptive response to their demand for research in the psychology department of McGill University, where Professor W. Lambert and his colleagues took up this challenge and agreed to study the development of this experiment in the St. Lambert elementary school.

The encouraging research reports which began to come out of the St. Lambert studies from about 1969 influenced the spread of immersion. In Ontario, particularly in Ottawa, as the national capital, parents' groups and some school board trustees pressed their school administrators to see to it that French be taught more effectively in the local schools and found in immersion the kind of solution they had been looking for. The school boards and the Ontario Ministry of Education, anxious to act responsibly and not to fall for another language teaching bandwagon, invited or commissioned research studies from the Ottawa and Carleton universities and from the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE) in Toronto. Similar developments took place in other provinces across Canada from British Columbia to Prince Edward Island. Thus the pattern was set for a period of experimentation, expansion and research on immersion in several localities across Canada.

The results of immersion

The results of these experiments, as presented in many different research reports, were clearly encouraging. It was obvious to anyone that much more French was acquired by "immersion children" than could normally be expected from learning French in a school setting. Surprisingly enough, too, the immersion students also got on well in their other school subjects taught in French and seemed to suffer no loss. On the contrary, there was some evidence that on every score the immersion children progressed very normally and in some

respects — beyond their clear advantage in French — seemed to do even better in other curriculum subjects than their unilingual peers. Even children from a different language background and children with minor handicaps were found to be as responsive to immersion education as their counterparts were to unilingual education.

In short, immersion appears as a remarkably constructive and quite exceptional educational development in the frustrating language learning business.

In the 1970s immersion became a popular alternative form of schooling. In 1977, when the Canadian Association of Immersion Teachers was founded, over one thousand teachers and administrators attended the opening conference in Ottawa. No exact figures on the extent of immersion education are available. But it is estimated that across Canada in the early 1980s some 75,000 young people are either in immersion or have had an immersion background in their schooling.

In short, immersion appears as a remarkably constructive and quite exceptional educational development in the frustrating language learning business. It has turned bilingual schooling on a large scale into a practical reality for unilingual children in a unilingual (Anglophone) public educational system in a largely unilingual social context.

Experience has been gathered on how to administer such schooling at various levels of the educational ladder. There are beginnings of immersion teacher training; there are curricula for immersion classes and there is a well-established professional organization of immersion teachers. There are in various cities across Canada groups of well informed researchers, teachers and administrators with a sophisticated and long-standing knowledge of this form of schooling. Moreover there is varied literature and numerous research reports which document this experiment. One or two books describe the early development. A handbook for parents, published by Canadian Parents for French, *So You Want Your Child To Learn French!* is a bestseller which contains a good up-to-date account of immersion and other approaches to language training. A booklet for parents on research by an authority on bilingualism, Jim Cummins, and a major review of the entire research over the last ten years by two leading researchers, Merrill Swain and Sharon Lapkin, are in preparation.

But there are still problems

The fact that immersion has been a success story does not mean that there are no problems or controversies. Some very fundamental questions remain. We can only refer to four of these to indicate some current concerns.

1. *Early vs. late immersion.* A few years ago it was convincingly argued that early full immersion is much more of a guarantee of success than late immersion. As experience on both accumulates, the long-term advantages of early immersion are not so confidently affirmed any more. Surprisingly, comparable achievement of late immersion groups are beginning to appear in books on the subject and researchers are trying to sort out the time, timing, age and learning factors involved in order to clarify this issue for themselves and for administrators.

2. *Degree of bilingual proficiency.* Immersion programs were prompted by the hope and expectation that they could make students fully bilingual. There is no question that immersion students reach a much higher level in the second language than their counterparts in a conventional language class. But their progress appears not to continue toward native-like proficiency. They seem to become arrested at a functionally useful but non-native level. Is that inevitable? What is amiss? Why is this so? Could it be remedied? Would intensive contact with native speakers push the immersion student to native-like approximation? Investigators are trying to understand and resolve this issue.

3. *Lack of contact with Francophones.* Immersion undoubtedly can bring Anglophones closer to their Francophone neighbours. Yet, it would be naïve to hope that immersion by itself can bridge the "two solitudes". This is much more a task of the larger society. It is up to society through deliberate measures such as student exchanges, teacher exchanges or the Monitor Program, (offered by the Secretary of State's Department), to create contact situations which match the immersion effort and overcome the invisible hurdles between the two language groups. Immersion has so far remained too much an in-school effort and has not yet worked out the social steps outside the school setting which are needed if the immersion is to lead to contact experiences with Francophone contemporaries.

4. *Curriculum and teaching techniques.* The immersion experiments began in an almost improvised manner on a wave of enthusiasm. Little attention was paid at the beginning to the details of curriculum and techniques which are needed to make a program educationally successful. As experience has been accumulated, this deficiency has been remedied to a certain extent. But a great deal remains to be done to provide curricula which are equivalent to a mother-tongue program of studies and which has a special bias because it is a French curriculum in an English school milieu. Equally the techniques of teaching intricate subject matter to students whose language knowledge is imperfect requires special skills which have not yet been adequately studied.

Wider implications

It would be quite wrong to think of immersion as an experiment which is purely of significance to French as a second language in Canada. The immersion experiment is of critical importance to current trends in language teaching anywhere. Today it is fashionable in language pedagogy to demand a "communicative approach". The meaning of this term is ambiguous, but it certainly implies the use of real-life communication as an instrument of language teaching. The experience of immersion provides language teachers with convincing examples of how to introduce communicative activities, authentic topics and real-life experiences into the language class. Anyone who believes that real subject matter and topics of genuine importance have to play a part in language instruction should not fail to look at the immersion experiment.

Finally, the immersion experiment is an outstanding example of an educational innovation in which language teachers, administrators and researchers have collaborated over a period of years. The co-operation among different groups or researchers in Montreal, Toronto, Ottawa and other centres across Canada, and the interaction between different levels of government — federal, provincial and local — and between theoreticians and practitioners in this experiment over more than a decade is an unusual event and deserves the attention of anyone who believes in thoughtful planning as an approach to innovation in language training.

Bilingual education: some background reading

Theory

Hornby, Peter A., ed. *Bilingualism : Psychological, Social and Educational Implications.* New York: Academic Press, 1977. Papers from a conference held on the Plattsburgh Campus of SUNY in 1976. Contributions from Canadian and American specialists. A very useful introduction and overview is provided by the editor.

Simões, Antonio, ed. *The Bilingual Child.* New York: Academic Press, 1976. Articles which look at research and analysis of a number of themes in bilingualism: cognitive studies, programs in bilingual education, teacher-directed issues, etc.

History

Canadian Modern Language Review. Special issues dealing with themes in Bilingual Education: Volume 32, N° 5, May 1976 : Immersion Education for the Majority Child. Vol. 33, N° 2, November 1976 and Vol. 34, N° 3 and N° 5, May 1978.

Lambert, W.E. and Tucker, G.R., *Bilingual Education of Children : The St. Lambert Experiment.* Rowley, Mass: Newbury House, 1977. The classic description of the St. Lambert experience.

Swain, Merrill, ed. *Bilingual Schooling: Some Experiences in Canada and the United States.* Toronto : The Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, 1972. A report on the Bilingual Education Conference held in Toronto in 1971, this volume contains descriptions of a large number of programs which were spear-heading bilingual education in the late 60s and early 70s.

Recent developments

Alatis, J., ed. *International Dimensions of Bilingual Education.* Georgetown University Round Table on Languages and Linguistics, 1978, Washington, D.C. : Georgetown University Press, 1978. Articles by M. Swain and H.H. Stern review French immersion in Canada in the context of an international symposium on various forms of bilingual education.

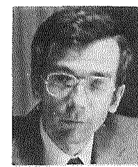
Obadia, A., «Programme d'immersion : croissance phénoménale et pénible», in the *Canadian Modern Language Review,* Vol. 37, N° 2, Jan. 1981, pp. 269-282. An article by an experienced Francophone practitioner who reviews recent developments in immersion.

A practical guide

Mlacak, Beth and Isabelle Elaine, eds. *So You Want Your Child to Learn French!* Ottawa : Canadian Parents for French, 1979. A collection of articles, theoretical and practical, written by educators and parents.

Bibliography compiled by Professor Janice Yalden, Associate Dean of Arts, University of Carleton, Ottawa and Dr. H.H. Stern of OISE, Toronto.

To meet the requirements of Bill 101, firms are drawing up programs to make French the language of work in Quebec. The process is highly complex and demands a determined effort both in practical terms and in attitudes of mind.



Michel Guillotte is executive director of Quebec's *Centre de linguistique de l'entreprise* (Business Linguistic Centre). He joined the Centre in 1975 to take charge of the francization program, a program to help firms develop their ability to operate in French. In this capacity he was responsible for the preparation of individual francization programs for a number of large and medium-sized firms in Quebec. He is a graduate of *l'École des Sciences politiques* in Paris.

The francization of business in Quebec

MICHEL GUILLOTTE

Bill 101 and the procedures designed to ensure its application in the business world are still in their early stages of implementation. It would, therefore, be premature to try to measure the results achieved to date. The most we can consider at this point are the strategies that businesses are planning to use to meet the requirements of the Bill. In the course of my job, I have had to provide detailed analyses of the language situation in about 40 companies to identify the various problems that must be solved and to draw up some of the first francization programs following Bill 101. In the light of this experience the following observations will be practical in nature and will deal with three major subjects: the introduction of a process of change into complex structures, the content and consequences of francization programs in businesses, and the special situation pertaining to Canadian head offices.

