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A LOOK AT 50 YEARS SINCE THE ROYAL COMMISSION ON BILINGUALISM AND BICULTURALISM

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- 5** Getting to Know Ourselves: the Association for Canadian Studies and its Evolving 'Identities'
Jack Jedwab
- 8** Foreword: The B&B Commission – 50 years on
Maxwell Yalden
- 14** The Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, 50 Years Later
Graham Fraser
- 18** The Impact of the Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism on Francophone Minority Communities in Canada
Linda Cardinal
- 24** The Laurendeau-Dunton Commission: The situation of Francophones in Ontario
François Boileau
- 29** Canada's Bilingual Education Revolution: The B&B Commission and Official Languages in Education
Matthew Hayday
- 34** The Fiftieth Anniversary of the Laurendeau-Dunton Commission: Where to now?
Jean-Pierre Corbeil
- 39** Resolving the Language Question: The Impact of the Bi & Bi Commission
Michael MacMillan
- 43** The Laurendeau-Dunton Commission and the need to rethink Canadian Diversity
Alain-G. Gagnon and Jean-Charles St-Louis

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GETTING TO KNOW OURSELVES: THE ASSOCIATION FOR CANADIAN STUDIES AND ITS EVOLVING 'IDENTITIES'

PART 2 OF 2

JACK JEDWAB, Executive Vice-President of the Association for Canadian Studies

There are many individuals and organizations in Canada that contribute to the ongoing discussion and debate about who we are as a people and as a country and that seek to identify the principal factors that account for our continued transformation. There are also many ways to approach the issue. As debates about Canadian identity evolve, so too have there been changes across those institutions that engage in such debates. Canada's universities have played a pivotal role in ongoing reflection around our multiple identities. Over the past few decades, our universities have established different centres and programs that are dedicated specifically to identity issues. Since the 1970's there has been an expansion of centres for Canadian, Quebec, Aboriginal, Immigration and Ethnic studies and a broad range of other university-driven initiatives that bring together faculty and students across disciplines. The academics involved with such programs have generated an inestimable number of conferences and publications.

Government plays a vital role in developing policies and programs that respond to identity needs and have invested significantly in the diverse expression of cultures that collectively defines us. Legislative measures have played a fundamental role in shaping Canadian identities. Indeed law professors are not sufficiently present in national conversations about identity.

As regards the nation's public conversation around identities, there are challenges associated with cooperation between government and the academy. With faculty members seeking to protect their academic freedom there has been some reluctance to establish partnerships with government in undertaking projects that examine identity. For its part government expects that the academy will be mindful of the fact that, when it extends funding for research on identity, policy objectives frequently need to be taken into account. Yet increasingly there appears to be recognition that government is an essential partner in identity debates and therefore, at times, some degree of collaboration is necessary. It is the form taken by such collaboration that is often crucial in ensuring satisfactory outcomes for academic and policy-maker alike.

Since the 1970's, a range of institutions have been established whose aim is to bridge the gap between the two sectors and ensure that joint research efforts do not compromise either academics and/or policy-makers. The Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council provides rigorously peer-reviewed assessments of projects often initiated by government that offer funds for academic research. But SSHRC is a granting organization and therefore does not generate its own research. Outside the academy, a segment of the non-governmental sector offers a forum for policy makers, academic and non-academic researchers as well as those agencies offering services to the public, where together they can all help identify research priorities and, on that basis, attempt to deliver a relevant research agenda. The specific NGO stakeholders often come from the aforementioned sectors. But NGO efforts to establish joint collaboration can also be challenging, as partners serve different constituencies with varying and sometimes conflicting interests. For example academic or other professional associations that constitute an important segment of the NGO sector are mandated to represent the views of their members and frequently advocate for a particular set of goals consistent with academic needs.

As regards social and cultural policies in Canada, the NGO sector that engages in such issues both via reflection and/or service delivery has evolved dramatically over the past few decades. Several organizations once thought to be either fixtures in the NGO landscape or potentially significant sectoral actors have simply ceased to exist. One thinks of the Council for Canadian Unity, the Canadian Policy Research Networks, the Canadian Council for Learning to name but a few. Yet others are struggling to survive after experiencing massive cuts to funding. One thinks of the youth exchange program Katimavik, the International Council for Canadian Studies, the Metropolis Centres for research on Immigration and Integration and several others. Learned societies will undoubtedly struggle with recent cuts to travel assistance programs for conference attendees from the Federation for the Social Sciences and Humanities. And Canadian Studies centres in Canada and abroad have been the object of changes in strategic direction on the part of universities, and also had to learn to work with fewer operating dollars.

A few NGOs possess significant endowment funds that enable them to persist despite changes in the economy

and in the funding environment. Many have however been affected by market volatility and as a result low returns on interest have seen the scope of their activities reduced. Former ACS Board member Chad Gaffield once suggested that the strength of the ACS was that, in the absence of meaningful endowment, it was forced to be entrepreneurial. Those organizations that will survive the ongoing challenge of the current NGO environment will indeed need to innovate.

The case can be made successfully that, over the past two decades in particular, the Association for Canadian Studies has made an important contribution to the national public conversation about Canadian identity. It has done so by generating its own research and forums rather than simply facilitating them for others. It has also been able to move quickly to take advantage of opportunities as they arose, and with its strong cross-sectoral network of contacts has been good on delivery when undertaking the organization of an event, the production of a publication and in completing research and disseminating it. The ACS has built brand value by focusing its research and activities on issues of the day that are on the public and policy-makers radar. In part it was the value of our brand that enabled us to help restore the National Metropolis and manage it successfully in 2013 and we look forward to again convening the Metropolis network for a sixteenth edition of the Conference in 2014.

But to borrow a line from Bob Dylan, "the times they are a-changing" and the Association for Canadian Studies needs to partially rethink its brand as we go forward. We need to rethink the role of membership in our organization and the importance of numbers in this regard. We need to rethink the way we disseminate our conferences, publications and research and, in an environment where the public is inundated with websites and apps, ensure that what we offer is both distinct and relevant. We need to think of how the various projects we undertake meaningfully relate to our mission and governance. We need to think of who are our natural partners. We should ensure that the term 'association' properly reflects the scope of activities that have been undertaken by the ACS or represent the diversity of its principal stakeholders and funders. In other words, we need to be able to answer who and what we are, as an association.

On June 11th, the principal funder of the ACS, the Canadian Studies program of the Department of Canadian

Heritage reinvented itself and is now called the Canadian History Fund. That change is not without significance for the ACS as it will imply that its vital partnership agreement with PCH will be almost entirely oriented towards promoting knowledge about Canadian history. That by no means prevents the ACS from undertaking other activities that are consistent with its broader scope. Over the past two decades, the ACS has widened its sphere of activities and the range and diversity of its partners with a diverse conference, research and publications agenda that goes well beyond the issue of Canadian history.

It is legitimate to ask whether the title "Association for Canadian Studies" fairly describes initiatives such as the work we do for Public Safety Canada on perceptions of terrorism, counterterrorism and security. Where is the intersection between the National Metropolis Conference and the National History Conferences? With this and various other current and future opportunities in mind we are in the process of establishing the Canadian Institute for Identities and Migration (CIIM/ICIM). It will undertake research, conferences and publications that focus on issues of identity, distinct but not separate from the agenda of the ACS, which will be increasingly focused on expanding public knowledge about history and supporting history education. The ACS will continue

to oversee any project or activity related to Canadian history. These include, but are not limited to, the ACS annual conference, the Canadian Issues/Thèmes Canadiens quarterly magazine, the ongoing development of a national network of Francophone history teachers, the creation of learning materials and the organization of student forums.

CIIM will be a good fit for much of the non-history agenda. It will effectively capture our publication Canadian Diversity, the Canadian Journal for Social Research, our public opinion research touching upon various issues, the annual conference of the Canadian Ethnic Studies Association in which we act as the managing partner, the Metropolis Conference, various international projects and other related activities, notably in the areas of diversity and specifically the study of migration, language, ethnicity and religion. CIIM aims to be a think tank that offers a national forum for cross-sectoral dialogue between Canadians about who are as people(s). We have carefully focused on identities in the plural as we are focused on Canada as well the comparative experience around identities elsewhere in the globe. Hence the name is designed to give us a wide mandate when it comes to undertaking projects on a bi-national or multi-national basis.

FOREWORD: THE B&B COMMISSION – 50 YEARS ON

MAXWELL YALDEN received his BA at the University of Toronto, and M.A. and PhD at the University of Michigan. He joined the Department of External Affairs in 1956 and was posted to Moscow, Geneva and Paris, as well as serving in various capacities in Ottawa. He was appointed Assistant Under-Secretary of State in the Department of the Secretary of State in 1969, and subsequently Deputy Minister of Communications in 1973. In 1977 he became Commissioner of Official Languages for a term of seven years. In 1984 he was appointed Ambassador of Canada to Belgium and Luxembourg. In 1987 he became Chief Commissioner of the Canadian Human Rights Commission. In 1996 he was elected to the United Nations Human Rights Committee, and reelected in September 2000. Mr. Yalden is a Companion of the Order of Canada, and Commandeur de l'Ordre de la Pléiade. He has been awarded honorary doctorates by the University of Ottawa and by Carleton University.

ABSTRACT

My purpose in the pages that follow is to offer a brief assessment of what the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism was up to; its major achievements and shortcomings; and the progress of language reform in this country, in the light of its analysis of the problem and its recommendations for resolving some of its salient elements. The Report was no less than a remarkably thorough analysis of a significant aspect of our national identity, and moreover one in which the commissioners attempted to recommend a course of action for remedying its major weaknesses.

INTRODUCTION

Half a century ago, one of the first acts of the newly elected government of Prime Minister Lester Pearson was the establishment of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, better known as the B&B or Laurendeau-Dunton Commission.

The creation of the Commission was a farsighted decision on Mr. Pearson's part, but it turned out to be more than that. In the end, its recommendations and their aftermath were to have a substantial effect on Canadian politico-social life that undoubtedly went far beyond what he and his colleagues could have anticipated.

The contributors to this special edition of "Canadian Issues" explore a range of the Commission's activities and recommendations. They provide a critical examination of their strengths and weaknesses; the policies adopted by governments in response; and the impact on the Canadian identity that have emerged from developments since 1963.

My purpose in the pages that follow is to offer a brief assessment of what the Commission was up to; its major achievements and shortcomings; and the progress of language reform in this country, in the light of its analysis of the problem and its recommendations for resolving some of its salient elements. My perspective is that of one who was involved with these issues for more than thirty years. My involvement included principally participation in the development of language policy as a senior government official, and monitoring the progress of language reform as Commissioner of Official Languages.

When I left the Department of External Affairs (as it then was) in the late 1960s, to join the Secretary of State's Department, (now the Department of Canadian Heritage), with responsibility for official languages programs, the process was already underway. The Commission had criss-crossed the country, hearing all manner of views on language problems and related matters, some of which – opposition to the “two founding peoples” idea in the west, for example, or incipient separatist views in Quebec – surprised and even shocked members of the Commission.

A “Preliminary Report” had been published in 1965, in which the commissioners asserted their conviction that the country was passing through “a crisis” of which many Canadians were not even aware; and affirmed their belief in the fundamental importance of recognizing the “two founding peoples” approach to social and linguistic realities in Canada. And two books of its six-part final report – on official languages and education – had also appeared. Pierre Trudeau had replaced Mr. Pearson as Prime Minister; he had emphasized his firm commitment to language reform; and had set officials to work drafting government responses. Further reports were in train in 1969 and 1970 – on the work world, the “other ethnic groups”, and the federal capital and voluntary associations. All in all, a massive attempt was in the works to identify and remedy what the Commission perceived as significant lacunae in Canada's language policy and the treatment of its two major linguistic minorities.

THE ORIGINS OF THE B&B COMMISSION

One of the first suggestions for the creation of a royal commission came from the then editor of *Le Devoir*, André Laurendeau, backed up with support from francophone colleagues of Mr. Pearson. They were deeply concerned by the highly unsatisfactory situation of the French language and the francophone minority in Canada,

and believed that a thorough investigation of the problem was long overdue.

On this basis, Prime Minister Pearson went ahead. The B&B Commission came into being, with a mandate to

report upon the situation and practice of bilingualism within all branches and agencies of the federal administration;

report on the role of public and private organizations, including the mass communications media, in promoting bilingualism ... and the basic bicultural character of our country and of the subsequent contribution made by the other cultures;

discuss with the provinces the opportunities available to Canadians to learn the English and French languages, and to recommend what could be done to enable Canadians to become bilingual.

The co-chairmen of the Commission were André Laurendeau and Davidson Dunton (then President of Carleton University), with Laurendeau replaced on his death by Jean-Louis Gagnon, one of the commissioners. They were joined by eight others from various parts of the country. It is perhaps worth noting, from the perspective of another generation, that only one was a woman (Mrs. Gertrude Laing of Calgary), and that all were white, although some semblance of ethnic diversity was observed through the presence of Mr. Jaroslav Rudnycyj of Winnipeg and Mr. Paul Wyczynski of Ottawa.

The result was more than seven years of labour, and a total of 150-odd recommendations. Further, the federal government's responses were virtually unprecedented in the history of royal commissions, as to the completeness of their treatment of the Commission's recommendations, and the high proportion of acceptance of those that were within its jurisdiction.

