particularly the separation of constitutional powers between the federal government and the provinces that this principle implies. Third, the Quebec problem, via the presence of the sovereignist Bloc Québécois at Ottawa, makes the federal government a one party property, namely that of the Liberal party of Canada, and it worsens the regional alienation of the West[5].

These consequences of Trudeau's failure to integrate Quebec within Canada in a healthy way are clearer now that people realise that the biggest probability is not Québec leaving Canada but staying in Canada, its French-speaking majority more alienated than ever. But the worst part of the Trudeau legacy is a stunning paradox, considering the prime minister's well-known supposed aversion for nationalism of any kind. This odd legacy is a new Canadian nationalism – for which Trudeau is a hero – an ideology doomed in the longer run because it is based on the denial of the *Québécois* heart of the country[6]. A big problem with this ideology, that can be surprisingly intolerant toward modern Québec political difference, is that it is not aware of itself: it doesn't see itself as nationalism at all[7]. It is therefore very difficult for these new Canadian nationalists to be critical of themselves.

Those with a real interest in Québec are already aware of many of these facts. Unfortunately, that is not the case with too many Canadianists. And yet, to do solid research on Canada, it is important to at least be aware of the existence of another vision of the country; otherwise, there is simply no understanding the Canada-Québec problem. Obviously, that does not mean that this other vision can be defended on every point. Québec indépendantistes, for example, have underestimated the threatening aspect of a political project which would separate an already highly Americanized and henceforth exclusively anglophone Canada in two; in this scenario, absorption by the U.S.A. would ultimately become likely. The two referenda they have lost, along with the resulting weakening of Québec's position, have highlighted a certain lack of realism among Québec nationalists concerning the nature of Québec identity and its relation with Canada. It is the other part of a political dead-end that Trudeau's actions clearly contributed to make worse.

# THE CANADIAN GOVERNMENT AND THE ROYAL COMMISSION ON BILINGUALISM AND BICULTURALISM: A NEW DIRECTION FOR OFFICIAL LANGUAGES IN EDUCATION

**MATTHEW HAYDAY**
Matthew Hayday is a PhD candidate in the Department of History at the University of Ottawa. He recently submitted his thesis, which addresses the impact of Canadian federalism on the development of the Official Languages in Education Program. This article draws on the archival research conducted for that thesis, particularly the records of the RCBB held at the National Archives of Canada.

**ABSTRACT**

Amidst the criticism of official languages programs initiated in the wake of the RCBB, a success story has emerged: that of second language instruction and of minority language schools. The official languages in education program, with its federal funding and provincial administration has ultimately laid the groundwork for new constitutional guarantees for minority language education.

In the forty years that have passed since the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism (RCBB) was created, both the Commission and the official languages programs initiated by the federal government in response to its recommendations have come under fire. Not only have the Trudeau government's language policies been criticized for failing to protect and promote the French language in Quebec (Guy Laforest,

*The End of a Canadian Dream*, 1995), they have also been accused of fostering a conception of Canadian identity, popular in English-speaking Canada, that has driven an even deeper wedge between the two solitudes of English-speaking Canada and French-speaking Quebec (Kenneth McRoberts, *Misconceiving Canada*, 1997). The continued threat of Quebec separatism is routinely cited as evidence of the failure of these language policies to come to terms with the distinctive nature of that province. In recent months, Ottawa's long-standing program to promote bilingualism in the civil service has come under renewed fire for discriminating against English-speaking Canadians, particularly those from Western Canada.

While there has been ample criticism of Ottawa's response to the recommendations of the RCBB, there are also important instances of progress which stemmed from its work. The field of education has been particularly rife with success. In the first fifteen years following the release of Commission's report on education, almost all of the provinces initiated new programs in French immersion, expanded their second language course offerings, and undertook major initiatives to legalize and expand their official minority language education programs. By 1977, all of the English-speaking premiers had publicly declared their commitment to official minority language education, and in 1982 these rights were guaranteed under Section 23 of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. In the years which have followed, a series of legal challenges and hard work by community leaders has led to the further elaboration of these rights and the establishment of homogenous minority language schools.