Quebec's Bill 101 is coercive legislation under which business management will be penalized if it fails to obtain a francization certificate. Its objective is clear: to ensure that the introduction of such programs forms an integral part of the planning process, usually at the most senior level of any business. These programs must also be tailored to the particular circumstances of each firm so as not to conflict with other priorities such as efficiency and profitability, which managers naturally tend to consider more important.

The effect of Bill 101 is to encourage change in the attitudes of managers of private firms. Francization requires even those who accept its objectives — even the Francophones of Quebec — to question a value system which, until now, has proven to be a sure key to success, and to replace it with a new set of criteria whose implications most people do not yet understand.

For historical reasons, English became the language of business and industry in Quebec. The province's English-language minority traditionally enjoyed a privileged economic and social position. This fact had its effect on immigrants who almost always opted for English-language education. On the other hand, the reform of Quebec's social institutions since 1960, particularly in the field of education, created a highly skilled Francophone labour force that absolutely had to be employed somewhere in the private sector once all public and para-public services had been staffed. At that point, the Quebec government concentrated its efforts on promoting the economic power of the French language and that is why it passed Bills 22 and 101.

Coercive legislation sets objectives as precisely as possible but does not necessarily provide for its own implementation. For this reason, some Francophones in Quebec businesses and in the federal public service still demand a bonus for the extra effort they must make to speak French in fields in which they have worked in English for many years. Many Quebecers simply cannot imagine that it is possible to work in French. They are unaware that this is already being done: they do not realize that proper French terminology exists and when they come into contact with it, they often do not understand it. In most firms, employees suddenly receiving plans in French immediately request the English version. Their attitude toward the francization program is therefore

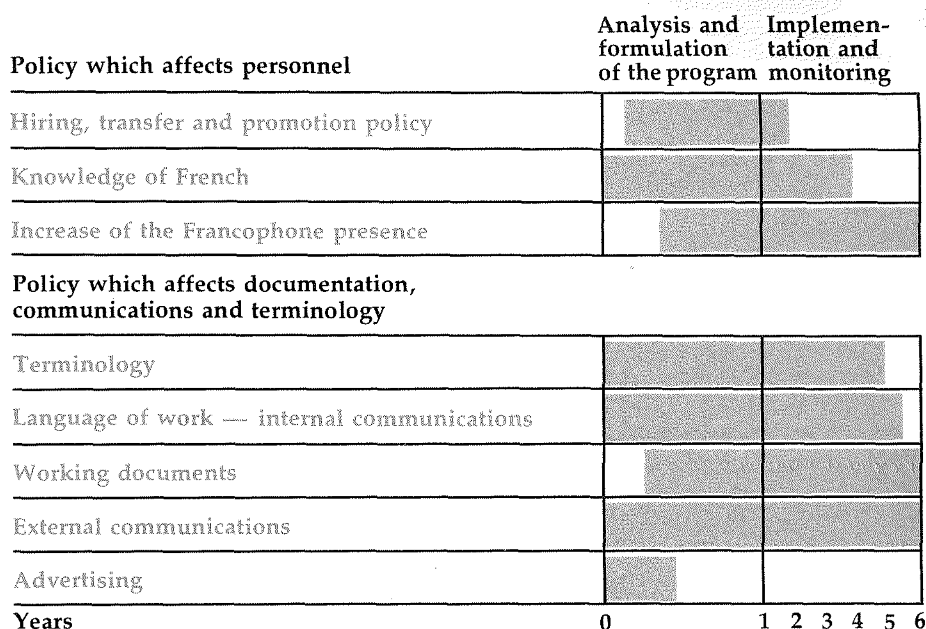
highly ambivalent. Although most Francophones in Quebec support the Government's objectives, they also resist making the extra effort required to produce change.

Francization

When preparing its francization program (see chart opposite), a firm calls together its officers and certain other staff members, explains its objectives and invites questions. It then asks its employees to implement the program. There are no fundamentally negative reactions at the preparatory stage. However, several months later, analysis of the elements used to measure the degree of implementation — staff movements, Francophone recruitment, promotion of bilingual personnel, the language of oral and written communication, use of terminology — generally shows that the program has not even moved to square one. In a large Montreal bank, for example, it was announced on two occasions that directors of Quebec branches could send their loan requests to the regional head office in French. Analysis of the results showed that 80 per cent of the requests were still written in English by branch directors, most of whom were Francophones. In another firm, two years after publication of a policy, 69 per cent of all annual performance appraisals are still prepared in English even though only 28 per cent of the employees are Anglophone.

Since Bill 101 is coercive, officers appointed by the Government of Quebec to oversee its implementation are perhaps interested in attitudinal change but probably spend most of their time monitoring and studying concrete results. Coercive legislation is more concerned with monitoring objectives than with the change

The elements of a francization program fulfilling Section 141 of the Charter of the French Language (Bill 101)



process itself. This reality can scarcely fail to escape the attention of the legislator or business manager.

Window-dressing or the real thing?

But where do we establish the point of no return? What measures must be taken to ensure that the French fact becomes a permanent reality in Quebec? Some of the simple, highly visible, relatively inexpensive and immediately effective results include French signage, French documentation and French company names. Such measures do not involve people, structures or systems; they simply require a budget and action. They are, in fact, not fundamental to company operations and are little more than window-dressing.

Another measure is to teach Anglophones French. Experience has shown that a beginner needs about 1,000 hours of instruction to acquire a working knowledge of the language. However, this program must be followed up by practice in the workplace and thus requires the co-operation of the student's colleagues.

Second-language instruction, then, must be closely linked to the progress made in the use of French within the firm and involves co-ordination of staff movements which few companies have so far achieved. Oddly enough, English instruction for Francophones should also be provided so as to allay fears of forgetting the language that is essential to promotion and success and to eliminate frustration and jealousy at the sight of colleagues learning French during working hours, often at company expense.

Cost considerations
Although translation is expensive, it is nevertheless the easy solution which avoids questioning old habits and procedures. All the studies and analyses conducted to date show that translation budgets are biggest when documents are systematically translated. In every well-planned francization program, translation is used only as a last resort after all other solutions have been examined.

Translation is nevertheless necessary in many cases and businesses are then faced with the question of who will pay for it. For example, a company that produces communications systems asks an electronic equipment supplier for certain documentation in French. The latter answers that it will cost $100 per page to produce the translation. Since, in setting up their own francization programs, two other companies have made the same request of the supplier, will the three firms be charged for one-third of the translation costs or will one of them pay the whole cost? On a broader scale, will the translation cost of all businesses be divided among the companies who have gone furthest in promoting French or divided among all Quebec firms or among all Canadian firms?

Establishing French as *the* language of work in Quebec means making the maximum use of this language. It does not, however, necessarily lead to unilingualism in Quebec industry. Language constraints will continue to require that other languages, particularly English, be used. These constraints may for example be related to the nature of a firm (advanced technology, for example), to its clientele and to its organizational and administrative leadership (in particular, its head offices).

The purpose of francization programs is to ensure that the Francophone Quebecer who works in English does so for career-related reasons. This language requirement should not be arbitrary but should reflect precise organizational characteristics. The francization process in business involves a number of measures relating to the French-language knowledge of heads of firms, the use of French in work documents and manuals and an increased number of employees with a high degree of proficiency in French at all levels of a firm.

An action plan
Bill 101 also deals with French as a language of work, internal communications and communications with customers, suppliers and the public. It provides for the use of French terminology and French advertising and deals with recruitment and promotion policies designed to generalize the use of French.

To meet these objectives, every firm must prepare a detailed action plan including timetables and responsibility centres for each measure. Head offices and industrial research centres in Quebec, whose operations are more national or international than regional, are governed by a special regulation permitting the use of a language other than French in their operations.

They are, however, subject to the condition that French be used in certain specified cases. These include internal signage and communications with customers, suppliers, the Quebec public, Quebec shareholders and senior officers and staff of other Quebec firms.

Tight deadlines
When drafting Bills 22 and 101, the Quebec legislature imposed a language policy and procedures for its implementation. Its objective was to make French the language of work in Quebec but the government nevertheless allowed firms the freedom to prepare their own programs to attain this end, programs which they would then negotiate with Quebec's *Office de la langue française* (OLF), the principal administrator of the legislation.