It is also worthy of note that there was a substantial degree of opposition support in Parliament for much of what the government was doing. With the exception of a few of Mr. Diefenbaker's supporters, the Official Languages Act, for example, passed the House of Commons in 1969 with the endorsement of all parties. It should also be emphasized that improvements to the Act were later adopted by Prime Minister Mulroney's Conservative government in the 1980s.

THE B&B RECOMMENDATIONS AND GOVERNMENT REACTIONS

Before turning to a review of their recommendations, it will be worthwhile to look briefly at some of the Commissioners' fundamental assumptions.

First, they made it plain that, in their view, language reform meant "institutional", not "individual", bilingualism. In other words, governments were to provide service in the preferred language of the citizen; by and large, individual Canadians would not be required or expected to become bilingual.

Second, they adopted the "personality" rather than the "territorial" approach to bilingualism. In plain language, this meant that members of a linguistic minority would receive service in their language wherever "their numbers warranted". It did not mean that the country would be "bilingual", in the sense of being divided into distinct unilingual territories, as is the case, for example, in Belgium.

We must also recognize, of course, that they were talking about two official languages, no more. Thus, although there was some dissent on the part of one or two commissioners, there was no intention to assess the situation of other languages spoken in Canada.

And finally, attention to the aboriginal peoples and their languages was entirely lacking. "Our terms of reference", as the commissioners put it, "contain no allusion to Canada's native populations". Nevertheless, they did believe that the authorities should recognize that "everything possible must be done to help the native populations to preserve their cultural heritage" and to assist the survival of the most common languages.

With these two principles underpinning their work; with the exceptions I have just mentioned; and always bearing in mind the importance they attached to "an equal partnership between the two founding races", the way before them was clear. Their recommendations, to which I can give only brief attention, were developed at great length.

RECOMMENDATIONS

First of all, they proposed that the British North America Act (then Canada's constitution) should be

amended to provide (section 93) for minority-language education; and that the provisions of section 133, with respect to the use of English and French in the federal and Quebec legislatures and courts, should be extended to apply to New Brunswick and Ontario.

They further recommended that the federal government should enact an Official Languages Act, providing for equality of status of the two official languages, English and French, and appoint a commissioner of official languages; and that the provinces of New Brunswick, Quebec and Ontario should do likewise.

On matters of governance, they proposed the establishment of "bilingual districts" (with a minority-language population of 10% or more). In those districts, and in the National Capital, service to the public should be provided in both official languages.

With regard to education, the commissioners recommended that minority-language education should be provided in bilingual districts, in the National Capital, and elsewhere, "where practicable", for example in major urban centres. The federal government should defray the additional costs entailed in providing this service. Second language instruction should be "compulsory" in Canadian schools.

As regards the work world, "French Language Units" should be created in the federal public service and the armed forces, with French as the language of work. In the private sector in Quebec, French should be the principal language of work.

As to the "other ethnic groups", fair employment and human rights legislation should be extended and should be monitored by full-time commissions. Conditions for citizenship, the right to vote and stand for office should be the same for all individuals. Private schools teaching in languages other than English and French should continue, but there should be no generalized program of public financing for such schools.

The final book of the report, dealing with the federal capital and voluntary associations, recommended that all services should be "freely available" in both languages in the National Capital. No formal recommendations were made with respect to voluntary associations, but the importance of equal partnership, language reform and cultural sensitivity was emphasized.

GOVERNMENT RESPONSES

Government reactions to all this came forward with remarkable speed, considering the enormous scope of the terrain covered by the report.

Beginning with the constitution, an attempt was made as early as 1971, at Victoria, to entrench language rights, which did not succeed at the time, essentially because of Quebec's unwillingness to accept the overall Victoria package. Negotiations continued, however, and minority-language education was provided for in the 1982 Constitution.

New Brunswick has been declared a 'bilingual province', whereas Ontario and Quebec have not.

As to legislation, a federal Official Languages Act was enacted in 1969, and subsequently amended in 1988 and 2005. New Brunswick also adopted an Official Languages Act; Ontario passed a French Languages Services Act; and Quebec adopted legislation establishing French as the official language of the province.

Federal and New Brunswick commissioners of official languages were appointed; Ontario appointed a commissioner of French language services, who reports to a minister rather than being directly responsible to the legislature; no similar action was taken by the other provinces.

In the matter of government administration, no federal bilingual districts were established. Services are, however, provided in certain of these regions, at the federal, provincial and municipal levels.

Minority-language education is available across the country. Federal subsidies are also provided. Minority-language education at the postsecondary level is accessible in several provinces. Generally speaking, second-language instruction is not a compulsory subject. Federal assistance has been provided, but the administrative structures envisaged by the commission were not created. There are private exchange programs, some of them at least partially subsidized by public funds.



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With respect to the work world, no French Language Units were created, although similar entities were established, with mixed results, in both the federal public service and the armed forces.

Under Bill 101, French is the language of work in Quebec in most cases, although it remains a mixed language regime in others, especially where contact with business or industry outside Quebec is frequent.

With regard to other ethnic groups, fair employment and human rights legislation exists in all provinces, and is monitored by full-time commissions or specialized agencies. Appropriate legislation has been adopted at the federal level as well. Human rights commissions operate at both federal and provincial levels.

Conditions for citizenship, and the right to vote and stand for office, are the same for all individuals both federally and provincially.

Private school subsidies continue, though not equally in all provinces. "Indirect press subsidies" are also maintained. According to the CRTC, Canada's broadcasting system provides several third-language programs, on both radio and television

With respect to the national capital, no legislation creating English and French as "official languages" has been adopted by the provinces of Ontario or Quebec, or the municipalities of Ottawa or Gatineau. However, many services are provided in both languages. No tripartite interprovincial agency has been created to ensure coordination.

Finally, as regards voluntary associations the federal government has offered subsidies for interpretation and translation to various voluntary associations.

WHAT DOES ALL THIS MEAN?

We must now ask ourselves what has been accomplished. The contributors to this volume will review these issues in some detail. I wish only to offer a few observations of a general nature.

Is Canada now a "bilingual country"? The answer is "yes and no". Yes, governments provide services in the two official languages far more effectively – and willingly – than was the case in the past. Even in Quebec, where the Bill 101-inspired regime prevails, such services are

available to a degree in both the public and private sectors. No, however, with regard to individual bilingualism. Immersion schooling has had a salutary affect; and young people are more bilingual than their elders were. But there is no question of Canadians being bilingual from coast-to-coast and there is not likely to be. But then, as I have pointed out, it never was the Commission's intention that they should be.

Were the goals of the B&B Commission realistic? Again, yes and no. They were, to a degree, subject to the problems of all royal commissions: prolixity and "mission creep". On the whole, however, it was reasonable to set out the whole convoluted problem; and this could hardly have been accomplished in a more compact form. Moreover, they had the advantage of publishing their half-dozen reports over a period of as many years, which provided sufficient time for a considered response.

The proposals put forward by the commissioners were on the whole both reasonable and practicable. They never expected that the two main linguistic communities could "enjoy ... advantages ... throughout the country on an equal footing." In other words, the ideal had to be tempered with realism, and identical treatment for both groups was not feasible. Even less was genuine individual bilingualism. Thus, whatever the shortcomings of the commission's recommendations, the superficial argument that "bilingualism has failed" because such objectives were not met is simply to misunderstand what was intended.

Were the commissioners successful in marrying the notion of two official languages with that of "no official culture", as Prime Minister Trudeau put it in 1971? An element of "yes", to be sure; but perhaps with more of a leaning toward "no", in that they found it difficult to put aside their two-founding-peoples approach, which after all was incorporated in their terms of reference and regarded by them as fundamental, at least at the beginning. It is true that they made an effort in this direction in their treatment of "the other ethnic groups" and in diverging somewhat from a dualistic perspective after the death of André Laurendeau. However, it can be argued that they never showed evidence of genuine conviction, and certainly not enough to convince critics in western Canada.

What about the virtual omission of any consideration of the aboriginal peoples? It is obviously the case that they were given no substantial consideration in the report. But

the commissioners rightly observed, as I have also noted above, that their terms of reference made no mention of native peoples. And it is equally clear that they had their work cut out for them with the language issue, without venturing into another difficult and complex area. The huge exercise involved and the massive report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, 20 years later, is proof enough of that.

Finally, it has been asked whether the report of the Commission had an important impact on Canadian identity. Here, the answer must surely be in the affirmative. In so far as royal commission reports ever have an impact, the B&B report must be counted among them. Government responses clearly affirmed that it influenced their actions in the area of official languages; subsequent approaches to constitutional reform, legislation, and governmental policy all bore this out. And with them, Canadians' perception of the nature of their identity also changed. One obviously cannot establish a direct cause-effect relationship, but I believe the case for the significance of the Commission's report in this context is clearly established.

CONCLUSIONS

One can of course conclude that the B&B report made a significant contribution to Canadian life without necessarily approving or disapproving of the results of their work. Whatever one may think of the latter, however, I believe it has to be agreed that the report represented a comprehensive assessment, historically and legally, of Canadian politico-linguistic practices at the middle of the 20th century. It was no less than a remarkably thorough analysis of a significant aspect of our national identity, and moreover one in which the commissioners attempted to recommend a course of action for remedying its major weaknesses.

Many of the problems that are sometimes attributed to the language reform program that was subsequently devised resulted from government action – or more accurately, inaction – rather than lacunae in the Commission's analysis or recommendations. To take only one example, the proposed bilingual districts, so dear to the Commission's heart, were never created, largely because the federal government could not rid the provinces of the idea that they were in some sense a Trojan horse that would be used to introduce *provincial* districts requiring provincial services in those areas.

At the same time, there were undoubtedly weaknesses in the report, both of conception and of presentation.

To illustrate, as a matter of conception, the proposed French language units were both too bureaucratic and not enough cognizant of the human difficulties they could entail. Creating entities in which individuals would work entirely in French and communicate with other administrative units in that language may have looked good to the commissioners on paper. In practice, however, it was widely felt that they could end up establishing what would amount to linguistic ghettos, with all that that would entail for the careers of the persons involved.

With respect to presentation, as basic an idea as institutional bilingualism (as opposed to individual bilingualism) never really came across to ordinary citizens. Many of them simply could not believe that it would avoid a situation in which French would be “shoved down their throats”. And to a degree, the more the commissioners or the government tried to explain, the less convincing they were.

All in all, however, while these and other shortcomings cannot be dismissed out of hand, they are inconsequential when taken in the context of the overall import of the report. The results to which it led and the achievements that flowed from it have been very considerable, perhaps more than in any other country in the western world, with fewer problems and more political peace than many would have expected.

In a word, I think we may conclude that the process of language reform in Canada is here to stay, even if it may have lost some of the thrust that characterised it at the beginning. What was begun by the Royal Commission created by Lester Pearson in the early nineteen sixties and carried on by Pierre Trudeau and successive political leaders, Liberal and Conservative, is now deeply embedded in our constitution, our laws, our administration, our schools, our cultural institutions, and even in the daily life of many of us. I have remarked above that in matters like these one cannot readily establish cause-effect relationships. But what has been achieved is not likely to have come about without the Royal Commission. This, I believe, may be regarded as a fair statement of its legacy to Canadians.

THE ROYAL COMMISSION ON BILINGUALISM AND BICULTURALISM, 50 YEARS LATER

GRAHAM FRASER has been Canada's Commissioner of Official Languages since October 2006. Before his appointment, he had a long and distinguished career as a journalist. Mr. Fraser wrote in both official languages for *The Toronto Star*, *Maclean's*, *Montreal's The Gazette*, *The Globe and Mail* and *Le Devoir*. He is also the author of five books, including *Playing for Keeps: The Making of the Prime Minister* (1988) and *Sorry, I Don't Speak French* (2006), which helped stimulate renewed public discussion of language policy in Canada. Mr. Fraser has a Bachelor of Arts and a Master of Arts in History from the University of Toronto.

ABSTRACT

The Royal Commission played a critical role in bringing to the forefront the state of mutual incomprehension between French-speaking and English-speaking Canada. The key question was the one that Laurendeau and Dunton would ask at the beginning of every public hearing: "Can English-speaking and French-speaking Canadians live together, and do they want to? Under what new conditions? And are they prepared to accept those conditions?" These profound and existential questions made it clear that the commissioners were defining the mandate in a way that went to the fundamental issue of whether the country would, or should, continue to exist – and in what form.

"It is impossible to understand Canadian language policy in ignorance of the past that created it, for it is a continuation of centuries of conflict, competition, and compromise between two of the great world languages and the powers that propagated them within the ever-changing contexts of their domains."¹

On July 19, 1963, the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism was launched – with André Laurendeau and Davidson Dunton as co-chairs. The launch came eight months to the day after Donald Gordon, the President of Canadian National Railways, had been interrogated before a parliamentary committee on the absence of French Canadians from among the CNR's 17 vice-presidents, and seven months after Prime Minister Lester Pearson had called in the House of Commons for the creation of a Royal Commission.

They were an interesting pair: Laurendeau, the passionate, sensitive French-Canadian nationalist who had led the fight against conscription in 1942, who had fought Duplessis first as a member of the Bloc populaire canadien and then as the editorial page editor of *Le Devoir*; and Dunton, former general manager of the Wartime Information Board, former chair of the CBC and president of Carleton University. Both were urbane,

highly civilized men: Laurendeau deeply in touch with the traditions of French-Canadian nationalism, and Dunton well connected to the style and customs of the senior public service in Ottawa.