These changes to the Canadian language education landscape, which prior to the 1960s could best be characterized (with the exception of Quebec) as hostile to the education rights of official language minorities and passive to second language acquisition, can be traced to a the recommendations of the RCBB. Recommendation 31 of the Commission's report on education stated that "the study of the second official language should be obligatory for all students in Canadian schools," and further recommendations spelled out how a program of instruction should be constructed. For the official language minority communities, the Commission established the principle that "Anglophone and Francophone parents should have the right to have their children educated in their own language. To implement this principle, minority-language schools will have to be provided." In terms of Ottawa's role, the most important recommendations were 26 and 27, which called on the federal government to "accept in principle the responsibility for the additional costs involved in providing education in the official minority language," and spelled out what it estimated those costs to be.

In response to these recommendations, the Canadian government, in collaboration with the provinces, launched an ambitious program in 1970 to pay for a percentage of the cost of minority and second official language education, from the primary grades through to post-secondary institutions. It also began providing bursaries to students and teachers who wished to improve their language skills, funded the establishment of teacher training centres, and paid for half the cost of special pilot projects in official languages education. The Canadian government would spend over $1.8 billion on its Official Languages in Education Program (OLEP) in its first fifteen years of operation. The program continues to exist to the present day, and was recently granted a new lease on life with the Privy Council's renewal of the Canadian government's official languages action plan (PCO, *The Next Act: New Momentum for Canada's Linguistic Duality*, 2003). How did this federal involvement in education, a provincial jurisdiction under the BNA Act, come about, and how did Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism help determine the parameters of this involvement?

### Crafting the Recommendations

In determining their recommendations concerning how to establish a language regime for Canada, the Commissioners were undoubtedly influenced by the demands of official language minority community associations. French-Canadian and Acadian community organisations, including the Association acadienne d'éducation en Nouvelle-Écosse, the Société nationale des acadiens, the Association canadienne-française de l'education de l'Ontario, the Association des éducateurs canadiens-français du Manitoba, and the Association canadienne-française de l'Alberta, among others, appeared at committee hearings and submitted detailed briefs to the Commission. Their submissions repeatedly stressed the need for official language minority education programs, if there were to be any hope of a future for their communities. Moreover, several of these associations called specifically for Ottawa to get involved to protect their language rights. While the commissioners acknowledged that education was not a panacea to the survival of the French language in Canada, it was the necessary first step.

While the RCBB accepted the principle that official minority schools should be established, the commissioners also agreed that it should be the parents' choice of whether or not their children would attend these schools, rather than making this attendance compulsory, as was the case in some countries with bilingual educational systems. The inclusion of right to a freedom of choice was particularly sought by Commissioner Gertrude Laing. She stressed that parental values in this respect must be respected, and that parents from the minority language community should have the right to send their children to majority language schools, if they felt that this was in the child's best interest (for economic reasons, etc.)

The commissioners recognized that the establishment of minority language schools would not be accomplished by virtue of good wishes and legislation alone. The establishment and functioning of these schools would entail additional costs over and above the cost of a single language education system. A number of different cost factors were identified by the commissioners, ranging from simple economies of scale, to the purchasing of new textbooks and audiovisual materials, to the training and hiring of new teachers. While the commissioners recognized that education fell under provincial jurisdiction, they believed that the confirmation of the bilingual and bicultural character of Canada required action by the fe-

deral government, and thus recommended that the federal government pay for the additional costs entailed by this education.

This funding recommendation represented a hard-won compromise from within the Commission. It was initially proposed by Professor H.B. Neatby, the RCBB's research director, and supported by Commissioner Laing, the Chair of the Commission's study group on Education. The pro-posal emerged out of a desire to have the Commission put forth a concrete proposal to resolve the problem of minority language education. The other main alternative floated in meetings was to propose constitutional changes which would make the provision of minority language education mandatory for the provinces, a solution which was particularly supported by Commissioners Laing and Frank Scott. However, there were major concerns raised, particularly by Commissioners Royce Firth and Paul Lacoste, that such a proposal could provoke a worse crisis in federal-provincial relations, and that there was not enough public support for such a change at present. Moreover, André Laurendeau noted that Quebec would be particularly resistant to any move towards new constitutional guarantees under section 93 of the *British North America Act*. The commissioners thus accepted the administrative proposal, so as to give a more concrete solution to the Canadian government.