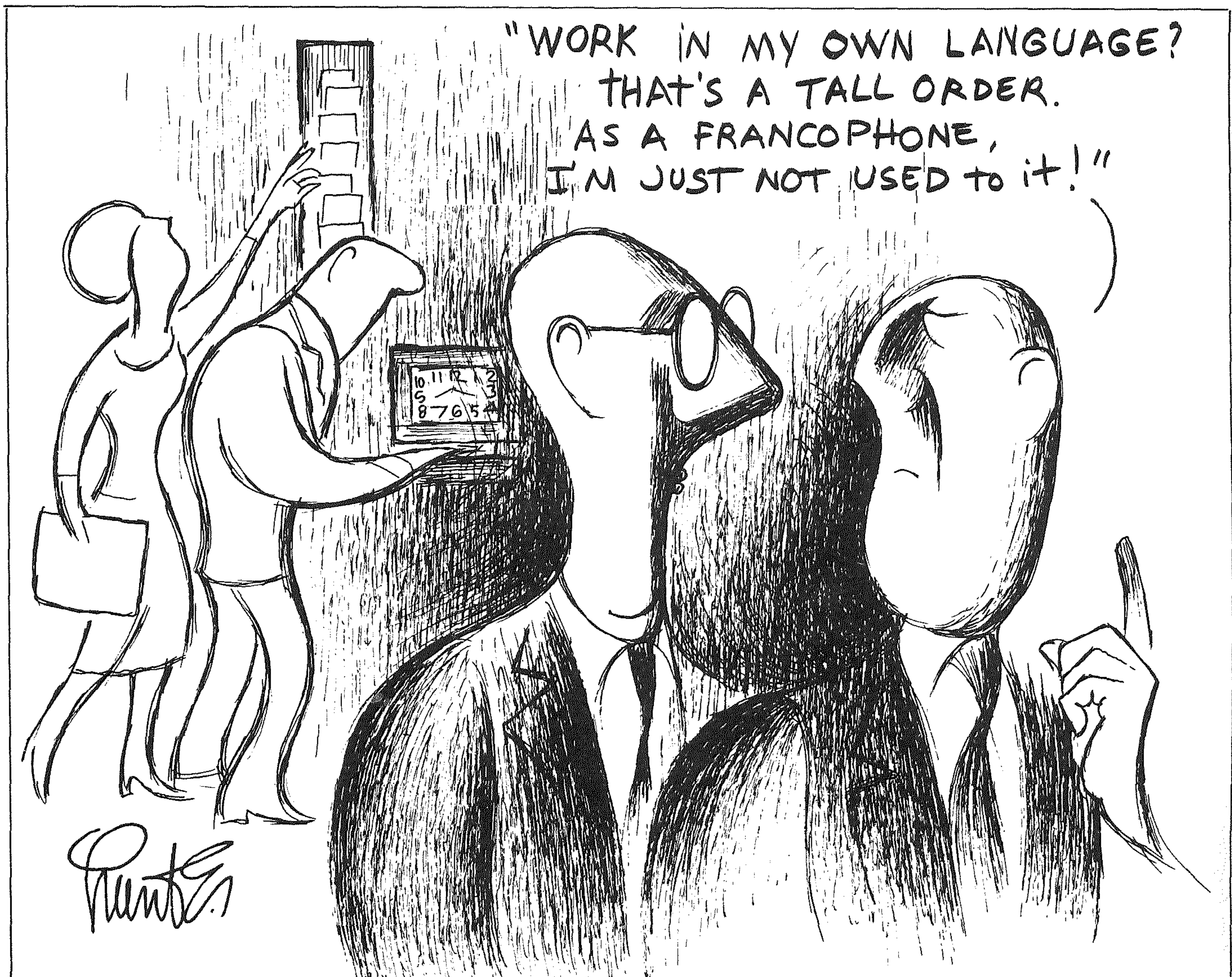
From the very beginning, this approach has created serious problems, most of which have been caused by the unexpected complexity of various stages of the process. The deadlines contained in the regulations governing large companies are too short and information required by the OLF rarely exists in the form requested. For example, what firm keeps accurate files on the number of senior and middle managers who use French or English at work and who are also members of a professional association? What company knows the number of French and English documents used by a particular branch, where they were prepared and printed, the number of users and the frequency with which they are used?

In addition, since the evaluation criteria for these programs are unknown, the OLF and business representatives cannot always conduct their discussions with a full knowledge of the facts. The large companies, particularly those with more than 500 employees, must therefore bear the burden of this learning process. It must be recognized, however, that in most cases the OLF treats every firm individually and gives proper consideraton to the constraints peculiar to each.

The objective of the provision governing the francization of internal communications is to make French the language of work as the necessary instruments such as documents, forms and so on, become available. Another objective is to increase the French-language skills of non-Francophone staff. In this area too, each firm is expected to prepare a timetable for the overall francization of internal communications.

Head offices

The first firms to negotiate programs helped establish certain major precedents. As a result, the OLF and a number of companies have managed to define the basic principles for French-language communications between head offices (whether located inside or outside Quebec) and their Quebec branches. The OLF's systematic application of these principles has sanctioned a form of institutional bilingualism by requiring that head offices of Canadian firms, wherever they may be located, have a sufficient level of bilingualism within their organization to be capable of receiving and sending certain written communications in French. While negotiating its program — the first to be submitted by a large company with head offices outside Quebec — Imperial Oil agreed that two-way correspondence should be conducted in French within Quebec whenever it personally



involved a member of a board of directors, a national branch director or his assistant. Or when it concerned national planning, the issuance of policies and directives or the monitoring of results on a national basis.

This basic principle, which the OLF has applied to all firms doing business in Quebec, corresponds to all intents and purposes to an application of the spirit of the Official Languages Act to national head offices, which by extension, may be considered as the « federal government» of business. English is traditionally the language of work in head offices throughout Canada; Francophones and the French language occupy only a marginal position. The current provisions of Bill 101 go directly against this trend. Even the partial francization of head offices poses a considerable political problem because OLF pressure is often perceived as excessive by firms whose business dealings and investments in Quebec are not extensive.

Multinational corporations
Consider, for example, the case of a major multinational corporation whose Canadian headquarters are located in Ontario and which employs more than 1,600 persons in 14 branches in Quebec. Approximately 75 per cent of its products produced in Quebec are sold to clients outside the province. The company has submitted its francization program to the OLF.

One of the major objectives of francization in the communications sector is to formalize written French communications with head office. To facilitate the change, the firm intends to use existing structures to their full extent in order to avoid disturbing either head office activities or those in Quebec by needlessly extending the time required to conduct communication. In other words, in preparing this part of their francization program, the officers in charge have opted for a practical form of action.

The firm began formulating its program by determining which positions at head office could issue or receive messages written in French. It concluded that the president and vice-presidents of its four head office branches (personnel, legal services, marketing and finance) fell into this category. It was then decided that all written communications with head office could be divided into three categories: *official* communications on specific subjects, concerning many persons and of long-term effect; *occasional* communications made on rare occasions in response to immediate needs; and *personal* communications which as the name would suggest, relate to such matters as social benefits, group insurance, dental care and retirement funds.

The firm states clearly in its program that all official written communications issued by head office to personnel and administrative units in Quebec are to be prepared in French. Periodic communications between head office and individual employees will be drafted in the preferred language of the correspondent and personal communications will be prepared in the language of the employee's choice.

Before the year's end, the firm will determine which communications may be considered official and, early next year, will decide on measures it will adopt to ensure that communications with head office are conducted in French. Weekly or monthly reports will be considered official communications and the firm's objective is to prepare them in such a way that French will become the language of work in Quebec.

Small Quebec businesses
Let us now consider the example of a small Quebec-based firm that distributes imported books and magazines to smokeshops, drugstores, grocery stores and so on. The company's activities extend into New Brunswick and even to certain remote parts of Labrador. Although it deals with Anglophone clients and distributes a large proportion of English-language material, the firms operates in French only, both in its external communications and in internal management.

It should also be noted that the OLF has taken into account the fact that the firm's situation is different from that of a large company. It has more modest financial resources, a staff of 50 and a director whose tasks already include administration, personnel management and marketing, and who cannot realistically be asked to take on the work of a full-time

Cartoonist **Raoul Hunter** has been enlivening the editorial pages of Quebec City's *Le Soleil* for over 20 years. His work has appeared in numerous Canadian and foreign newspapers and periodicals and has won him many prizes and competitions. His most recent success was winning a national competition to design Canada's 1982 Christmas stamp. He studied in Quebec and at *l'École nationale supérieure des beaux-arts* in Paris where he specialized in sculpture.

francization commitee as well. The formalities have also been simplified. The questionnaire used to collect language data has been modified and is also used for planning the francization program. It has been prepared in co-operation with approximately 60 firms contacted by the *Centre de linguistique de l'entreprise* and the *OLF*.

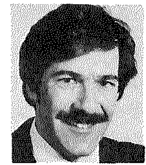
An ideal balance
Francization represents an enormous amount of work from all points of view. Although it runs against Canadian traditions, it is really nothing more than a local variation of the problems multinationals have been facing in most countries for a number of years. These problems include an increased sense of nationalism, a trend toward greater participation, increased nationalization and unfavourable public opinion towards multinationals.

The *Centre de linguistique de l'entreprise* (Business Linguistic Centre), a private non-profit organization, was founded in 1972 to help private enterprise deal with linguistic issues in Quebec. The Centre provides over one hundred companies with the opportunity to share their experiences in dealing with language issues. The Centre also acts as a technical advisor to its members, offering them services in the following areas : interpretation of legislation, francization, language training, translation and information. The *Centre de linguistique de l'entreprise* is located at 1110 Sherbrooke St. West, suite 2403, Montreal, Quebec H3A 1G8. Tel: (514) 844-2691.