The members of the Commission were equally impressive: Frank Scott, Dean of Law at McGill University, Quebec labour leader and future federal cabinet minister Jean Marchand, New Brunswick priest and university administrator Clément Cormier, Ontario lawyer – and future High Commissioner and Senator – Royce Frith, Calgary French teacher Gertrude Laing, the University of Manitoba's Department of Slavic Studies head J. B. Rudnycky, and Paul Wyczynski, founder of the Centre de recherche en littérature canadienne-française at the University of Ottawa.

However, in my view, the key debate was between Laurendeau and Scott.

Laurendeau's view, eloquently expressed in the famous blue pages of the Commission's first report, was that Quebec needed to be predominantly French in order to have a critical mass for a successful, distinct French-speaking society in North America, and protections were needed for the minority French-speaking communities and for French-speaking federal public servants. He had also hoped that the Royal Commission would make recommendations for constitutional changes to give Quebec more powers.

Scott, on the other hand, believed that Quebec was legally and historically a bilingual society and that bilingualism should be extended to the rest of Canada. He feared that the Commission was leaning towards a unilingual Quebec and so refused to sign the report, which recommended that French be the language of work in Quebec.

Both men felt that they had lost the argument: Laurendeau because there were no recommendations for a special constitutional status for Quebec, and Scott because his vision of a bilingual Quebec as the basis for extending bilingualism across the country was not accepted. But in fact, both won: Laurendeau, in that Quebec has been clearly defined as a French-speaking society with certain protections for the English-speaking minority, and Scott because minority language protections have been defined as rights and enshrined in the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*.

The Royal Commission played a critical role in bringing to the forefront the state of mutual incomprehension between French-speaking and English-speaking Canada. The key question was the one that Laurendeau and Dunton would ask at the beginning of every public hearing: "Can English-speaking and French-speaking Canadians live together, and do they want to? Under what new conditions? And are they prepared to accept those conditions?"

These profound and existential questions made it clear that the commissioners were defining the mandate in a way that went to the fundamental issue of whether the country would, or should, continue to exist – and in what form.

The initial framing of the issue was not without its flaws. To begin with, the mandate called for the Royal Commission "to recommend what steps should be taken to develop the Canadian Confederation on the basis of an equal partnership between the two founding races, taking into account the contributions made by the other ethnic groups to the cultural enrichment of Canada and the measures that should be taken to safeguard that contribution." Even then, the use of the word "races," as opposed to "peoples," to describe English- and French-speaking Canadians raised eyebrows. And, as Eve Haque pointed out, "For the 'other ethnic groups,' the preliminary hearings were a contestation around the specific terms of reference, with particular concern about the positioning these terms seemed to imply."²

In her book, she quotes Mrs. Saul Hayes telling the commissioners that "the terms of reference have implications that give rise to the basic objection of dividing Canada into a primary group of First Citizens and a secondary group of citizens who *may* qualify as Canadians, under certain conditions."³

Haque describes the commissioners, as well as some of the witnesses, tying themselves into knots over "new Canadians." Some witnesses found that phrase offensive, arguing that, though it was originally used to describe those who came to Canada after 1947, when the *Citizenship Act* was passed, it had acquired a secondary meaning of those who had arrived in Canada after 1759, but were not of French or Anglo-Saxon origin.

Years later, Gérard Pelletier would write in his memoirs that he came to regret that the words "bilingualism and

biculturalism” had been used, since they created so much misunderstanding. He did not explain what he would have recommended instead – but I expect that if such a Royal Commission were established today, the chosen phrase would be “linguistic duality and cultural diversity.”

For that phrase, I suggest, better expresses the contemporary reality. The two dominant language communities speak English and French, but within those communities many different cultures coexist.

Part of the misunderstanding that still exists about Canada’s language policy revolves around the idea of official bilingualism, with many assuming that the goal of the policy is to achieve a state in Canada where everyone speaks both languages. In fact, the reverse is true. Official bilingualism is intended to ensure that the state can serve citizens in both languages so that every citizen is not obliged to be bilingual.

It took a while for the commissioners themselves to grasp this. One of the Commission’s researchers, William Mackey – a distinguished scholar of language policy and founder of and now an emeritus professor at the International Center for Research on Bilingualism at Université Laval – laid out the principles of the bilingual state.

The first was that the survival of each linguistic group must be guaranteed. The second was that the state was founded not to promote bilingualism, but to protect the linguistic integrity of each group, meaning that the bilingual state must defend and even promote unilingualism for both. And the third principle was that the majority must not simply passively accept the minority, but must always help it to develop.

“In fact, there are fewer bilingual people in the bilingual countries than there are in the so-called unilingual countries,” Mackey wrote. “For it is not always realized that bilingual countries were created not to promote bilingualism, but to guarantee the maintenance and use of two or more languages in the same nation.”

At first, Scott was a bit taken aback.

“In regard to this idea of promoting unilingualism, I must confess that, perhaps lacking French logic, I could not see how a Commission appointed to promote bilingualism could end up favouring the promotion of unilingualism,” he wrote in his journal. “Gradually it dawned on

me, and I think on the others, that what Mackey meant was that unless there was a strong degree of unilingualism in the bilingual country for each language, one would eventually dominate and assimilate the other.”⁴

The result – which Scott ultimately found unacceptable and dissented from – was a recommendation that the language of work in Quebec should be French.

On the basis of the recommendations that were accepted, the Royal Commission’s goals were extremely realistic. English and French were recognized as official languages – not only in the *Official Languages Act*, but in the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. The position of Commissioner of Official Languages was created to investigate complaints and to report to Parliament on how federal institutions were respecting their language obligations. A multiculturalism policy was introduced.

Some of the Commission’s recommendations were not enacted. The system of bilingual districts was not introduced – although later, for the purpose of language of work inside the federal public service, a similar system was adopted. Ottawa did not become a federal district, as the commissioners had recommended.

The discourse has changed. Rather than discussing bilingualism and biculturalism, Canadians are more likely to talk about linguistic duality and cultural diversity and how the two concepts complement each other and interact.

But the framework for discussing language rights, duality and diversity was established by the Commission. In the decades since, it became clear that it was possible for Canada to adopt policies that would welcome newcomers to both of Canada’s language communities. French-speaking communities – the majority in Quebec and the minorities across the country – became increasingly culturally diverse and welcoming to immigrants.

The missing component in the framework, however, was Aboriginal issues. Those questions were largely dormant and absent from the public space in 1963; they emerged in response to the Trudeau government’s proposal to abolish the *Indian Act*, which mobilized Aboriginal leadership in the 1970s and 1980s.

But it is difficult to imagine how the scope of the Royal Commission, already very broad, could have been expanded to address Aboriginal questions.

As it is, the debates over language policy, individual and collective rights, the future of minority communities, and the use of French as a language of work in the federal public service can be said to have laid the groundwork for the asymmetrical language policies that now exist in the federal government and Canada's provinces, the concept of language rights that have been enshrined in the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, and the Supreme Court jurisprudence that has clarified and defined those rights.

That sense of compromise, that wrestling between individual rights and collective rights, can be seen in the work of Canadian philosophers Charles Taylor⁵ and Will Kymlicka.⁶ Both accept what Taylor calls “a politics of difference”⁷ and Kymlicka calls “a post-ethnic conception of minority nationalism”⁸: a compromise between collective rights and individual rights that protects the idea of cultural survival.

That sense of compromise between individual and collective rights is now part of the Canadian political and judicial landscape. It is one of the important legacies of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism.

NOTES

- ¹ William F. Mackey and Michael A. Morris, *Canadian Language Policies in Comparative Perspective*, edited by Michael A. Morris, McGill-Queen's University Press, Montréal and Kingston, 2010, p. 17.
- ² Eve Haque, “Canadian Federal Policies on Bilingualism, Multiculturalism, and Immigrant Language Training: Comparisons and Interaction,” in *Canadian Language Policies in Comparative Perspective*, edited by Michael A. Morris, McGill-Queen's University Press, Montréal and Kingston, 2010, p. 269.
- ³ Eve Haque, *Multiculturalism Within a Bilingual Framework: Language, Race and Belonging in Canada*, University of Toronto Press, Toronto, 2012, p. 59.
- ⁴ Mackey and Scott paraphrased and quoted in Graham Fraser, *Sorry, I Don't Speak French: Confronting the Canadian Crisis That Won't Go Away*, McClelland & Stewart, Toronto, 2006, pp. 65–66.
- ⁵ See Charles Taylor, *Multiculturalism and 'The Politics of Recognition': An Essay*, with commentary by Amy Gutmann (Editor), Steven C. Rockefeller, Michael Walzer and Susan Wolf, Princeton University Press, Princeton NJ, 1992.
- ⁶ See Will Kymlicka, *Politics in the Vernacular: Nationalism, Multiculturalism, and Citizenship*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2001.
- ⁷ Taylor, p. 61.
- ⁸ Kymlicka, p. 287.

THE IMPACT OF THE COMMISSION ON BILINGUALISM AND BICULTURALISM ON FRANCOPHONE MINORITY COMMUNITIES IN CANADA

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ABSTRACT

The following article presents some of the reflections and analyses that were made about the situation of Francophones living outside of Quebec by the Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism. It reveals that commissioners, and André Laurendeau in particular, have shown a great deal of sensitivity towards these minorities. The text takes a look at the main recommendations made by the B&B Commission on official minority-language education. The B&B was the very first time an inquiry was set up to consider the situation of French in contemporary Canada and constituted a crucial step in mending past wrongs made in Francophone minority settings.

***“The English are used to dominate:
I have never felt it more.”***

André Laurendeau, *Journal* 1990 [1964]: 67. (traduction)

***“So when did I realize for the first time
that I was, in my country, of a species to be treated inferiorly?”***

Gabrielle Roy, *La détresse et l'enchantement* (1984: exergue) (traduction)

The history of francophone communities outside of Quebec is marked by milestones, most of them unfortunate ones – consider, as an example, the day the English-speaking provinces adopted measures limiting the use of French during legislative assemblies or in schools (Aunger, 2005; 2001). This, however, did happen before the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism (B&B Commission) was created in 1963. From that turning point onwards, the Canadian linguistic system has been through many major changes and the situation of Canada's francophone minorities outside of Quebec has begun to improve. Canada had finally started shaking off its listless stance on language rights, in which it had been immersed for nearly a hundred years.

In this article, we would like to take a look, even if only a brief one, at some of the reflections and analyses that were made about the situation of francophone minorities by the B&B Commission. We believe such a goal to be more than necessary considering that ever since Canada was founded, this was the first time a Royal Commission was put in place in order to consider the situation of its French-speaking population. The Commission's intention was to hear this community out and have a better understanding of the state the country was in. Since the historiography of the B&B Commission and its impact on Francophones living outside of Quebec is virtually non-existent, we write our article with a programmatic intent. The emphasis placed on the relationship between Francophone communities in and outside of Quebec during the Estates General of French Canada in 1967 relegated the work done by the Commission to the background. Yet, two commissioners came from francophone minority communities: father Clément Cormier, founder of the University of Moncton, and Professor Paul Wycynski, cofounder and director of the Centre de recherche en civilisation canadienne-française at the University of Ottawa. Although he was of Polish descent, professor Wycynski was a historian and a specialist of French-Canadian literature, with a particular interest in Émile Nelligan, François Xavier-Garneau and Albert Laberge. This 50th anniversary gives us the opportunity to be reminded of their involvement with the Commission.

We encourage readers to revisit documents written at that time and to scrutinize archives and memoirs in order to better gauge the importance and the impact of this Commission on francophone communities. Throughout this article, we attempt to offer a few comments, ideas and avenues for further exploration.

THE WORK DONE BY THE B&B COMMISSION IN FRANCOPHONE MINORITY SETTINGS

The B&B's mandate was to investigate the state of bilingualism and biculturalism in Canada, to recommend guidelines aiming to promote bilingualism in public and private institutions, to foster a better understanding of Canada's bicultural character and to promote bilingualism amongst Canadians. On top of having received and analyzed 400 briefs (Laurendeau, 1990: 46), the commissioners crisscrossed the country and met with people from French speaking minority communities from diverse backgrounds – students, teachers, business people, religious and community leaders, Francophones and francophiles. André Laurendeau comments on his meetings in his Journal, thus revealing his great sensitivity towards francophone minorities.

Linguistic insecurity in minority communities can bring about behaviours that are at times very contradictory. Laurendeau was fascinated with how Francophones viewed bilingualism; he was perplexed by Acadians from Prince-Edward Island telling him that the language situation was alright when it was not the case; in New-Brunswick, where he was witnessing the awakening of Acadian identity, he observed that the Acadian people's ambitions remained quite modest. As he points it out in his Journal (1990:76), Acadians accept "the notion of all Francophones being bilingual as a normal ideal". However, in Ontario, he is surprised to find a completely different situation. Franco-Ontarians, especially the ones living in Windsor and Sudbury, have a very negative stance on bilingualism. In their opinion, bilingualism inevitably leads to the impoverishment of the French language.

Furthermore, he rarely comments in his Journal on the briefs submitted by representatives from Francophone associations, except for the submission by the Association canadienne française d'éducation de l'Ontario (ACFÉO), which he found to be too subdued. On February 27th 1964, B&B commissioners met with Bishop Demers of the ACFÉO at the Cercle universitaire d'Ottawa. Laurendeau observed that Bishop Demers appeared to be afraid of causing any trouble to federal commissioners by addressing the issue of education, given that this issue fell under provincial jurisdiction. However, Laurendeau considered education as the essential element in resisting assimilation for minority-language communities. Laurendeau willingly recognized the role the University of Moncton played in the Acadian renaissance. Moreover, a certain complicity had

developed between him and Father Cormier, the founder of that institution.