The modalities of this funding were the cause of great debate within the Commission. The model proposed by Neatby and Laing stressed a universal federal funding formula, applicable to all provinces. Other commissioners, notably Davidson Dunton, Paul Lacoste and Frank Scott, wanted the federal money to be targeted specifically at minority language education in unilingual provinces, to enable them to catch up to the level of development of provinces such as Ontario, New Brunswick and Quebec. However, this position was rejected by the majority of the Commissioners, particularly given André Laurendeau's assertion that this type of proposal would be unacceptable in Quebec, which would get no funding under this model. H.B. Neatby and Commissioner Rudnyckyj also noted that it would be unwise to exclude the bilingual provinces from this program, as there would then be no incentive for them to improve their existing programs. Moreover, if the federal funding was merely rolled into an equalization grant, as had also been proposed, provinces such as Ontario could divert the funds to other provincial priorities, such as welfare. As such, the universal approach to official language minority education funding was the one put forward in the final recommendations.

Second language instruction was also considered an important priority, especially given the higher receptivity of young children to language instruction. A national interest was also attached to knowledge of the second language, as the commissioners believed that this knowledge would develop into a greater degree of cultural understanding and familiarity with the way of life of the other cultural group. Second language knowledge would also advance a more practical objective of training young people (especially anglophones) for an envisioned bilingual civil service.

The crux of the RCBB's approach to second language instruction was recommendation 31, which states: "We recommend that the study of the second official language should be obligatory for all students in Canadian schools." The commissioners believed that this would not entail radical change to the existing structure of provincial educational systems, as second language programs were already offered in most of these systems, albeit not always by all local school boards, and not at all grade levels. The RCBB notably did *not* make any recommendations about federal funding of second language instruction. Rather, it believed that these programs already existed, and should merely be broadened to include all students.

### From Recommendations to Action

The RCBB's report on Education was released amidst the ongoing mega-constitutional negotiations of the late-1960s. Ottawa and the provinces met several times between 1967 and 1971 in an attempt to revamp the Canadian constitution, and respond to the challenges posed both by new trends in Canadian federalism and by the new nationalism of Quiet Revolution-era Quebec. Provincial governments, led by the conciliatory efforts of Ontario Premier John Robarts, and New Brunswick Premier Louis Robichaud, were thus more favourably disposed to a national official languages program than they had been in the past. This is not to say that there was no resistance. Indeed Alberta Premier Ernest Manning was particularly resistant to the *Official Languages Act*, and several premiers balked at the prospect of a new role for Ottawa in the field of education.

The end result of the RCBB's recommendations, Ottawa's priorities and provincial concerns was a compromise. After two years of negotiations, the federal-provincial programme of cooperation for the promotion of bilingualism in education (renamed the OLEP in 1979) was launched. The federal government agreed to pay for a percentage of the per-student costs of official minority language education and second language instruction programs administered by the provinces. While Ottawa had ideally envisioned a role in evaluating and setting priorities for these programs, the provinces insisted that this was properly their jurisdiction, and blocked those proposals.

The results of the OLEP have been mixed. Deprived of the ability to actively direct the structure of new education programs, Ottawa has often been frustrated by how provinces spent the OLEP grants, at the slow speed with which new programs have been initiated, and at the pedagogical approaches employed by provincial departments of education. Despite these setbacks, the achievements of the OLEP have nevertheless been significant. They have greatly expanded access to both minority and second language education programs across the country, shifted the discourse about language education in Canada, and consequently have laid the groundwork for new constitutional guarantees for minority language education. While one may contest the success of certain aspects of the RCBB's work, it is clear that in education, the Commission is responsible for some significant positive transformations to the Canadian language landscape.