In the Canadian context, these problems suggest a trend towards the "Canadianization" of firms and the screening of foreign investment. The provisons of Bill 101 governing head offices, as well as OLF action in this field, raise the fundamental question of the more equitable use of both official languages in our country's national decision-making centres. It remains to be seen, however, to what extent the federal government and the companies concerned will allow such unilateral action to be taken. More particularly, given the great variety of situations, how many employees of the firms in question will accept either the imposition of complete bilingualism or the burden of learning a language they will use to only a limited extent in their communications?

(Adapted from French)

Analysing the 1976 dispute over the use of French in Quebec air traffic control, the author argues that opposition to bilingualism in the air was based on more than concern for safety.



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Bilingual air traffic control

SANDFORD F. BORINS

Relations between English and French-speaking Canadians have been characterized by long periods of calm and indifference punctuated by brief and angry confrontations, such as the Manitoba Schools crisis or the two conscription crises. The most recent crisis was the confrontation in 1976 over the use of French in air traffic control. This article, based on my recently-completed study of that crisis, will discuss the confrontation's origins, its resolution, and the lessons we may draw from it on improving relations between English and French-speaking Canadians.

Aviation in Canada developed as an almost completely Anglophone activity and those few Francophones who participated in its early years were completely assimilated with their English-speaking Canadian colleagues. This pattern began to change during the years of the Quiet Revolution for several reasons. One was that the Quebec region of the Ministry of Transport (MOT) began to recruit bilingual Francophone air traffic controllers who, by the early 1970s, held a majority of the controllers' positions in that province. At the same time, more and more Francophones qualified for private pilots' licences: however, many of them were not fluent enough in English to use it to converse with air traffic control and preferred to use French. The Francophone controllers began to do what other Francophones throughout the entire province were doing, namely they began demanding the right to use French at work.

French on the job

In 1973, a small group of activist controllers, located mainly in Quebec City, formed an organization to legitimize the use of French in air traffic control. They tried various tactics, such as putting pressure on the Ministry of Transport, on the Canadian Air Traffic Control Association (CATCA — their union), on their local M.P. (who happened to be transport Minister Jean Marchand), by filing grievances with the Commissioner of Official Languages and by speeking newspaper publicity. Finally, they acted unilaterally, by using French on the job. At the first, their campaign was successful, and in 1974 the Ministry of Transport accepted the use of French by private pilots at small airports in Quebec flying under visual flight rules.

Their next request, the use of French in air traffic control for commercial aircraft flying under instrument flight rules, met with strong resistance from English-speaking controllers and pilots. The Quebec City controllers therefore broadened their organization to include Francophone pilots and other aviation professionals and called this new body *l'Association des Gens de l'Air du Québec* (AGAQ). The opposition of Anglophone controllers to AGAQ's new demand was based on arguments of job security and safety.

If bilingual air traffic control were permitted, a substantial number of unilingual Anglophone controllers would be forced to leave the Montreal Control Centre to be replaced by bilingual (which generally meant Francophone) controllers. Anglophone controllers did not see how a person could control busy traffic effectively using two languages. Anglophone pilots, on the other hand, opposed bilingual air traffic control not out of economic interest (since bilingual air traffic control would require the controller, not the pilot, to be

bilingual) but because of their almost religious belief that air traffic control should be conducted in one universal language, which happened to be English. Pilots had been taught to maintain a "listening watch" on their radios for air traffic control messages to other pilots which might be of importance to them: the use of two languages would diminish the effectiveness of the "listening watch".

A deteriorating situation
The issue mushroomed into a dispute in late 1975. At that time, the policy of the new Tranport Minister, Otto Lang, was that MOT would implement bilingual air traffic control gradually, without any specific timetable and with thorough testing to ensure safety. The Francophone controllers at the Montreal centre became dissatisfied with this gradualist approach and unilaterally began to use French in conversations with one another and with pilots who could speak French. This was opposed by the Anglophone controllers at the centre and tensions grew between the two groups. Relations became so strained that some supervisors were threatened and fist-fights almost broke out in the control room.

The situation came to a head when a Francophone supervisor suspended two Francophone controllers for speaking French to one another. Not surprisingly, this state of affairs was denounced by Francophone politicians and editorialists throughout Quebec as an insult to the French language. Under pressure from the Quebec Liberal caucus, Otto Lang modified his policy to one of implementing bilingual air traffic control as soon as possible by making it safe. It was also decided that Anglophone controllers who did not wish to learn French would be given special compensation in order to induce them to give up their incumbents' right to their jobs and transfer out of Montreal. Plans were made for an exodus of over 70 controllers.

The predominantly Anglophone controllers' union, deeply resented the way bilingualism was being implemented and completely lost trust in Lang and his officials. CATCA realized that transferring the Montreal Anglophones to other locations would diminish opportunities for the controllers stationed in those locations. Even though Lang said that bilingual air traffic control would not be implemented anywhere outside Quebec (except for possibly Moncton and Ottawa) the Anglophone controllers did not believe him, fearing that their jobs throughout the entire country might be at stake. These controllers, seeing that the Francophones' unilateral action had been effective in Montreal, now feared that Lang might break his promise that safety would be his prime consideration if there were further unilateral action.

Bargaining bilingualism
In this atmosphere of anger and distrust, CATCA decided to introduce the bilingualism issue into its negotiatons with MOT over a new contract to replace the one which expired December 31, 1975. The government's position was that bilingualism was a matter of government policy which, unlike wages or working conditions, could not be a subject for collective bargaining. At this point, what CATCA wanted was some thorough study of bilingual air traffic control and some guarantee that it would not be introduced unless it had been proven safe in rigorous testing.

The Anglophone controllers also realized that if they were to bargain over bilingual air traffic control, they would have to be prepared to strike over it. Since a strike would cripple air service, public support would be a necessity. Therefore, Anglophone controllers and pilots forged an alliance and set out to persuade the English-speaking Canadian public that bilingual air traffic control would be suicidal. This publicity campaign was very effective for several reasons, one being that the basic concept of the "listening watch" was intuitively plausible to the man-in-the-street. It appeared to be analogous to defensive driving.

However, the groundswell of support sprang from emotion rather than reason. It was an expression of substantial covert oppositon throughout English-speaking Canada to the government's overall bilingualism policy. The controllers and pilots exploited this opposition arguing that the policy of bilingualism was now being carried to an extreme where it could threaten human life. The Trudeau government was virtually handcuffed in its attempt to respond: it had other problems to worry about. The government was increasingly unpopular in English-speaking Canada and its energies were absorbed by an effort to win public support for its anti-inflation policy. Finally, the Minister of Transport, Otto Lang and his senior officials (Deputy Minister Sylvain Cloutier and Deputy Air Administrator Walter McLeish) were so confident that their policy was correct that they saw no need to respond. Ultimately, CATCA won its fight

and got the government, which had entirely lost English-speaking Canadian support on this issue, to agree to a wide-ranging commission of inquiry into bilingual air traffic control.

The Keenan factor

This might have been the end of the matter, were it not for one ill-advised decision. The person McLeish recommended and Lang appointed to be the Commissioner of Inquiry was John Keenan, a well-qualified, fluently-bilingual aviation lawyer who served as legal counsel to the pilots' union. Lang and McLeish chose Keenan because they were sure he was unbiased and that any unbiased person would see that bilingual air traffic control could be safely implemented. Unfortunately, they forgot that not only did justice have to be done, but justice had to appear to be done. Keenan was attacked by the Francophone controllers and ultimately by the Quebec Liberal caucus and resigned.

Keenan's resignation aggravated tensions on the part of the Anglophone controllers and pilots. CATCA felt that Keenan's resignation represented a breach of the collective agreement that had just been signed with MOT. The membership voted over whelmingly to go on strike. The government responded by obtaining an injunction to prevent a strike. Most controllers stayed at work, but there were some wildcat walkouts. The airline pilots felt that the airways had become unsafe and on Sunday, June 20, 1976, refused to fly. Within a few days, pilots from all over the world acted in solidarity with their Canadian colleagues and refused to fly over Canadian airspace. The pilots and controllers had massive support in English Canada. The strike lasted a week.

It ended only after Lang and his officials met with the leaders of the pilots' and controllers' unions, and signed an agreement to widen the scope of the Commission of Inquiry, to allow the pilots and controllers to nominate one of the three judges who would be members of the Commission and to agree that the government would implement only the unanimous recommendations of the Commission,(and then only if there was a free vote to that effect in the House of Commons).Lang and his officials were not very troubled by the agreement. They were convinced that their cause was right, and they did not view the agreement as posing an insurmountable barrier to the implementation of bilingual air traffic control. People throughout Quebec reacted angrily, accusing the government of compromising something as vital as their right to speak French in their own province. Many observers have claimed that this angry reaction contributed substantially to the victory of the Parti Quebecois in the election of November 15.

A disaster for Francophone-Anglophone relations

The crisis of June 1976 was the worst moment in French-English relations in decades. How was the air traffic control problem ultimately resolved? In the days and weeks which followed the crisis, opinion leaders in English-speaking Canada, seeing the reaction in Quebec, came to the conclusion that they had been misled by the Anglophone pilots and controllers. They now saw them as bigots, or at least as people who pandered to bigots in order to win public support. It is fascinating to read the newspaper columns and editorials that summer and see how opinion turned about completely. This change in élite opinion in English-speaking Canada on the issue was virtually complete by the fall of 1976. The election of the Parti Quebecois was the *coup de grâce:* most English-speaking Canadians were now quite willing to permit bilingual air traffic control. It seemed a small price for keeping Quebec within Confederation. At the public level this controversy was virtually resolved by the end of 1976.