And lastly, Laurendeau (1990: 59) admitted of having been disappointed by his meeting with Robarts and his Ministry of Education. Laurendeau's views aligned better with Prime Minister Robicneau of New Brunswick. However, neither one of them agreed to submit a brief to the B&B Commission. Robicneau considered the topic was too sensitive. As for Robarts, he claimed that a sovereign government could not intervene in initiatives undertaken by another sovereign government. It should be noted that this argument did not really convince Laurendeau (1990: 59).

THE RECOMMENDATIONS MADE BY THE B&B COMMISSION AND FRANCOPHONE MINORITIES OUTSIDE OF QUEBEC

As much as he was struck by the linguistic insecurities of Francophones outside of Quebec, Laurendeau also took note of their militancy and admitted that he was troubled by the hostility his presence seemed to awaken in Anglophones. The latter considered his efforts as nothing more than support towards separatism. Laurendeau writes: "But the thing is, being rooted in a certain culture implies a minimum of separation (from another culture). Similarly, someone who wants to have a personal life, especially when it comes to some kind of inner life, feels that he cannot belong uniquely to his public functions and fellow citizens." (1990, 195). It is not surprising to find in the B&B's second volume many recommendations intended to reinforce education in French outside of Quebec. The first recommendation concerns the right of parents to be able to choose the official language they want their children to be schooled in. Thus, the following passage is found in the second volume (1967: 146):

Our first recommendation follows logically from the principle of the moral right of Canadian parents to have their children educated in the official language of their choice and from the definition of the bilingual districts (which ensures that the number of students affected will justify the provision of minority language schools). We recommend that public education be provided in each of the official minority languages at both the elementary and secondary levels in the bilingual districts.

Commissioners contemplated creating bilingual districts. That project was dropped, but the idea of providing official minority language education was maintained. It was considered that establishing these kinds of schools was an essential step in order to restore a certain amount of linguistic security for francophone minority communities. This is also the reason why B&B commissioners asked provincial governments to make sure that these schools "acquaint students with their cultural heritage" (Commission, 1967: 154). The commissioners also believed that these types of schools in Quebec, Ontario and New Brunswick, should fall "under the direction of an administrator at the associate or assistant deputy minister level, and that this administrator be provided with an adequate staff and budget" (Commission, 1967: 174) and "that a school board shall include representatives of both majority-language and official minority-language schools whenever the board has both kinds of schools under its jurisdiction" (Commission, 1967: 171).

The B&B Commission also made a significant number of recommendations on training programs for teachers all over the country, from the Maritimes all the way to the Western provinces, and on higher education in the official minority language. Probably inspired by the University of Moncton, the B&B Commission recommended that "French-language education at the university level be provided for the Francophone minority whenever the potential enrolment makes it feasible to do so." (Commission, 1967: 182). It also recommended that "the University of Ottawa and Laurentian University give priority to increasing the number of degree programmes offered in French (Commission, 1967: 184)". The Commission also made a number of recommendations aimed at promoting second-language instruction and suggested that a research council on languages should be created.

The various recommendations made concerned all levels of schooling, from preschool to university. A substantial number of them stressed the need for second-language teaching. Some serious change had to be brought about at the time; past errors in French language education had to be corrected and measures had to be taken in order for the language to remain relevant outside of Quebec. The challenge undertaken by Laurendeau was to provide Francophones outside of Quebec the necessary conditions to attain a sense of linguistic security through education.

THE IMPACT OF THE B&B COMMISSION ON MINORITY FRANCOPHONE COMMUNITIES

Laurendeau and the other B&B commissioners concluded their analysis of the French language situation outside of Quebec by stating that “overall, however, we have been convinced that the spokespeople from minority French communities have faith in the survival of the French culture despite the difficult conditions it is sometimes faced with (Commission B&B, 1965: 73)”. At that time, some provinces had already started setting up measures in order to support a greater openness towards their francophone minorities. Thus, in 1965 in Ontario, Robarts set up an Advisory Committee on French Language Services in order to provide services in French to its French-speaking population. He also authorized the use of French in Ontario’s legislative assembly. Around that time, the University of Ottawa adopted the 1965 University of Ottawa Act, through which it committed itself to “promote the development of bilingualism and biculturalism, and to protect and develop French culture in Ontario”. In 1967, Robarts’ government allowed the set-up of French public high schools – they were however faced with some resistance from existing school boards, all Anglophone, who were opposed to the idea.

The B&B Commission should also be acknowledged for inspiring the creation of second language immersion programs in the 1970s. These programs were created with the goal to foster Canadian unity. Not only do these programs still exist nowadays all over Canada, but the University of Ottawa finally created the first immersion program at the university level in 2009. To this day, more than 1 000 students from all over the country have taken part in this new program.

Despite these achievements, Ontario refused to sign on to official bilingualism, which was a recommendation made by the B&B, and preferred maintaining the Anglophone character of the province and providing services in French when the numbers warrant it. As for New Brunswick, it became an officially bilingual province in 1968, one year before the Official Languages Act was adopted by the Canadian Parliament. This federal act, however, was not specifically designed with francophone minorities outside of Quebec in mind. It was mostly designed as a measure to address the concerns of Francophones living in Quebec; and it has, in fact, been conducive to the government of Quebec’s decision

to make French the official language of the province. Then, in 1977, the adoption of the Charter of the French Language confirmed once and for all that French, and not bilingualism, was the central element of Québécois identity. In the meantime, in the Western provinces, the battle over French went on. In 1979, nearly 100 years after having been revoked, French-language rights in the legislative assembly in Manitoba were reinstated following the decision of the Supreme Court of Canada in the Forest case. And finally, in 1982, when the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms was adopted, a section was specifically included to address minority language educational rights (section 23), responding to the need highlighted by the B&B Commission to find solutions to the situation of French minorities outside of Quebec.

Of course, these various consequences are not all direct results of the recommendations made by the B&B, but we believe they emerged as a prolongation of the work that was started by the latter. However, the project of revitalizing the French language outside of Quebec, 50 years after the B&B Commission, remains a work-in-progress. Despite the adoption of the Official Languages Act and the federal government’s funding of activities held in official minority languages, it is only in 1988, with the passing of the new Official Languages Act, that the Canadian government took on the responsibility of ensuring the vitality and the development of its official language minorities. Moreover, more than 15 years had to pass for the first action plan designed to promote official languages in Canada to be presented (in 2003). Laurendeau would have probably agreed that francophone minorities could benefit from some renewed support, although he would have wondered, rightfully so, if these efforts are not coming a bit too late. Nevertheless, every five years since 2003, the Canadian government has been releasing what has come to be known as a roadmap on official languages which provides a number of initiatives meant to support the development of official language minorities. The latest roadmap was published in March 2013.

CONCLUSION

The B&B Commission primarily focused on bilingualism. Debates around defining concepts such as biculturalism were largely inconclusive, and this to the point where the latter was eventually overshadowed by the notion of multiculturalism. Regardless, bilingualism in francophone minority settings often did not have good

press. It has often been considered as being a pretext used in order to deny Francophones their rights to have access to services in their mother tongue. That being said, Laurendeau probably did not suspect at the time that bilingualism would become a big part of the identity of Francophones in minority settings. This idea divides the francophone research community as well. Should bilingualism be regarded as an added value or a prelude to assimilation? In any case, up to now, solutions to linguistic insecurities of francophone minorities outside of Quebec have stemmed more from a bicultural approach than from a bilingual one. Indeed, the implementation of homogeneous French institutions such as unilingual French schools should not be mistaken as part of the B&B Commission's bilingual approach given that one of the obvious consequences of these schools has been their role in reinforcing Canadian biculturalism. Even if discussions around biculturalism have been dropped indefinitely by every government since Trudeau, this debate will eventually have to be reopened. Biculturalism is an unfinished project and an idea that remains as strong today as it was in 1963.

NOTES

- ¹ For a more complete examination of Ontario's linguistic regime, see Cardinal and Normand (2011).
- ² Matthew Hayday (2005).
- ³ For a synthesis of the debate, Deveau, Allard and Landry.

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THE LAURENDEAU-DUNTON COMMISSION: THE SITUATION OF FRANCOPHONES IN ONTARIO

MR. FRANÇOIS BOILEAU is currently pursuing his third mandate as the French Language Services Commissioner of Ontario. His role is to receive complaints from members of the public and present recommendations regarding the application of the *French Language Services Act*. Prior to beginning his mandate as Commissioner in August 2007, Mr. Boileau acted as legal counsel for the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages where he defended landmark cases before the Supreme Court of Canada. He also played a key role in defending French-language rights by representing the *Fédération des communautés francophones et acadienne du Canada* (FCFA) in the Montfort case before the Ontario Court of Appeal. In 2011, François Boileau was awarded the Order of Merit of the *Association des juristes d'expression française de l'Ontario* (AJEFO).

ABSTRACT

After many years of debates and consultations, the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, also known as the Laurendeau-Dunton Commission (named after its co-presidents), published a final six volume report comprised of countless recommendations. However, its most resounding recommendation remains that French and English should be granted official language status at the federal level in Canada, but also at the provincial levels in Ontario and New-Brunswick.

Fifty years later almost to the day, legitimate questions remain: Has Ontario found its balance between strengthening the rights of its French-speaking minority without becoming an officially bilingual province? How was Ontario able to reconcile multiculturalism and the francophonie?

THE FRENCH LANGUAGE SERVICES ACT: AN ALMOST-OFFICIAL ACT

As soon as 1969, the federal government followed-up on the Laurendeau-Dunton Commission's key recommendations by adopting the Official Languages Act. The impact of this act on the rights of Francophones, and especially on the ones living in Ontario, was not instantaneous but is undeniable. Following an approach of slow but incremental steps, reforms have been undertaken in Ontario under the leaderships of Robarts and Davis.

Thus, in 1972, the Ontario government adopted a French-language services delivery policy. This policy not only created the first designated areas, but also forced the government to make all of its communications available in both languages.

In 1978, Ottawa MP Albert Roy submitted a private bill (Bill 89) to the Legislative Assembly, the forerunner to the French Language Services Act, whose aim was to enable Franco-Ontarians to have access to services in their language based on a framework law. Although this bill was supported by French community leaders, it was ultimately dropped given the inauspicious political climate at the time.

It was only in 1986 that the French Language Services Act (FLSA) was unanimously adopted by the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, following difficult negotiations and behind-the-scenes dealings.

Nonetheless, the FLSA is much more than an act on the delivery of services in French. It has an almost constitutional status, as it was proven by the Montfort case before the Ontario Court of Appeal. Furthermore, the FLSA makes sure that the laws being passed at the Legislative Assembly are passed in both languages and that every citizen has the right to be tried in either French or English under the Courts of Justice Act.

In essence there is nothing really missing in this act for it to be considered an official languages act ...apart for the word "official" in its title!

Admittedly, Ontario's FLSA is not as detailed as the Official Languages Act; this does not however prevent it from accomplishing great feats. The notion of active offer of services in both languages is nowadays understood by the provincial government as being an integral part of the Act.

Moreover, since 2011, the province has a regulatory framework for services offered by third parties, in order to put an end to loopholes.

Following the Montfort episode, many leaders of the Franco-Ontarian community have undertaken an initiative called *Opération Constitution*¹, the goal of which is to include, in the Constitution, the equality of the French and English languages in Ontario. This subject has also resurfaced during the *Colloque sur les 25 ans de la loi sur les services en français* held at the University of Ottawa in November 2011.

Nevertheless, given the lack of enthusiasm with which constitutional reforms are met by Canadians and their governments, this initiative has not yet successfully materialized. However, since Franco-Ontarians are keenly aware of the value of small steps, it would not be surprising that this initiative might pick up again in the not-so-distant future.

But despite not living in an officially bilingual province, Franco-Ontarians benefit from many accomplishments that bring support to the FLSA and which contribute to the vitality of their community.

REINFORCING FRENCH LANGUAGE RIGHTS

The history of Franco-Ontarians is not one of undisturbed peace and harmony. Indeed, the community's achievements have often come from hard-won struggles. This was the case with Regulation 17. Then there was the educational crisis of Sturgeon Falls in 1971 and the one in Penetanguishene in 1976. More recently, the Montfort hospital saga² has shown what a strong and proud Franco-Ontarian community can accomplish when faced with an unacceptable situation.

However, a great number of initiatives and positive steps have been taken by the government of Ontario during the last decades, and which have enabled the francophone community to develop and blossom. Such successes need to be remembered in order for us to better assess the progress that has been made while planning for our future.

In October 2004, Ontario's Minister of Education launched the *Politique d'aménagement linguistique* (PAL). This first-of-its-kind policy in the country aimed to help protect the culture, reinforce the pride and improve the academic performance of French-speaking students in Ontario by providing them with an educational system in their mother tongue, that met the specific needs of the community. That same year, the government adopted the Courts of Justice Act which gave official language status to both French and English in Ontario's judicial system.

Three years later, even though it was not caught in a linguistic crisis, the provincial government proposed to modify the FLSA to appoint an independent ombudsman to help it better apply the text and the spirit of the FLSA. The position of French Language Services Commissioner was thus created, the second provincial office to be established after the one in New-Brunswick.