During the next three years, the issue had to be resolved in the aviation community, which was a far more complicated undertaking. The Commission of Inquiry held two long sets of hearings. Under the Commission's aegis, MOT conducted a painstakingly thorough simulation study of bilingual air traffic control. The study showed that bilingual air traffic control was just as safe and efficient as unilingual air traffic control, even under the most difficult traffic situations imagineable. This simulation study was the only controlled experiment comparing the two systems which has ever been undertaken, anywhere. The study also developed new procedures to be used in a bilingual system and discovered some defects in existing procedures. The Commission of Inquiry, basing its findings on the testimony, the simulation studies and consultants' studies of procedures at airports with bilingual air traffic control in other countries, unanimously concluded that bilingual air traffic control should be implemented in Quebec. This conclusion was endorsed, quickly and without controversy, by the Clark government in August 1979.

"Il y a du français dans l'air"

Bilingual air traffic control was implemented in stages during

1980. By 1981, the majority of private pilots flying in Quebec use French. However, because most Canadian airline pilots are Anglophones and because a great of international traffic flies over Quebec, less than ten per cent of air traffic control communications under instrument flight rules are in French. One important outcome was that the enmity which once sizzled between French and English-speaking pilots and controllers has now died down and relationships within the aviation community have become professional once again. A number of Anglophone pilots have told me that when they fly over Quebec they begin their conversation with air traffic control with "Bonjour," then switch to English and they sign off with "Salut". It is their way of recognizing the validity of the Francophone position.

The fact that the bilingual air traffic control controversy developed from disagreement over a technical issue, to a political crisis and even to outright racism is cause for pessimism about Canada's future. The fact that the problem was then resolved safely, thoroughly, and rapidly (three years in the bureaucratic world is almost overnight!) is cause for optism.

The dispute came about, in part, because of some clear personality differences between the Minister of Transport, Otto Lang, his senior officials, Cloutier and McLeish, and the presidents of the pilots' and controllers' unions. (These are discused in detail in my book). The dispute also came about because English-speaking Canadians just did not understand the desire of Quebecers to be "*maître chez nous*". In addition, the Francophone controllers were impatient to correct past injustices and often unwilling to compromise with the Anglophones. The dispute was settled when English-speaking Canadians came to understand Quebec's aspirations, at least as far as this issue was concerned, and when controllers and pilots of both linguistic groups stopped discussing historical grievances and started to search for a technical solution to what was fundamentally a technical problem.

Respect of place, persons and language

They say that "Everything's got a moral, if you can only find it." I am now going to look for the morals in this story. First of all, it underscores the importance, in any such crisis, of English-speaking Canadian sympathy for the desires of Francophones to make French the *lingua franca* of Quebec and to use it when dealing with or participating in national institutions. Education about Quebec and French language training remain the major means of inculcating this sympathy and should be supported and extended. The crisis also showed that the English language press was generally rather uncomprehending of Quebec. One hopes that, as a result of this crisis, the election of the Parti Quebecois and the referendum, the English language press has become more effective at explaining Quebec to the rest of the country.

For Canada to work as a nation, our national institutions should be receptive to the needs of both language groups. Bilingualism ultimately should go beyond the federal government. The internal difficulties of the controllers' union provide a lesson to all organizations. Any organization that calls itself national needs to provide some level of service in both languages and to set up its bylaws and procedures in such a way that it is not always the Francophones who are adjusting to the unilingual Anglophones. Bilingualism is expensive, but we must pay the cost.

Finally, a commitment to Canada's survival is essential in the attitudes and behaviour of our leaders. This means that Anglophone leaders must avoid bigotry on their own part and condemn expressions of bigotry by their followers. On the other hand, Francophone leaders should not use their impatience for change as a justification for not participating in the process of change. More generally, the leaders of all interest groups must accept a concept of the public interest, a notion that their groups' interests must, at a certain point, give way to an over-riding interest in the country's survival and unity. The bilingual air traffic control story shows instances where organizational leaders failed to do this, but also occasions where they did display this sense of responsibility, and did so magnificently. If the response to this crisis has, in some way, deepened this sense of responsibility, then it has served a worthwhile purpose.

Belgium is a country with three national languages, a multitude of dialects and a linguistic sensitivity so great that language questions have been eliminated from the census forms and nobody is certain any more how many people speak what.

Josiane Hamers was born into a French-speaking family which came, originally, from a predominantly Dutch-speaking part of Belgium. To complicate her linguistic life even further, she grew up in England, pursuing her post-secondary education at the Free University of Brussels in Belgium, and then at McGill University in Canada. She now teaches the psychology of language at Laval University and says that, with her background, a preoccupation with languages is almost inevitable.

The language question in Belgium

JOSIANE HAMERS

The case of Belgium is almost always cited in any discussion of bilingual countries and of the kind of problems that can arise from the co-existence of two ethnic groups within a single state. To a very large degree, political life in Belgium revolves around the language question and the problems of contact between two language groups. To reduce this friction, the country is adopting innovative solutions that can be understood only in the context of Belgium's current situation, its history and the development of a shifting balance of power between the two principal ethnic groups.

In Belgium, as in Canada, two separate ethnolinguistic groups have both had to make concessions in order to live together in a single country. The Fleming's essentially of Germanic origin, in the north, and the Walloons of Franco-Latin origin, in the south, have lived in the region from time immemorial. In the days of the Roman Empire, Belgium formed the northernmost portion of Gaul, a border territory under Roman rule and in contact with the barbarian people. However, Belgium has existed as a modern European state for only a century and a half, becoming independent in 1830, after serving as the battlefield for many European wars and following a period of domination by various other European countries including Austria, Spain, France and Holland.

The language boundary

The origin of the "language boundary" separating the north of Belgium from the south has not been clearly established. Although this "border" follows no natural frontier, it appears to be extremely stable. With the exception of the capital, Brussels, which will be discussed below, it has changed very little over the past thousand years. The boundary probably resulted from population fluctuations in the early Middle Ages when Germanic conquerers imposed their language on the small, scattered populations of the north but were integrated with Latins in the more populous Latin regions to the south. This demographic explanation, the most widely accepted theory, will probably never be verified because there is virtually no historical evidence dating from the period in which the boundary was established.

In any case, based on demographic, economic and socio-political factors, the balance of power has shifted over the centuries between the two major language groups separated by this boundary. As a result, it is impossible to describe bilingualism in Belgium today, or to understand language planning and its consequences for education, administration, the workplace and current relations between the two ethnic groups, without referring to the country's history.

Who speaks what?

Living in an area of barely 30,000 square kilometres, Belgium's population of ten million inhabitants comprises several language groups: a Dutch-speaking majority in the north (56 per cent), a Francophone population in Wallonia in the south (32 per cent), a small German-speaking minority in the east (less than one per cent) and a central group (11 per cent), partly Flemish partly Walloon, which is more or less bilingual and is located around the officially bilingual Dutch and French capital of Brussels. In addition,

there are several mixed regions in which one of the three national languages has official status, but where various "protected" minorities have certain language privileges called "facilities".

A question of dialects
This brief description of Belgium's "linguistic profile" would be incomplete if no mention were made of the fact that, within each of the officially unilingual regions, there is a high incidence of "diglossia". The term "diglossia" denotes a situation in which a language spoken by certain parts of the population does not have the status of a "standard language". Most Belgians speak one or more of the numerous, sometimes mutually unintelligible, dialects which have little in common with the official language of their own region. In the south, for example, several varieties of "Walloon", a generic term indicating a group of Picardy dialects, exist alongside standard French. In the north, several Flemish dialects, which are very different both from one another and from standard Dutch, are still the mother tongue of large portions of the population. Similarly, the German dialects spoken in the east vary from standard German. Finally, there is also a Brussels dialect, which is an odd mixture of French and Dutch. As Fishman points out[1], Belgium contains all possible combinations of diglossia with or without bilingualism, and of bilingualism with or without diglossia. Although Belgium has three national languages very few Belgians speak any one of them as their mother tongue.

[1] J.A. Fishman, "Bilingualism with and without Diglossia, diglossia with and without bilingualism", *The Journal of Social Issues,* 1967, 33(2), pp. 29-38.

The battle of Brussels
Although Brussels has official bilingual status, it is entirely possible to live there without being bilingual because all services are provided in both languages. Originally a Flemish city, modern Brussels is in fact a small, predominantly French-speaking island in a Flemish sea. This anomaly is the result of historical, socio-economic and political forces that have caused the originally Flemish population of Brussels to become a Francophone majority in the capital of a country whose population is, for the most part, Flemish.

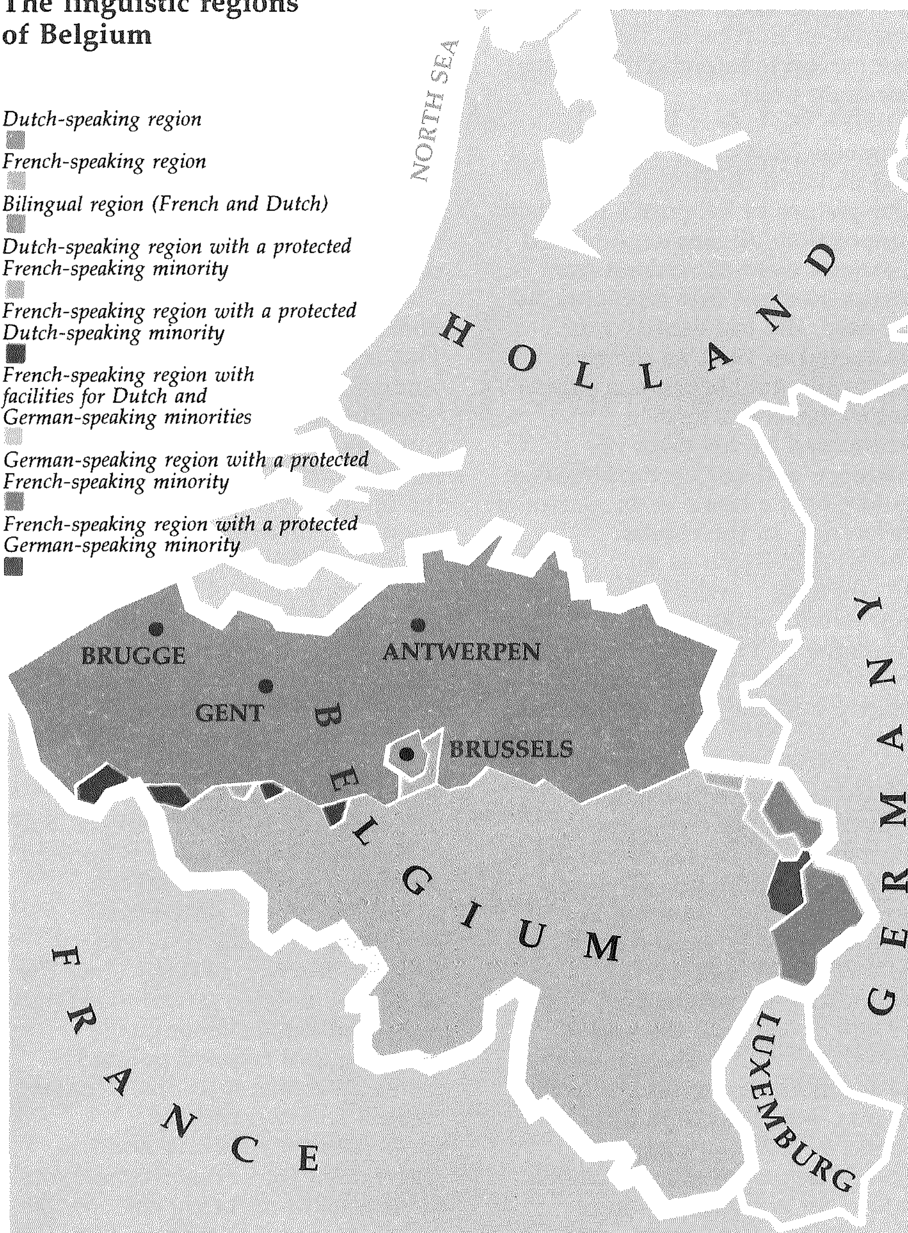
The French language, spoken by the ruling class and enjoying greater international stature than Dutch, was for a long time considered the more prestigious of the two languages. This situation led to the creation of a double language boundary for the Flemings, one geographical, the other socio-economic. The attraction of French has made it the language of upward social mobility and it is for this reason that Flemings wishing to establish themselves in the capital tend to adopt French at the expense of their mother tongue. As a result, a portion of the Flemish population of Brussels is now in a transitional bilingual state and will become Francophone by the next generation. This process is made even easier by the fact that Flemings generally have a sound basic knowledge of French.

For these reasons, the population of Brussels is seen as a separate group, distinct from the Walloons. Apart from the expression "Belgian Francophones", there is no generic term for all Francophones in Belgium. Most frequently, the French-speaking population is referred to by such expressions as "Walloons and the Francophone citizens of Brussels". Many unilingual municipalities on the outskirts of Brussels accord certain language rights to their protected minority. The relationship between the various language groups varies continually within these municipalities since, as neighbouring satellites of the capital, they are gradually absorbed by metropolitan Brussels. As a result, these communities are the source of much political tension within the country. Although language planning problems have been solved in the officially unilingual regions, the problem of border communities and that of the capital city and its suburban municipalities have become highly controversial. The anticipated language struggle has already been called the future "Battle of Brussels".

Brussels' linguistic composition
Available demographic statistics give some idea of the city's linguistic composition. According to the 1947 census, 37 per cent of the citizens of Brussels were unilingual Dutch-speakers, 44 per cent spoke at least one Dutch and one French dialect, while five per cent spoke the three national languages. These figures were calculated on a total of approximately one million inhabitants. Of the bilingual population, 34 per cent stated that they used their French dialect more often than their Dutch dialect, whereas 15 per cent claimed the reverse[2]. Today these data are obviously out of date. Not only has the population of Brussels doubled since that time, but the metropolitan region is much larger than it was in 1947. And Brussels' image has changed as well.

[2] H. Baetens-Beardsmore, *Le français régional de Bruxelles,* 1971.

The linguistic regions of Belgium



Formerly a modest city, it is now a major European metropolis and site of the headquarters of NATO, the Common Market and many other international institutions. This cosmopolitan character is enhanced by the presence of a large number of European and North African migratory workers who have added a number of foreign languages to the national languages and dialects already spoken in Brussels. Several rather unreliable surveys seem to indicate that the population of Brussels is roughly 75 per cent Francophone and 25 per cent Dutch-speaking. It is virtually impossible, however, to estimate how many in each group are bilingual unless one makes an educated guess based on historical evidence. Nevertheless, these figures clearly show that a change has taken place in the city's linguistic make-up.

Language and socio-economic power

As in the past, the situation in Belgium today is dependent upon the degree of power each group wields and, as is the case in Canada, ethnic origin is linked to socio-economic status. For several centuries, Wallonia, formerly a coal mining and heavy industry centre, was economically stronger than Flanders, which, with the exception of the Antwerp region and its harbour development, has always been an essentially agricultural area. This economic supremacy reached its peak in the first century of Belgium's existence as an independent state. At that time, society in Flanders was composed of a Dutch-speaking proletariat and a Francophone bourgeoisie.

The end of the 19th century saw the birth of Flemish nationalism and its accompanying language demands, while the beginning of the 20th century was marked by heightened self-awareness and pride among the Flemish population and the creation of a Dutch-speaking élite. This trend was reflected in such fields as education. In the 19th century, secondary education had been provided by an exclusively French-language system, even in Flanders where it served a Francophone middle class. In the early years of this century, it gradually became more Dutch in character, a development that culminated, in the thirties, in the creation of the first Dutch language university. It was not

until after the Second World War, however, that the economic picture changed dramatically. New tertiary industries, particularly subsidiaries of multinationals, were established in the Flemish regions, while the coal mines and the old iron and steel industry of Wallonia began to decline. In the sixties, the socio-economic status of Dutch-speaking Belgians equalled, and ultimately surpassed, that of the Walloon population, thus relagating the latter to a secondary position. The Francophone bourgeoisie in the Flemish provinces was officially absorbed and, to a large extent, either was assimilated by Flemish society or became bilingual as a result of unilingual government and compulsory Dutch-language education. No information is available from official sources of the actual number of Flemings who continue to use French in the home, but it is likely that this figure is declining rapidly.

Although a similar phenomenon has never occurred in Canada and is unlikely to do so in future, it is nevertheless interesting to compare the socio-economic development of the Quebec population with that of Belgium's Flemish population.

The language question and politics
Belgium has had to organize its political forces in terms of the language problem, which can become so acute that it can causes delays of several months in the formation of a new Cabinet, as happened in 1979, or brings about the downfall of a national coalition government that has an overwhelming majority simply because it fails to solve language problems, as was the case in 1980. Failing a long-term solution, the language question could ultimately lead to the dissolution of one of Europe's smallest countries just at a time when Europe is attempting to foster even greater political and economic unity.

Language legislation adopted in 1963 makes it difficult to draw a clear picture of Belgium's linguistic composition: all language-related questions were eliminated from census forms at that time and, in any case, the last census was conducted in 1947. In the two large unilingual regions, a citizen's mother tongue is legally determined by his place of residence and not by the language spoken in the home or by personal preference. In the capital, however, individuals may choose the language in which they receive their education and deal with government. The 1947 figures, therefore, bear little relation to the country's actual language situation today.

Second language instruction
With the exception of some international schools, education in Belgium is unilingual. However, foreign language teaching is relatively well advanced since, in the unilingual regions, it is compulsory for all children from the age of ten until the end of secondary school. The choice of the second language is left to the parents, who may select the second national language or another language of international stature. In Wallonia, parents usually choose languages such as English or German, which are more international than Dutch, whereas French, the second national language, is generally chosen in Flanders.
Flemings generally have a better knowledge of French than do Francophones of Dutch. In the capital region, second language instruction is compulsory for children from age seven until the end of secondary school. Universities and other post-secondary institutions also insist on a high level of second language proficiency, and second language instruction is part of many university programs. Insufficient second language skills may prevent a student from completing a program of studies.