In 2008, TFO (TVOntario's French television channel) became a financially autonomous independent station. The station, which was officially launched in 1987, has an important role in the development and vitality of Ontario's francophone community, mostly because of its educational television shows created for French-language schools, which are also available online.

In 2010, the Legislative Assembly unanimously made September 25th the Franco-Ontarian Day. This significant gesture was undertaken to acknowledge the francophone community's contributions to Ontario. The chosen date coincides with the first time the Franco-Ontarian flag was raised in 1975. But despite these sustained progresses, the francophone community is still faced with numerous challenges, particularly in terms of postsecondary education.

THE IMPORTANCE OF A CONTINUUM IN EDUCATION

Of course, since 1982, section 23 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms recognizes the right of official language minorities to enroll their children in schools in their mother tongue (where numbers warrant it). But it was only in 1998 that the first French language school boards were created.

In a minority setting, providing education in the French language functions as a measure to protect and pass on the French language and culture, conditions which are necessary to sustain Franco-Ontarian communities. Colleges and universities are integral parts of the education continuum. They play an important role in community development by training future francophone leaders, nursing staff, doctors, technicians, entrepreneurs, investors, all of whom contribute to the well-being of the province and the competitiveness of its economy. In a situation where the French-language is in a minority position, such programs give students at the elementary and high school level the opportunity to continue their education in their own language and give parents an incentive to commit to the idea of schooling their children in French from the beginning.

However, at the present time, while Franco-Ontarians account for 600 000 of the province's population³, only 36% of postsecondary education programs are being offered in French in eastern Ontario, 33% in northern Ontario and 3% in central southwestern Ontario⁴. These numbers speak for themselves.

Indeed, unlike Francophones living in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Manitoba, who are half as numerous as Francophones in Ontario, Franco-Ontarians still do not have their own university, aside from Hearst⁵.

It is thus quite obvious that more postsecondary programs in French are necessary; a Franco-Ontarian university should possibly even be created at some point in the future. This does not however take anything away from bilingual universities such as Laurentian University and the University of Ottawa; both universities have a great reputation across the country and even internationally.

Creating a Franco-Ontarian university does not necessarily imply building new facilities, especially if we consider the difficult economic situation the provinces finds itself in these days. A Franco-Ontarian university could become the place where the community congregates in order to participate in the decision-making process involved in choosing programs to better prepare students and society for the future.

Indeed, depriving Francophones and Francophile students from such options negatively affects Ontario's society as a whole; it renders it progressively less successful to provide equivalent services in French because of the lack of bilingual and French-speaking professionals. Students could potentially come to consider French language schooling at the elementary and high school level as being an exercise in futility.

FRANCOPHONIE AND MULTIPLE IDENTITIES

The Laurendeau-Dunton Commission devoted an entire book to the *Cultural Contributions of the Other Ethnic Groups*⁶. Following the Commission's recommendations, the federal government adopted its policy on multiculturalism in 1971; one of the policy's main goals was to encourage immigrants to learn at least one of Canada's two official languages, to help them become contributing members of Canadian society.

At that same time, we are witnessing the emergence of a French regional identity claim. Indeed, it is towards the end of the 1960s that the term "French Canadian" as it was understood then started disappearing and began being replaced by terms like "Franco-Manitoban", "Franco-Albertan" and "Franco-Ontarian", to name a few⁷. In 1969, the Association canadienne-française de l'Ontario (ACFO) boycotted the Estates General of

French Canada, thus putting an end to the solidarity of the *French-Canadian family*⁸.

The Franco-Ontarian flag flew in 1975 and this act reinforced the community's desire to appropriate their cultural and linguistic identity in the province. It marked the beginning of a pluralistic social project undertaken by the French-speaking community of Ontario.

In 2009, the government of Ontario adopted a more inclusive definition of francophone (DIF), a first in Canada, adding yet another building block to this pluralistic project that characterises the contemporary Franco-Ontarian society.

The DIF includes, in addition to people that have French as a mother tongue, individuals that have neither French nor English as mother tongue, hence allophones, but who have a certain degree of knowledge of French as an official language and use it at home.

Beyond the natural and predictable impact such a redefinition has on statistical data, this definition mainly enabled members of different ethno-cultural communities to become officially recognized and included as being part of the Francophone community living in the province, reinforcing their sense of belonging to the community.

The DIF also includes exogamous families where either one of the parents is francophone. The percentage of exogamous families is constantly on the rise. Today, these families represent slightly more than two-thirds of francophone households even though the transmission of the French language from parent to child has more than doubled over the past 35 years.⁹

Indeed, a good proportion of children from exogamous families attend French-language schools. It was thus important that these households be taken into account and be recognized as Francophone.

Children from exogamous families define themselves primarily as being "bilingual"¹⁰. Some researchers consider the identity of Franco-Ontarian youth as being double or as constituting a new or hybrid definition of identity, with its obvious advantages¹¹. These young people identify more readily with two, even three, communities.

Additionally, there is another segment of the population that is often overlooked, underestimated even, although it represents a real natural ally on which Francophones should rely: the Francophiles. Citizens belonging to this group appreciate and consider linguistic duality as an advantage for their children and for Ontario's society as a whole. And because they adhere to this ideal, Francophiles try to take part in the activities of the Franco-Ontarian community, even though it is not always an easy task.

The Francophone community has to continue recognizing the contributions made by Francophiles to its development. The future of French Ontario has to rhyme with success, failure cannot be an option. In today's world, where the existence of multiple identities should no longer be a source of anxiety, Francophones and Francophiles have to work together to ensure the vitality of the French language in the province.

In conclusion, the Laurendeau-Dunton Commission has had an undeniable impact on Canadian society, particularly if we consider the French-services acts that have been adopted in Ontario, Nova Scotia and in Prince-Edward Island. Ontario's francophone community can certainly rely on tangible progresses that have been made and institutions that have been put in place in order to further its development and vitality. However, numerous challenges remain and minorities will never have the same amount of power the majority has. Protecting their legislative and constitutional rights will thus always remain a priority in order to maintain the linguistic duality and cultural diversity that define Canada.

NOTES

- ¹ Created in 1997, in the aftermath of the Montfort case's success, the *Opération Constitution's* goal was to include the rights of Franco-Ontarians in the Canadian Constitution. In its beginning, the movement was made up of about fifty members representing the francophone community; lawyers, seniors, youth and academics from across the province.
- ² See *Lalonde vs Ontario (Health Services Restructuring Commission)* (2001) 56 O.R. (3rd) 577.
- ³ For more details, see <http://www.ofa.gov.on.ca/fr/franc0-recensement-2011.html> (page visited in April 2013).
- ⁴ Office of the French Language Services Commissioner. *The State of the French-Language Postsecondary Education in Central Southwestern Ontario: No Access, No Future*, final report, Toronto, 2012.
- ⁵ Le Collège de Hearst is also known as l'Université de Hearst.
- ⁶ This is the title of the Commission's fourth book, published in 1969.
- ⁷ Michel Bock and Gaétan Gervais, *L'Ontario français: Des Pays-d'en-Haut à nos jours*, Centre franco-ontarien de ressources pédagogiques, 2004 Bock and Gervais, p. 183.
- ⁸ Gaétan Gervais, "L'histoire de l'Ontario français (1610-1997)", dans Joseph Yvon Thériault, dir. *Francophonies minoritaires au Canada – L'état des lieux*. Moncton, Éditions d'Acadie, 1999, p. 157.
- ⁹ Jean-Pierre Corbeil and Sylvie Lafrenière, *Portrait des minorités de langue officielle au Canada: les francophones de l'Ontario*, Ottawa, Statistique Canada, 2010.
- ¹⁰ Dallaire, Christine, "I am English too': Francophone Youth Hybridities in Canada." In Nilan, P. and Feixa, C. *Global Youth? Hybrid Identities, Plural Worlds*, (pp. 32-52). London and New York: Routledge, 2006.
- ¹¹ According to a recent study done at York University, bilingualism could delay the onset of Alzheimer's disease by a few years. For more details, see <http://www.lapresse.ca/sciences/medecine/201102/18/01-4371966-lebilinguisme-reduirait-les-effets-de-lalzheimer.php> (page visited in April 2013).



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CANADA'S BILINGUAL EDUCATION REVOLUTION: THE B&B COMMISSION AND OFFICIAL LANGUAGES IN EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

In most key respects we are still living in the B&B Commission-inspired era in the field of education. The right of the two official language minorities to educate their children in their mother tongue, as pushed for by the commission, has now been guaranteed under the constitution where there are sufficient numbers of students to warrant this education, a provision the courts have interpreted quite generously. The state of official languages in education is certainly not perfect in Canada. However, the state of the field of education has been so radically altered since the creation of the Royal Commission in 1963 that one would be foolish to focus solely on the ongoing weaknesses in the system. The entire conception of how minority language education should operate – and that it should be considered a right – has shifted 180 degrees over the past half century.

Fifty years after the creation of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, it is certainly fair to say that many of the hopes attached to the Commission's work remain unfulfilled. While progress has been made in terms of federal government services being offered in both official languages, it remains true that the default working language of many government departments continues to be English, and that many francophones feel compelled to speak in English with their supervisors and in meetings in order to be properly understood. The 1971 adoption of a policy of multiculturalism was, in many respects, a rejection of the vision of an officially bicultural Canada promoted by B&B Commission co-chair André Laurendeau and many other French-Canadians. And one must certainly use qualifiers if one wishes to speak of Canada as a bilingual country; the vast majority of Canadians remain unable to carry on a conversation in both official languages. However, while acknowledging these and other limitations, it is important to give credit to the major strides that have been made in Canada as a direct result of the Commission's work. Arguably, this is most evident in the sector of education, where the recommendations of the commission led to a dramatic shift in both official minority

language education and second language instruction. Moreover, the policies and programs resulting from the commission's work gave rise to actors in both government and civil society who have been able to promote and advance the cause of enhanced official languages programs in education over the past five decades, leaving behind a radically transformed education sector.

Consider the state of Canadian education in 1963. Quebec, alone of the provinces, offered a full gamut of educational programs from kindergarten through to university in both English and French. Indeed, prior to the Parent commission-inspired educational reforms, its minority English Protestant system was better funded than its French Catholic one. In the rest of Canada, the situation for official language minorities seeking instruction in their mother tongue was pitiful. In New Brunswick, the Acadian communities, who accounted for one-third of the province's population, were ill-served by underfunded publicly-run "bilingual schools" that gradually phased out French language instruction as students advanced through the grade levels. After the softening of the punitive Regulation 17 in 1927, Ontario had a system of French-language elementary schools but no publicly-funded French-language secondary education. As one headed further east or west, the situation got worse. Manitoba and Alberta, for instance, only permitted one hour per day of French language instruction. English-speakers who wished to learn French as a second language could take courses in the elementary and high schools of many provinces, but curriculum reforms of the 1960s were starting to eliminate mandatory second language course requirements – a development welcomed by many who observed that these courses failed to produce significant second-language competency in most students.

While a causal connection is difficult to prove definitively, it is nonetheless true that the period of the B&B Commission's tenure was one in which language rights, particularly in the education sector, were brought to the forefront of Canadian public debate. Aware of the climate of Quebec's Quiet Revolution, many provincial governments and school boards began to alter their practices in the language sector. In the mid-1960s, school boards in Montreal and Saint-Lambert pioneered French immersion programs, while the privately run Toronto French School (founded in 1962) expanded its French programming for English-speaking schoolchildren. Many provinces began the process of undoing decades-

old restrictions on French-language education for francophone students. New Brunswick radically altered the structure of its education system, providing centralized funding to a province-wide system of English-language, French-language and bilingual school districts. In 1967, Ontario Premier John Robarts announced his intention to provide funding to French-language public secondary schools, and delivered on this promise in 1968. By 1968, the Prairie provinces had adopted permissive legislation for schools that wished to provide 50% of their instruction in French, and Nova Scotia had created an advisory committee on Acadian education. These changes, a sampling of what was underway, did not go as far as many francophone community associations were requesting in their submissions to the B&B Commission, but nevertheless represented a significant shift in the approach of English-majority provinces to French-language education.

The first two reports of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, released in 1967 and 1968, included several key recommendations that would ultimately have major impacts on the education sector. Volume I, on the official languages, is of course known for its recommendations that the federal government adopt English and French as Canada's two official languages, adopt an official languages act, provide services in both official languages (initially supposed to be governed by a system of bilingual districts, which was ultimately abandoned in 1976 [see Bourgeois 2006]), and create an officer of Parliament, the Commissioner of Official Languages, with a mandate to investigate the government's adherence to the official languages policy (RCBB, Volume I, 147-149). In this volume, the Commissioners also argued that Canadian parents should have the right to have their children educated in the official language of their choice and that this should be recognized in the educational systems, dependent on the concentration of the minority population.

Volume II targeted the issue of education squarely on. Recognizing the crucial nature of mother tongue education for community vitality, the Commissioners boldly recommended that the federal government assume the responsibility for covering the additional costs that the provinces would encounter in providing education in the minority language (RCBB, Volume II, recommendation 26). This recommendation came despite the provinces' constitutional jurisdiction over

education, because “[f]rom a national perspective... minority lan-guage schools are essential if Canada’s bilingual and bicultural nature is to be confirmed.” (RCBB, Volume II, 192-3). Moreover, the commissioners believed that enhanced second-language capacity in Canada’s population would enhance cultural understanding of the other *official language group*, while also fulfilling the practical need for more bilingual Canadians to make an official languages policy practicable. They therefore recommended that the study of the second official language should be made obligatory for all students in Canadian schools. (RCBB, Volume II, recommendation 31).