Something to think about
This brief overview of the language situation in Belgium provides only a glimpse of the complex nature of bilingualism in that country. It does not consider the many psychological, cultural or linguistic consequences of the situation, which could jeopardize the development of the next generation[1]. A comparative study of parental values in regard to education, conducted by Lambert, Hamers and Frasure-Smith[2], showed that Walloon parents have much stricter attitudes toward socialization that their Flemish counterparts. Is this difference due to the Walloons' decline from their dominant position to minority status, or can the difference be attributed to ethnic differences between the two groups? Over the years, the Belgian government has instituted extensive language planning and focused political forces on ethnic relations. This has created a very complex socio-political structure and has determined the socio-psychological development of future citizens. It is therefore not surprising that language is a subject generally uppermost in the minds of Belgians

(Adapted from French)

[1]J.F. Hamers, "Le rôle du langage et de la culture dans le processus d'apprentissage et dans la planification éducative". *Recherche, Pédagogie et Culture,* Paris, 43, AUDECAM, 1979, pp. 24-31.

[2]W.E. Lambert; J.F. Hamers; N. Frasure-Smith, *Child-Rearing Values: A Cross-National Study.* New York, Praeger, 1979, pp. 172-185.

The country would no longer exist with Quebec in it without our two official languages, but that doesn't mean there aren't irritants about the present system. One of those irritants is the Murphy bridge/le pont Murphy, in British Columbia...

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Passion, reason and Murphy's bridge

ALLAN FOTHERINGHAM

The essential problem with the Official Languages Act and Westerners — as I am asked in my great wisdom to explain — is that on the meandering highway between Prince George and Prince Rupert in the hinterland of British Columbia, as the Skeena River wanders to the Pacific, there are necessarily a number of bridges.

Every time a harmless denizen of that lonely portion of the world crosses a bridge — say the Murphy Bridge — he sees also, in the same prominent type, "Pont Murphy". In his wilderness, in his bewilderment, he cannot quite see the reason why. Each sign — so ridiculous in its logic on a 12-foot bridge, so democratic in its execution — is a tiny irritant, a daily assault on common sense, the pea under the bilingual blanket.

Those of us who know better argue, of course, that there is no shrinking from the implications that this is an officially bilingual country, a country that would no-longer exist with Quebec in it (I can retroactively predict) if the Official Languages Act had not been imposed on the nation and had not Trudeau and friends come to Ottawa to save Quebec.

That is unanswerable rhetoric to those of us who know better — and yet, and yet, there are all the others. Those who really cannot see why, when you are attempting to find your way through the maze of signs at the magnificent new Calgary Airport (quite the most tasteful and comfortable in the land), why a semi-speeding motorist must try to unravel signs in French as well as English: double your confusion, double your irritation.

Passion over reason and vice versa

The problem is that no one, not even Pierre Elliott himself, can adequately explain to the used car salesman in Terrace, B.C., or Vanderoof, or Burns Lake, why the 12-foot Murphy Bridge is adding to Canadian unity by having a plaque labelling it "Pont Murphy". Tokenism is one thing, easily understood by those of us who toil for our meagre bread in Ottawa, the token town. Practicality is something else, understood more by loggers in Terrace and hustlers in the oil patch of Calgary.

I'm not really sure how one deals with the dichotomy. We are talking on one hand of the sincere and passionate feelings of legislators who felt the only way to save the nation (and they were right in their intent) was to impose across-the-board rules on bilingualism wherever the mighty heavy hand of federal money intruded on the face of Canada.

On the other hand, we have the common people who pay for all this (there ain't nobody here but us taxpayers) in Terrace and a thousand similar small, remote communities witnessing logic extended to absurdity. (That does not lead to respect for authority, or laws, or leaders.)

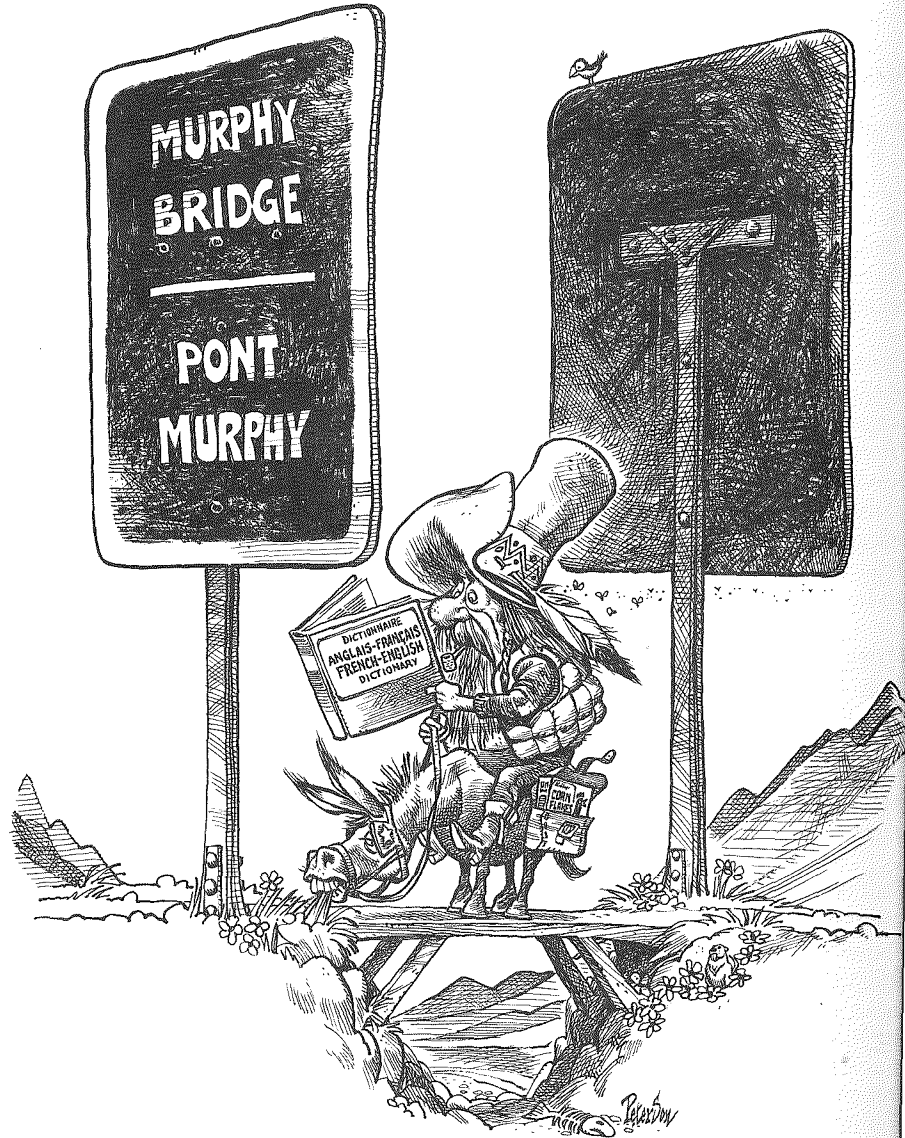
I'm always surprised that no one — considering the obvious lust in government for spilling other people's money — has ever done any real research into the fascinating aspects of the "cornflakes syndrome". (Mr. Trudeau's impeccable Gallic logic was at its best when he advised — to anyone who was irritated by French on the cornflakes box — "turn the box around". As usual, he assumes the unwashed in

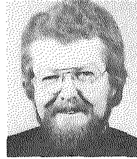
Upper Rubber Boot, Saskatchewan have been disciplined in Plato as well as he has.)

The cornflakes cranks
What I'm surprised at is that no one has really looked into the complaints you get (it's moreso in Western Canada than elsewhere) that whenever they go into a supermarket they find — against all the laws of average — that the boxes and cartons and tins are more often than not turned with the French facing the shopper. It's true. On the few occasions when I encounter supermarkets, a destination I detest more than massage parlours, I idly notice the same thing.

The reason? I (who has belief in the perfectability of the human spirit) have no doubt. It is done purposely — out of perverse and prejudicial reasons — by those who stack the shelves. The irritation and the bias against the French language is fed by those within the system who see a way to exploit the heavy-handed Ottawa approach.
We shall not go into here the loony tales of the food processors in the interior of B.C. who market a product sold only in B.C. — without national sales — who are forced by law to have bilingual labelling. Arguing with the blind eye of Ottawa is always a fruitless exercice.

At the base of it all is the bemusing factor that colours all the relations between the two founding peoples. There is the French belief in codifying all agreements, the precise mind that requires laws of logic to be encased in concrete prose. When I lived in London, I learned from my Paris friends why the French had such contempt for the English. A race of males that agonized, procrastinated and fumbled about with extra-marital sexual matters — rather than organizing things on a 4:30 p.m. ritual and then able





Roy Peterson is a free-lance Vancouver cartoonist who contributes regularly to the *Vancouver Sun* and *Maclean's* magazine. His work has also appeared in leading foreign journals such as *Punch*, in Britain, and *Esquire* in the United States. He has produced a number of books jointly with author Stanley Burke. Their latest book, *The Birchbark Caper*, a satirical comment on our constitutional debate, will be published this fall.

to *forget* the turmoil — surely was a race not to be trusted with the higher matters of life.

Upper middle trendies
The British, of course, believe in muddling through. They see no reason to write things down. That, plus sausages and mash, has made Britain what it is today. (I won't touch that one with a 10-foot Beefeater.) It is, by the way, why Kershaw and the Brits are so puzzled by Trudeau's mania for a bill of rights: Britain, while sinking beneath Yugoslavia's standard of living, has no bill of rights and is still the last refuge of individual eccentricity which, when you think about it, is what life is all about — the freedom to be left alone.

Perhaps I digress, but not much. Mr. Stanley Roberts, late of Canada West, in an article in this magazine recently boasted of the phenomenal increase in bilingual schooling in Calgary. True in a way, but six times zip still equals zip. In a session with concerned Liberals and civic leaders in Vancouver several years ago, Mr. Trudeau was told by a proud native that there was a waiting list for entry to the one (1) bilingual elementary school encompassed in the Vancouver school board system. "One school?" the Prime Minister replied. "Big deal."

He was, as it happens, correct. Parents do have to put their tads on the waiting list for entry to that school, there are line-ups for entry into night classes in French at the University of British Columbia and parents are pushing their kids into French classes (while the same kids tell "frog" jokes in the schoolyard.)

Mr. Roberts' statistics make impressive reading, but they disguise the fact that he is recording a trendy, upper middle class movement. It is the produce of a class of westerners, either newly-arrived or well-travelled, who realize their children will not be able to move upward in either political, government or even corporate fields unless they can function in two languages once into the Central Canada vortex.

Plain prejudice
There is still, sadly though, an undercurrent of prejudice in western Canada (perhaps even moreso in Ontario if the truth were known) over the fact "the French" were "conquered" once and won't lie down. It is still a fact that Bill Vander Zalm, the handsome and ambitious B.C. Social Credit cabinet minister who made the now-famous remark the 1976 night René Levesque was elected that he couldn't quite see the harm if Quebec separated because his cornflakes box would then be virginal once again, gains the most applause from the party faithful at Socred conventions.

Those of us who regard him as a shallow opportunist and call him "Bill Cornflakes" are well aware that in a certain constituency the label is not one of derision, but of affection. It's all very nice to talk about the $75,000 professionals who want their daughters to be able to speak French fluently so as to move in the right circles. But there are still a lot of people out there who traverse, and resent, the 12-foot bridges.

A letter from Belgium

A brief word of thanks for sending me your periodical on a regular basis. I was particularly pleased to receive the poster map with your last issue.

Your articles are very well written and represent a valuable contribution to research in Canada and in similar countries such as Belgium, the focus of my own studies.

Albert Verdoodt
Université catholique de Louvain
Belgium

Mixed Schools in Ontario

Ontario's mixed schools are clearly of most benefit to Anglophones seeking the advantages of knowing a second language. The following comment made by an Anglophone Penetanguishene school board member illustrates that fact. "You mean to tell me that there won't be a place anymore in Simcoe County where a WASP can become bilingual?" That comment was made following the request for a French-language high school to replace the mixed school in Penetang.

Unfortunately, the sentiment is shared by many Anglophones and even by assimilated Francophones who view the mixed school as evidence of their wish to live "as brothers" with Anglophones, and as an expression of their appreciation to Anglophones who, as descendants of the conquerors at the Plains of Abraham, could have destroyed them. Difficult as it is to believe, that argument is still made; the cult of the conqueror is hard to wipe out. For instance, an article such as "L'avers et l'envers de l'école bilingue" (*Language and society*, Nº4, Winter 1981), has much more influence among Francophones because it is signed by William F. Mackey and not by Pierre Tremblay.

On the other hand, Mr. Mackey's analysis is very accurate and expresses well the Franco-Ontarian's attitude to mixed schools. He manages, above all, to deal with the issues of the minority environment, language at school, language use in extracurricular activities and language use in a "mixed" family with Anglophone and Francophone parents. He also touches on a particularly sensitive issue when he talks about the Francophone consumer having to deal with a "bilingual" clerk.

Although the Ontario government says it is increasing bilingual services, there is always the sword of Damocles over our heads carrying the threat of "use these services or lose them". Mr. Mackey puts his finger on it when he says: "Language behaviour is not a charade. It is part of the business of living. And to most people, life seems more important than language". What good are these services if they are not used ? What good are they if we cannot control our educational institutions ? However, it is encouraging to see mixed schools in Ontario closing their doors one after another and being replaced by French-language schools. Mr. Mackey's article raises many issues and facts which merit consideration.

Claudette Paquin
Penetanguishene, Ontario

Food for thought

Before commenting on two of the articles which appeared in the fourth issue of *Language and Society*, we should like to congratulate the Information Branch of the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages on the superior quality of the magazine. It is pleasantly presented and the articles are, generally speaking, very informative and well-documented.

We should first like to comment on the article entitled "Attitudes towards bilingualism: Startling changes", by Stanley C. Roberts. In our view, this article contains a very incomplete interpretation of the real situation vis-à-vis tolerance of the French fact in western Canada. It is true, as Mr. Roberts says, that the past five or six years have seen an increased enthusiasm for French on the part of Anglophone parents, a growing number of whom are enrolling their children in French immersion classes and are pressuring school boards to increase the number of immersion classes and schools.

This enthusiasm for matters French should not, however, make us forget certain less encouraging aspects of the Francophone situation in the West. In 1978-79 school year, for instance, Francophones received less hours of classroom instruction in French than did Anglophones enrolled in French immersion programs. In Alberta, the distinction between regular French programs and immersion programs is still not clear.

Furthermore, Francophones still do not have their own French-language school boards. If, in addition, we mentioned the paucity of government services provided in French, we see that the situation is perhaps less rosy than Mr. Roberts has suggested. In our opinion, Mr. Roberts could have pursued his facts further.

We also noted that the English and French versions of the biographical note on Mr. Roberts differ. We hardly think it was necessary to stress that "sa connaissance du français fait merveille" in the French version when no such point was made in the English version !

The other article on which we have comments is that entitled "Language and population movements in Canada: Gazing into the demographic future", by Jacques Henripin. Not that we have any intention of disputing Mr. Henripin's forecasts, which show that in the year 2001 the French-speaking population may well fall to between 2.2 per cent and 3.5 per cent of the population outside Quebec, as compared with 4.4 per cent in 1971. This forecast seems quite probable should the provincial and federal governments fail to agree to develop more generous policies vis-à-vis Francophones outside Quebec. We do believe, however, that given the dynamic nature of Francophone communities outside Quebec, the various governments will see to it that the necessary structures are established to stimulate this dynamic spirit further.

In our view, Mr. Henripin's statements only serve to underscore the urgent need for government intervention and the establishment of an overall development policy for Francophone communities outside Quebec.

Given that the federal government has nation-wide responsibilities, it should establish, in concert with Francophones outside Quebec, a participatory mechanism to enable such a policy to be developed.

In his 1979 report, the Commissioner of Official Languages stated that he agreed there was a need to establish such a mechanism. Based on Mr. Henripin's data, it is clear that such a demand will remain a priority for the Fédération des Francophones Hors Québec.

Donald R. Cyr
Director General
Fédération des Francophones
Hors Québec

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Roberts' article: Anglophone point of view

... Mr. Robert's account of the shift in Western Canadian attitude with regard to bilingualism is extremely one-sided. I would go so far as to call it biased. For, in his article, "Sense and sensibility in the West", *(Language and Society*, No. 4, Winter 1981) Mr. Stanley Roberts expounds only on viewpoints of Western Anglophones.

Mr. Roberts doesn't say a word about the deplorable and depressing situation of Western Francophones, whose rate of assimilation is much higher than the rate at which Anglophones are being enrolled in immersion classes.

One of the major causes of this galloping assimilation of Western Francophones is the very unwillingness of provincial governments to provide them with easy access to French schools administered by French-language schools boards, thus forcing them to accept immersion schools. The most schocking case is that of the Franco-Albertans, for whom the Lougheed government's "best efforts" policy has always ended up meaning immersion schools, not only in cases "where numbers warrant", but especially "where Anglophone or Anglicised school boards so wish".

Stanley Roberts should realize, as Mr. William MacKay indicated in another article ("Safeguarding language in schools") in the same issue of your magazine, that immersion schools for Francophones in a minority situation are nothing other than hotbeds of assimilation. Immersion schools are designed for Anglophones, not for Francophones. What Francophone students need, and need urgently — to increase opportunities for cultural survival — are schools made for Francophones where French prevails, and which reflect the Canadian reality.

If, as Mr. Roberts claims, each enrolment in an immersion school is a "vote" for French, for bilingualism, and for Canada as a nation with two founding peoples, may we conclude that Western Anglophones are finally going to begin applying pressure on their provincial governments to provide us Francophones, their so-called equals, with our own schools and school boards just as they have? If our experience has taught us anything, this seems doubtful. What organizations, such as Canadian Parents for French, do is worry about Anglophone problems, not those of Francophones. And the same can be said about those in power.

...We are facing extinction, and our only failing is that we have no economic clout. Like some natural resources, we are expendable and non-renewable. Once we have disappeared, been assimilated, with whom will immersion students talk to practice their "French-as-a-second language"? The West will have lived up to the dream of our honourable compatriot Mr. James Richardson: a French Quebec, but an English Canada.

Gaston Renaud
Fédération canadienne-française de l'Ouest