At the time of the release of the B&B Commission’s report on education, the federal government was preparing what would become the Official Languages Act, 1969, which would also lead to the creation of the Commissioner of Official Languages. Keith Spicer was the first person named to this position. It was also in the midst of trying to negotiate the patriation of the constitution, and thus there were ongoing federal-provincial committees discussing, among other issues, the question of language rights in the federal government’s proposed Charter of Rights, which would become part of the (ultimately failed) 1971 Victoria Charter. These provided venues for the B&B Commission’s recommendations on official languages education to be discussed and debated.

The federal government generally accepted the thrust of the Commission’s recommendations, and indicated its willingness to fund, via the Secretary of State, both minority language education and second language instruction. By 1970, the federal government and the provinces had agreed upon a five-year funding program to promote bilingualism in education (as it was called at the time). Ottawa would contribute a percentage of the provincial cost of educating students in the minority official languages, and also the teaching of the second official language to the majority language students. This funding would be available to ongoing programs (so as not to penalize provinces that already were offering such education), but was primarily intended as an incentive to provinces to expand their program offerings by offsetting these costs. The Bilingualism in Education Program (as it was known until 1979) was expanded in 1972 to encompass special initiatives for universities offering minority language education programs and teacher training, the creation of language training centres, second-language teacher training bursaries, and shared-cost

special projects. Beyond the ambit of this program, in 1971 the federal government began funding the Summer Language Bursary Program for students who wished to undergo an intensive immersive experience in their second language during the summer months. In 1973, the Official Language Monitors Program was created so that minority language students could work as teacher aides for second-language students. The Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC), administered these two programs.

Although initially envisioned as a program to provide short-term incentive funding to develop the official languages in education, the Bilingualism in Education Program has been renewed every three to five years, and was renamed the Official Languages in Education Program (OLEP) in 1979. In its first fifteen years of operation, over \$1.5 billion was provided to the provinces. The program resulted in many of its desired goals. Over the course of the 1970s and early 1980s, most provinces dropped their restrictions on French mother-tongue education, and developed provincial structures to develop and support these programs. Federal funding was also channelled towards expanding elementary school French-as-a-second-language (FSL) programs. Perhaps most significant in the second-language sector was explosion of French immersion programs, which proliferated across the country, aided in large part by the federal grants, which funded these programs at the same (higher) level as it did minority language education. Quebec, despite restricting access to its English language educational programs, maintained them for its minority language community. (Hayday 2003) As of the present date, over \$7 billion has been spent under the auspices of the OLEP. The Second Language Bursary and Official Language Monitors Programs continue to operate today, although renamed in 2004 as the Explore and Odyssey/Odyssée programs.

The creation of the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages, the federal ombudsman for the *Official Languages Act*, had surprising consequences for the education sector. Although his primary mandate was to investigate complaints against the federal government for its implementation of the Act, the first Commissioner, Keith Spicer took a pro-active approach to trying to prevent such complaints from arising in the first place. This entailed making recommendations to the government on how to strengthen its approach to language policy. Witnessing some of the failures and weaknesses

of the federal government's efforts to train unilingual civil servants in their second language, he proposed a "youth option" in his Fifth Annual Report. This entailed shifting the focus of language policy to effective language education for children, so that they would grow up to become bilingual adults, able to fill the government's need for bilingual staff. More broadly, the youth option would also foster cultural understanding and interest between the country's two largest language groups, an objective he had been articulating since his first report.

In addition to advising the federal government to invest in this course of action, Spicer took advantage of opportunities to promote this ideal in his public communications and media interviews, thus conveying similar messages to the provinces and the CMEC. Working with his office's modest budget, Spicer developed educational kits and posters aimed at Canadian schoolchildren designed to foster interest in language learning, an approach emulated by his successor, Max Yalden. In the final year of his term, Spicer played convenor to a conference of parents interested in expanding French-second language learning opportunities for their children. The conference led directly to the founding of Canadian Parents for French (CPF), a national advocacy group that continues to be a leader in the promotion of French Immersion and FSL to this day. Yalden, in addition to having his office support CPF's efforts to mobilize communities in support of expanded language learning opportunities, also became keenly engaged in promoting student exchange programs and urging universities to expand their second language programmes.

One might arguably also draw a connection between the B&B Commission, the federal funding programs it spawned, and the adoption of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms in 1982. More specifically, the inclusion of minority language education rights in section 23 was a development that would have been unthinkable prior to the B&B Commission. The new discourses around language education rights and the funding that encouraged provinces to start creating official language minority classes and schools arguably went a long way to convincing the provincial governments to accept the inclusion of this clause in the Charter, and also to agree that this clause would not be subject to the notwithstanding clause (section 33). As many scholars have noted, this section of the Charter then provided leverage for francophone minority communities to win

the right to school governance through the courts over the course of the following two decades (Martel 1991, Behiels 2004, Martel & Pâquet, 2012).

In most key respects we are still living in the B&B Commission-inspired era in the field of education. The right of the two official language minorities to educate their children in their mother tongue, as pushed for by the commission, has now been guaranteed under the constitution where there are sufficient numbers of students to warrant this education, a provision the courts have interpreted quite generously (see the case of Summerside, PEI, for example: *Arsenault-Cameron v. Prince Edward Island*, [2000] 1 S.C.R. 3). Subsequent Commissioners of Official Languages, right up to the current Commissioner, Graham Fraser, continue to be keen advocates for federal funding and provincial provision of official languages programming in education and opportunities for student exchange programs. Federal dollars still flow to the provinces to maintain and expand minority and second official language education. And although there are certainly problems with the French immersion programs in the country – a supply of qualified teachers, for example, often being a significant concern – there is still tremendous demand for these programs. Rarely does a year go by where there is not news coverage of one Canadian school board or another whose capacity to provide enough spaces for the students seeking admission is being sorely tested. Arguably, even these periodic failures of the system to meet demand provide evidence of a kind of the success of the B&B Commission's legacy of stimulating Canadians' desire for quality education in their second official language.

The state of official languages in education is certainly not perfect in Canada. Critiques have been levied at Canada's FSL and French immersion programs in terms of the language capacities of their graduates, and similar concerns have been raised about the quality of English instruction in Quebec's French-language schools. Recalcitrant school boards and provinces have sometimes had to be forced by court action to provide minority language education and minority school governance. Canadians, by and large, still tend to be able to speak only one of the two official languages. However, the state of the field of education has been so radically altered since the creation of the Royal Commission in 1963 that one would be foolish to focus solely on the ongoing weaknesses in the system. The entire conception

of how minority language education should operate – and that it should be considered a right – has shifted 180 degrees over the past half century. Second language instruction, while not mandatory in many jurisdictions, has also often increased substantially in terms of quality and intensity for those parents and their children who seek this option. What remains now is to build on these foundations, fund these programs adequately, and invest resources in the dimensions of these programs that can lead to future improvements.

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THE FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE LAURENDEAU-DUNTON COMMISSION: WHERE TO NOW?

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ABSTRACT

The goal of this short article is to demonstrate, with the help of available official statistics, that the transformations and evolution that occurred within the Canadian legal framework in terms of official languages over the last fifty years coincided with a significant decrease of social and economic inequalities between Francophones and Anglophones and that, in turn, the demographic shifts in Canadian society are now giving rise to new issues and challenges, particularly as regards the French language as we approach the Commission's 50th anniversary.

Since Lester B Pearson's government launched the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism (Laurendeau-Dunton Commission) in 1963, Canada has been through profound changes, especially when it comes to its demography, society, culture, laws and politics.

When the Privy Council Committee reviewed the Commission's mandate in July 1963, it was the principle of *equality of the two peoples* that have founded the Canadian Confederation² which was set as the guiding principle of this initiative aimed at reporting on the state of bilingualism and biculturalism in Canada. It thus became the commissioners' responsibility to ascertain to what extent that equality existed.

The Commission's mandate was not only limited to the equality of "two peoples", but to the "equal partnership of all who speak either language and participate in either culture, whatever their ethnic origin."³ Moreover, this equality principle did not mean absolute equality of the members of both groups, but rather "a real equality of opportunity – an equality ensuring that the fact of speaking English or French would be neither a help nor a handicap to a person seeking entry into the institutions affecting our individual and collective life"⁴ and that this should hold for all aspects of life; social, cultural, economic and political.

At the time the Commission was created, a sense of discontent could be felt amongst the country's Francophones in relation to the vitality of their language and culture. And the Commission did indeed reveal that Francophones were markedly and consistently in a weaker position than their Anglophone counterparts when average income, educational level, professional occupation and business ownership were considered⁵.

A portion of the Laurendeau-Dunton Commission's mandate was to determine ways in which equality amongst Francophones and Anglophones could be achieved. In this respect, one of the main impacts the Commission has had was without a doubt the creation and the adoption of the Official Languages Act by the federal government in July 1969, the first policy having specifically to do with language to be passed by the federal Parliament. This act was created in order to "ensure respect for English and French as the official languages of Canada and ensure equality of status and equal rights and privileges as to their use in all federal institutions, in particular with respect to their use in parliamentary proceedings, in legislative and other instruments..." (section 2).

The goal of this short article is to demonstrate, with the help of available official statistics, that the transformations and evolution that occurred within the Canadian legal framework in terms of official languages over the last fifty years coincided with a significant decrease of social and economic inequalities between Francophones and Anglophones, and that in turn these demographic shifts in Canadian society are now giving rise to new issues and challenges, particularly as regards the French language, as we approach the Commission's 50th anniversary.

SOME MILESTONES OF LANGUAGE LEGISLATION IN CANADA

Since the adoption of the Official Languages Act in 1969, the Canadian legislative framework in regards to official languages has greatly evolved. For the purpose of brevity, we will limit ourselves here to a summary of some of the main milestones of this evolution.

Following the enactment of the act in 1969, Canada has set in place an official policy on multiculturalism in 1971, a policy which follows-up on recommendations made in the Laurendeau-Dunton Commission's fourth volume on the contribution made by the other ethnic groups to the cultural enrichment of Canada.⁶

At the provincial level, while New-Brunswick has granted official status to both French and English in 1969, Québec, through the adoption of the Charter of the French Language in 1977, posited French as the province's only official language, a shift which has had significant consequences, especially in regards to the language of instruction and the language used at work. It is only in 1986 that Ontario adopted its French Languages Services Act, a policy which guaranteed an individual's right to receive services in French from Government of Ontario ministries and agencies in 25 designated areas.

In 1982, the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms enshrined linguistic rights in the Canadian Constitution. Sections 16 to 22 of the Charter are about official language in Canada, section 23 specifically concerns the right of citizens belonging to a French or English-speaking minority to be educated in their mother tongue.⁷ In 1982, the notion of multiculturalism was also enshrined in the Charter, in as much as section 27 allows it: "This Charter shall be interpreted in a manner consistent with the preservation and enhancement of the multicultural heritage of Canadians."

It should also be noted that during the 1970s and in the 1980s in particular, French as a second language educational programs offered in provinces other than Quebec and educational programs promoting bilingualism grew significantly. For instance, while there were 260 schools offering a French immersion program during the 1976-77 school year, this number soared to 1 800 for the year 1991-92.

In order to reflect the country's new Constitution, the 1969 Act was revised in 1988 so as to "expand the legislative basis of the language policies and programs adopted by the federal government"⁸. Amongst the major changes that resulted from the revision of the Act of 1969, sections IV, V, VI and VII, which respectively concern communications with and services to the public, services provided on behalf of federal institutions, language of work in federal institutions, participation of English-speaking and French-speaking Canadians in federal institution (Commitment to equal opportunities and equitable participation), and finally, the advancement of English and French in Canadian society. Section VII of the 1988 act was modified in 2005, thus compelling the federal government's departments and agencies to take positive measures to foster the development of official language minority communities in Canada.

In 2003, the federal government adopted a five-year National Action Plan on official languages (2003-2005), which was followed by the Roadmap for Canada's Linguistic Duality 2008-2013 and the Roadmap for Canada's Official Languages 2013-2018.

SIGNIFICANT DECREASE IN SOCIO-ECONOMIC INEQUALITIES

The evolution of the legislative framework, programs and policies relating to official languages coincided with a marked and progressive decrease of socio-economic inequalities between Francophones and Anglophones in Canada.

As regards levels of education, census data from 1971 shows that 44% of Canadians aged 15 or older with French as a mother tongue had not completed the 9th grade comparatively to 23% of that same age group whose mother tongue was English. In 2011⁹, this gap had significantly narrowed; 25.7% of the population having English as a mother tongue had a high school diploma as their highest certification compared to 20.3% of individuals having French as a mother tongue. Similarly, 22% of the former had a bachelor level or higher university diploma compared to 18.6% of the latter. The gap that still exists nowadays can partly be explained by the fact that older generations of French-speakers are less likely to have a diploma or a degree than their English-speaking counterparts.

In terms of revenue, the significant gaps that existed between Francophones and Anglophones have also greatly narrowed, or even completely disappeared in some cases. For instance, while the median income of French mother tongue Quebecers was 7 250 dollars lower (in constant dollars, 2005) than the one of English mother tongue Quebecers in 1970, it was inferior by 4 000 dollars 35 years later. The narrowing of this gap is much more significant when we consider median income; in 2005, French-speakers had a slightly higher median income than English-speakers. In Ontario and in many provinces excluding Quebec, census data for 2006 shows that the median income of Francophones between the ages of 25 and 44 was in many cases superior to their English-speaking counterparts.¹⁰

One of the main changes regarding Francophones on the labour market is without a doubt the fact that during the 1960s and 1970s, this group was underrepresented in many sectors and was often confined to sectors with lower incomes. Hence, Francophones were a lot less likely than Anglophones to hold jobs in management, business, finance and administration. They were also underrepresented in the natural and applied science sector. This gap has considerably subsided today, and this to the point where overall each group is relatively equally represented in every sector.

The Laurendeau-Dunton Commission and the 1988 Official Languages Act have had a great impact on the representation of Francophones in the public service sector, especially at the federal level. Thus, while 26.9% of Canada's population was made up of individuals with French as a mother tongue in 1971, this group only held 23.8% of jobs within the federal public sector. In 2011, while Francophones accounted for 21.7% of Canada's population at that time, they made up 27% of the labour force within the federal government. Outside of Quebec, while Francophones made up 6% of Canada's total population, they accounted for 9% of the total employees working for the federal service. Thirty five years later, while their demographic weight was of 4%, they held 11.5% of federal public service jobs.

CHANGING DEMOGRAPHIC CONTEXT (1961-2011)

The narrowing of the gap in inequalities between Francophones and Anglophones over the last decades

happened at the same time important changes in the country's demographic context were underway. While the principle of *equality between the two nations* guiding the work done by the Laurendeau-Dunton Commission has resulted in equality of rights within all Parliament and Government of Canada institutions, the demographic forces at work in the last fifty years brought forth new challenges.

Over the last half century, numerous studies have shown that the active use and parent-child transmission of languages are closely tied to the demographic weight and status of those languages on a given territory, consequently, the demography of linguistic groups is thus a defining factor for the future of the French language in the country.

Through its activities, the Commission has shed light on the proportions (or number) of Francophones in the provinces and amongst their communities.¹¹ In 1961, Quebec's population was made up of 81.2% of individuals having French as a mother tongue, 13.3% of individuals having English as a mother tongue and 5.6% of individuals that had a language other than French or English as a mother tongue. In comparison, in all the other Canadian provinces, French was the mother tongue of 6.6% of individuals, 76.8% had English as a mother tongue while the demographic weight of the other languages combined was 16.7%. It should also be noted that the importance given to Quebec's demands within the Commission's work cannot uniquely be attributed to the fact that Quebec is the sole province where Francophones form a majority, but also to the fact that Quebec has a significant demographic weight within the Canadian Confederation (about 28.8%).

At the time of the 2011 Census, Quebec's demographic weight in the Confederation was 23.6% and Ontario's weight increased from 34.2% to 38.4%, mainly due to the influx of international immigration to that province. Likewise, Alberta and British-Columbia's populations combined represented 16.2% of Canada in 1961; it grew to 24% in 2011.

In Quebec, while the demographic weight of French as a mother tongue and French as the language mainly used at home varied between 81% and 83% for 1971 and 2001, it slightly declined during the next decade, which can mainly be attributed to the influx of international immigrants having a mother tongue other than French or

English. Due to the fact that Quebec's immigration policies tend to give an advantage to immigrants who have some knowledge of French, the proportion of immigrants able to speak French upon their arrival in Quebec has gone from less than 30% in 1980 to about 63% in 2011. In 2011, 94.4% of Quebec's population claimed being able to carry on a conversation in French. In 1961, this proportion was 87.4%.

Outside of Quebec, the demographic weight of French as a mother tongue went from 6.6% in 1961 to about 4% in 2011. As to the use of French as the main language spoken at home, it went from 4.3% in 1971¹² to 2.4% in 2011. When it comes to knowledge of French, the 1961 Census showed that 8.7% of individuals living in provinces outside of Quebec were able to carry a conversation in that language, compared to 10.2% fifty years later.

While the higher birth rate amongst Francophones during the 1950s and 1960s relatively maintained their demographic weight in the country during that time, many factors changed the situation in the following decades. Outside of Quebec and New-Brunswick, a decline in fertility coupled to a fragmentary parent-child language transmission resulted in a substantial increase of the Francophone population's average age. An increase in exogamous marriages and a rise of the use of English at home has also negatively affected the transmission of French to younger generation.

But the factor that always had and continues to have the greatest impact on the demographic structure of Canada's population is international immigration. On average, over the last 20 years, some 235 000 immigrants came to Canada every year, with more than 80% having neither French nor English as a mother tongue. Today, of the 250 000 immigrants that Canada welcomes annually, about 200 000 settle outside of Quebec and very few know French. Between 2001 and 2011, an average of 4.4% of newcomers settling in a province other than Quebec could speak French and barely 2% had that language as their first spoken official language.

While the demographic weight of Quebec in Canada was 23.6% in 2011, only 19.2% of immigrants that came to Canada between 2006 and 2011 were living in Quebec in 2006.¹³ Furthermore, 15.2% of immigrants that came to Canada during that period had French as their first official language (FOL), which is significantly lower than the demographic weight of Canadian having French as

their first official language (23.2%). Finally, it should also be noted that between 2001 and 2011, two-thirds of the population growth in Canada was due to international immigration. According to demographic projections based on the 2006 Census data, this proportion will reach 90% in thirty years.

CONCLUSION

It is undeniable that the inequalities amongst Francophones and Anglophones that were observed by members of the Laurendeau-Dunton Commission have considerably diminished over the last fifty years, and even disappeared in certain cases. Over the years, thanks to Canada's official languages legislative framework and many fierce struggles and demands, official language minorities have obtained many rights. But despite acquiring many linguistic rights, significant demographic trends that have been modifying the country's landscape in the last fifty years, such as international immigration as the main source of population growth and the strong inclination of immigrants to adopt English as their main language in the public and even the private domain, there remain important new challenges on the horizon. The greatest challenge that will most likely continue to arise is still the recognition and coexistence of the two official languages in a context of ever growing linguistic and cultural diversity. While the equality principle between two languages and the two main cultural groups was driving the work undertaken by the Commission, in 2013 the demographic imbalance between French-speakers and English-speakers which seems to gradually deepen across the country will continue to feed debates and concerns about the future of the French language in the country.

NOTE

- ¹ The analysis made in this article is the author's own and not Statistics Canada's.
 - ² Considering the contribution made by the other ethnic groups to the cultural enrichment of Canada.
 - ³ Report of The Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, Volume 1, Ottawa, 1967, p. xxix.
 - ⁴ Ibid, p. xxxii.
 - ⁵ See « Les groupes linguistiques au Canada : 30 ans de scolarisation », Jean-Pierre Corbeil, *Tendances sociales canadiennes*, n° 11-008 in the catalogue, Winter 2003.
 - ⁶ For more on this subject, see the article « Le multiculturalisme canadien », March 2006, Michael Dewing and Marc Leman, Parliamentary Information and Research Center, Library of Parliament.
 - ⁷ In certain provinces, it is only towards the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s that Francophones were granted the right to manage their own schools.
 - ⁸ Marie-Ève Hudon, Justice Canada, « *La Loi sur les langues officielles: Comprendre ses principes et son régime d'application* », Document interne, 2009. It should be noted that the Canadian Multiculturalism Act also came into force on the 21st of July of 1988; it was adopted by Parliament a week prior to the adoption of the Official Languages Act, 28th of July, 1988.
 - ⁹ Starting with the Census of 2006, Statistics Canada surveys people on the highest certificate, diploma or degree obtained instead of the number of years of schooling.
 - ¹⁰ At the time this article was written, the 2011 National Household Survey's data on revenue was not yet released.
 - ¹¹ At the time of the Commission, 48.3% of Canadians were of British descent, 30.4% were of French descent and 25.8% were of other ethnic origin. It should be noted that a large part of the studies done by the Commission were based on official statistic data on ethnic origin provided by the 1961 Census.
 - ¹² The question of the language most often spoken at home first appeared in the Census at that time, mainly because of a recommendation made by the Laurendeau-Dunton Commission.
 - ¹³ Since historically the number of immigrants integrating Quebec society has been proportionally small compared to the province's demographic weight in the Canadian confederation, amongst the 6 775 770 immigrants living in Canada in 2011, 974 895 (14.4%) were residing in Quebec.
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RESOLVING THE LANGUAGE QUESTION: THE IMPACT OF THE BI & BI COMMISSION

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ABSTRACT The language issue has changed dramatically over the past 50 years, and the impact of the Bi and Bi Commission has had a considerable impact on that evolution. The perceived constitutional crisis that launched the royal commission has dissipated, replaced by more mundane, occasionally acrimonious disputes over incremental policy adjustment. Language equality and language rights were two fundamental policy goals guiding the Commission's endeavours. While its agenda on language equality was only partially adopted, the analyses and prescriptions of the Bi and Bi Commission are amply reflected in the language policy frameworks upon which the crisis has been laid to rest, and will continue to inform the foundations of linguistic accommodation in Canada.

As the fiftieth anniversary of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism (the Bi and Bi Commission) approaches, it invites examination of the state of language issues in Canada and the impact the Bi and Bi Commission had on their evolution. The most casual review of the current situation reveals that the perceived constitutional crisis that launched the royal commission has dissipated, replaced by more mundane, occasionally acrimonious disputes over incremental policy adjustment. Language policy continues to provoke sporadic debate at the federal and provincial levels. In the fall of 2012, the Conservative government of Stephen Harper conducted an abbreviated and largely invisible public consultation regarding the existing federal language policy, the purposes and results of which have yet to surface. While Harper had been a vociferous critic of the federal Official Languages Act prior to forming the government, as Prime Minister he has been conspicuously silent on the subject. In March 2013, the minority Parti Québécois government in Quebec introduced Bill 14, which proposes a substantial extension of the requirements of the Bill 101, the Charter of the French Language. However, the lack of cross-party support for the PQ initiative ensures that the status quo will prevail. Neither result is surprising, since surveys of public opinion in recent years reported that “70% of Canadians feel that bilingualism is a defining feature of the country”, and “a majority of Canadians – six in ten – believe that

official bilingualism is a success story that Canadians can be proud of." (Government of Canada, 2008, 5; Jedwab, 2009, 9) In combination, these facts reflect the changes wrought to the language situation in Canada, and are a measure of the impact of the Bi and Bi Commission on subsequent political developments over language.

In its final report, the Bi and Bi Commission recommended substantial changes in Canadian public policy to achieve not only equality of the two official languages in Canada, but also equality of their linguistic communities. Above and beyond the intrinsic merit of such changes, the Commission perceived this goal to serve national unity, by removing major sources of linguistic grievances emanating principally from Quebec. This would go a long way toward resolving the perceived nascent constitutional crisis over language. Such changes, it clearly recognized, would not be welcomed outside of Quebec. However, the Commissioners insisted that a firm commitment among federal and provincial political elites to the language policy initiative would suffice to ensure its acceptance and implementation. Some of these expectations ultimately proved overly optimistic, but the vision they offered would be achieved in significant measure.

The goal of linguistic equality was central to the Commission's agenda, but it would prove decidedly elusive to define and even more controversial to implement. As they asserted, "our mandate clearly states the problem in terms of equality: it postulates an 'equal partnership between the two founding races'". (RCBB, 1968, xxxix) What was this taken to involve? They elaborated that, "the point at issue is essentially equality of opportunity, but a real equality of opportunity – an equality ensuring that the fact of speaking English or French would be neither a help nor a handicap to a person seeking entry into the institutions affecting our individual and collective life." (1968, xli) This was a tall order in a society that was overwhelmingly English speaking beyond the borders of Quebec. It required substantial expansion of the number of Francophones in the federal public service, a substantial expansion of a capacity to offer services in French, creating opportunities to work in French in the federal public service, and the cooperation of provincial governments to implement comparable policies in provincial public administrations.

The goal of joint action by federal and provincial governments to create bilingual districts across the country did not succeed. It foundered on resistance from provincial governments combined with the challenges of identifying acceptable distinctions in treatment of

the two official language minorities in the provinces. (McRae, 1998, 72-76). The necessary political consensus and support among provincial political elites simply did not emerge. In the end, the federal government developed and implemented its own plan for provision of bilingual federal services where sufficient demand existed. Only New Brunswick followed the federal lead in passing an Official Language Act to recognize English and French as such, and to commit to provision of government services in both languages. In subsequent decades, a number of individual provinces would enact legislation to provide varying measures of French language services suited to their respective circumstances. Quebec would initially take steps to assert the priority of French over English in 1977, but followed that with legislation in the 1980s acknowledging entitlements to health and social services for Anglophones. As a result, a measure of joint federal provincial policy commitments was achieved.

The core concept of "equal partnership" as the model for equality was particularly problematic. As they understood the goal they were to pursue, equality would involve "...the equal partnership not only of the two peoples which founded Confederation but also of each of their respective languages and cultures." (RCBB, 1968, xxxix) They recognized the immense challenges such a goal would face. During their hearings, they heard many complaints and criticisms about the model they were developing, not least of which was opposition to the idea of equality between the language groups or communities themselves. This has been a prominent issue in subsequent considerations of language equality both for federal and New Brunswick language policy. Majority language groups, whether in Quebec, New Brunswick or Canada as a whole do not accept the idea that numerical inequality is consistent with equal status for the linguistic communities, especially when such claims have a significant impact on the distribution of benefits and career opportunities. In 1981, the government of New Brunswick attempted to pass legislation to recognize the equality of its two linguistic communities. The effort failed, and illustrated the point that language equality is a contentious rationale for language policy, not least because the two language groups may disagree profoundly on the meaning and implications of language equality. What ultimately emerged was a more limited, pragmatic concept of equality wherein "equal treatment under equal circumstances is a broad approximation of its policy content". (MacMillan, 1998, 176) Equality of service

– the availability and quality of service provided – was a readily defensible and acceptable mode of equality that distributes benefits equally to the members of different linguistic communities and is therefore more acceptable to both. This has been a prominent characteristic of evolving language policy, especially at the federal level.

Equal partnership faced other challenges as well. It was offensive to those forming the increasingly multicultural character of Canadian society, which were excluded from this formulation. Beyond that, as Oliver notes, “equal partnership demanded greater autonomy for Quebec”, an agenda which the Bi and Bi Commission ignored, and which in any event was out of step with the constitutional orientations of Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau. (Oliver, 1993, 320) While the equal partnership concept was ultimately discarded, the principle of support for and promotion of the two linguistic communities advanced by the B & B Commission was progressively enhanced over the ensuing two decades. The revisions to the federal Official Languages Act in 1988, which asserted a federal responsibility to preserve and promote the two linguistic communities were an important legislative realization of that principle. Its significance was enhanced in the Supreme Court interpretation of its status in the *Beaulac* case, where the Supreme Court asserted that “Language rights must in all cases be interpreted purposively, in a manner consistent with the preservation and development of official language communities in Canada” (Supreme Court of Canada, 1999, 791). Subsequent judicial decisions would infuse more substantial content into the principles enunciated in the Bi and Bi report.

The immense volume of research conducted for the Commission provided a fact-based rationale for such an agenda. It documented the degree to which the French language was largely excluded from national political life. If employed in the federal public service, most would have to “park their language at the door”, as one described it, upon arriving for work. Not surprisingly, Francophone citizens and clients of government services were routinely unable to be served in their mother tongue by their government administrators. All these realities were amply documented in the research volumes, and roundly criticized as areas for action to advance “a real equality of opportunity” for both official language groups. While the studies documented the scope of the problems, they also revealed avenues for policy development. Most importantly, they indicated nation-wide public

support, among both Anglophones and Francophones, for federal government services being available to both language groups in their own languages. Such support did not extend to provincial government services, nor to services in the private sector, but the results did indicate that a central element of the Bi and Bi Commission’s policy goal enjoyed public support. (Pool, 1974, 484-6) Not surprisingly, this became a prominent focus of the Bi and Bi Commission’s recommendations and the subsequent Official Languages Act (1969). Over the two next decades, subsequent studies of public attitudes on language policies revealed a gradual increase in levels of support and a broadened scope of language entitlements supported. While the Francophone public had always strongly supported entitlements to minority language education and government services from both federal and provincial governments in the official languages, the Anglophone community expressed majority support (57% or higher) for these entitlements, as well as support for hospital services (MacMillan, 1998, 39-46). Thus, national public opinion eventually surpassed the commitments made in both the OLA and the language clauses of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

As noted earlier, the Bi and Bi Report had counted on elite support to overwhelm public resistance to the comprehensive integrated language policy it proposed. One of the remarkable elements of subsequent developments was the degree to which public support equalled that of political elites. This was systematically documented in the large survey of support for Charter rights conducted in the years following its adoption. The Charter Project was designed to assess the extent to which Canadians supported the rights entrenched in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. It concluded that official bilingualism had become a broadly accepted value both in the Canadian public and the Canadian political and administrative elites. Among the public, Francophones were more strongly supportive of official bilingualism than Anglophones, (96 per cent versus 73 per cent), but substantial majorities of both groups were supportive. The political, administrative and legal elites were generally at or above 80 per cent in supporting the Charter provisions, including, it should be noted, members of the Parti Québécois. While this support was somewhat fragile and could be undermined by political controversies, it nevertheless confirmed a prevailing national consensus for official bilingualism. (Sniderman et. al., 1996, 195)

Did the Bi and Bi recommendations which were implemented resolve the perceived constitutional crisis over language? The prominence of language controversies in the process of implementing federal language policy, and the two Quebec referenda that followed, suggest limited success in the short term. Given the scope of changes introduced to the prevailing language hierarchy, this is hardly surprising. Such changes, however, were necessary and once implemented, formed the basis of linguistic peace. Nevertheless, it was only a part of a long-term solution – a judgment shared by the Bi and Bi commissioners. When the first volume of their work appeared, André Laurendeau had sadly remarked that “it does nothing for Quebec.” (Laurendeau, 1991, 8) This was because it left untouched several of the most prominent language grievances in Quebec, such as the dominance of the English language in Quebec workplaces, immigration and linguistic assimilation. Somewhat ironically, it would take a Quebec government determined to achieve independence via linguistic assertion for the French language to address these remaining problems identified by the Bi and Bi Commission. The Parti Québécois language legislation, still popularly known as Bill 101, would redress these issues within the provincial domain, soothing linguistic insecurities, and completing the resolution of the language crisis.

It is worth emphasizing that the federal policy of official bilingualism, extended and reinforced with the regime of language rights based in the Charter, enjoys substantial support in Quebec. A survey on support for independence in Quebec discovered that such support increases as linguistic insecurities rise, and wanes in tune with the decline of such anxieties. (Nadeau and Fleury, 1995). The federal language policy that emerged from the Bi and Bi Report, in conjunction with Bill 101, has done much to assuage language concerns in Quebec, to the point that a recent commentator has declared “the end of the language crisis in Quebec.” (Anctil, 2010, 368) There is good reason to draw such a conclusion. It has been over two decades, specifically since the expansionary reforms to the OLA in 1988, since federal politics has been roiled by languages debates. Within Quebec, the language issue has periodically claimed the limelight, but ultimately the

language policy status quo has been maintained. This is not to say that language issues may not yet arise in either jurisdiction again. Canadian political history testifies to the proposition that language is always a sensitive topic, easily subject to provocations. However, the analyses and prescriptions of the Bi and Bi Commission are amply reflected in the policy frameworks upon which the crisis has been laid to rest, and will continue to inform the foundations of linguistic accommodation in Canada.

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THE LAURENDEAU-DUNTON COMMISSION AND THE NEED TO RETHINK CANADIAN DIVERSITY

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ABSTRACT Despite the fifty years that have passed since the launch of the Laurendeau-Dunton Commission, the framework that was used then to address cultural and linguistic issues in Canada sounds familiar, even contemporary. The dominant approaches in debates about (re)-defining the Canadian federation have up to today always reproduced that same pattern, which revolves around the relationship between linguistic majorities (Quebec's status being a central element), minority integration as the expression of Canadian diversity and a dismissive stance towards issues specific to aboriginal peoples. Revisiting the work that has been done during that time offers the great opportunity to cast a forward-looking glance at the new conditions that will define a way for us all to coexist in Canada's multinational context.

"Developing a Canadian policy is like building a puzzle."
André Laurendeau ([1964] 1990: 75) (traduction)

Responding to the growing concerns voiced by cultural, political and economic elites in Quebec, Prime Minister Lester B. Pearson launched a broad inquiry in 1963 whose aim was to revitalize the relationship between Canada's two founding peoples. He thus sparked the first of a series of major reassessments in Canada's constitutional framework that rippled through the country for more than half a century. Working with what it framed as a "crisis", the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism (B&B Commission) set out to recognize that the Canadian federation was composed of "two majorities", the equality of which should be pursued, and that Quebec was home to a "distinct French-speaking society" (*Preliminary Report and Book I*). With special emphasis given to identity issues, the Commission's efforts were directed towards consolidating and reinforcing Canada's French and English-speaking communities. Aboriginal groups and cultural minorities, while well represented at public hearings and in the briefs submitted to the Commission, were given a somewhat more peripheral importance in the final report. The situation of aboriginal peoples was not considered as being part of the Commission's mandate, and as such are barely discussed in the report save for a mention in the foreword that the "most widespread" languages and cultures should be preserved as they are elements of the "common heritage of all Canadians" (*Book I*: xvii). Contributions made by cultural communities are discussed in the Commission's fourth volume, which bears the questionable title "The Cultural Contribution of the Other Ethnic Groups" and are the subject of a minor commentary written by Commissioner J. B. Rudnyckyj on the institutionalization of the "regional languages". *Book IV*, which informed Canada's multicultural policy, essentially suggests that the "other ethnic groups" should blend in with the two other linguistic majorities all the while encouraging the protection of cultural legacies that "enrich" Canadian heritage.

Despite the fifty years that have passed since the launch of the Laurendeau-Dunton Commission, the framework that was used then to address cultural and linguistic issues in Canada sounds familiar, even contemporary. The dominant approaches in debates about (re)-defining the Canadian federation have up to today always reproduced that same pattern, which revolves around the relationship between linguistic majorities (Quebec's status being a central element), minority integration as the expression of Canadian diversity and a dismissive stance towards issues specific to aboriginal

peoples. Trying to solve this Canadian "puzzle", to quote Laurendeau, always seems to involve starting over with the same pieces that were cut-out by the Commission. Revisiting the work that has been done during that time offers the great opportunity to cast a forward-looking glance at the new conditions that will define a way for us all to coexist in Canada's multinational context. This exercise has to enable us to examine the possibilities and the limits associated with the notion of belonging, as it is conceptualized in an officially bilingual state where two "citizenship regimes" operate in constant tension with each other, moved by similar preoccupations around how to deal with cultural diversity in a multicultural context.

Two persistent sources of tension that arise when negotiating belonging and citizenship in Canada become apparent through the work done by the Commission. On the one hand, despite the emphasis laid by the Commission on the urgent need to redefine the role of Quebec to achieve equality between Francophone and Anglophone societies, it appears that only a difficult and partial institutionalization of political autonomy can be allowed if the multinational character of the Canadian state is to be maintained. On the other hand, consistent with the concept of citizenship built on the majorities' hegemonic practices as it was demonstrated by the Commission (see Haque2012), we can witness that there is in Canada, as well as in Quebec, a certain broadening of the definitions of belonging, but that while these definitions acknowledge the "cultural contributions" of minority groups (official language minorities, aboriginal peoples, individuals of immigrant origin or of mixed race), they remain largely determined by the terms and conditions that Canada's two majorities define (see Gervais, Karmis and Lamoureux 2008).

THE DIFFICULTY OF INSTITUTIONALIZING POLITICAL AUTONOMY IN A MULTINATIONAL STATE

The Laurendeau-Dunton Commission was set in motion at a time when citizenship belonging to Canada was being redefined, a process to which the Commission significantly contributed. According to Eve Haque's recent study (2012), the language and culture of either of the "founding people" (more so than ethnic origin or descent) explicitly became the elements through which Canadian "national" identity is defined and expressed. According to Haque, institutionalizing this approach enabled us to avoid relying on ethnic or racial criteria, all

the while making sure that majorities that descend from original settlers retain their privileged position when laying out the building blocks of national identity and citizenship, what she described as the “ongoing project of white settler nation-building” (2012: 5). Furthermore, it should be added that the Commission was launched at a time where not only one but two identity-defining processes were underway, the coexistence of which regularly generated many negotiations and disputes, some of which have lasted up to this day (Gagnon and Iacovino 2003; Labelle and Rocher 2004). This Canadian “duality” identified by the Commission, while it allowed for a minimum of consideration to be given to aboriginal and immigrant minority groups, mainly aimed at achieving a symbolic, material and political equality – so as “to alter the power dynamics” as Laurendeau said (1990: 96) – of two overlapping societal projects, one of which was predominantly subordinated to the all-encompassing ambitions of the majority. This pursuit of equality between Canada’s two main linguistic communities clearly reflects the political element of the initiative undertaken by Lester B. Pearson’s liberal government.

Finally, let us consider another dimension of equality between the two communities – the political dimension. This covers the possibilities for each society to choose its own institutions or, at least, to have the opportunity to participate fully in making political decisions within a framework shared with the other community (...); it is not cultural growth and development at the individual level which is at stake, but the degree of self-determination which one society can exercise in relation to another (...) but with the extent of the control each has over its government or governments. This is the basis for the discussion of the constitutional framework in which the two societies can live or aspire to live (...) (Book I, p. xxxv).

However, following Laurendeau’s death on June 1st 1968, the notion of two founding nations he had been advocating with the Commission was dropped and promptly replaced with an approach that would later be articulated as “multicultural in a bilingual framework”; this idea was central to the notion of Canadian nationalism as it was understood by the new liberal government of Pierre Elliott Trudeau, which came in place in late June 1968.

The substitution of the notion of biculturalism for the notion of multiculturalism, while it might have better addressed some of the concerns voiced during commission audiences and through certain recommendations, was mainly intended to sideline the recognition of the distinct status of Quebec, a status for which nationalists, federalists as well as sovereignists, were advocating (McRoberts 1999; Forbes 2007). However, achieving equality between Anglophone and Francophone societies as the Commission intended is not possible without recognizing Quebec’s distinct status (see Gagnon and Latouche 1991; Bickerton, Brooks and Gagnon 2003).

Recognizing equality between the “two founding nations” as it was pursued by the Commission remains as problematic today as it was in the past. Canada is slow in acknowledging formally and constitutionally the existence of more than a singular citizenship regime on its territory, even though these “two distinct societies” have considerably crystallized and asserted themselves. In fact, there is a kind of “duality” that has been institutionalized, more or less formally and not without opposition. In spite of repeated setbacks in the constitutional recognition of its distinct status as a society, Quebec has progressively established its unique citizenship regime and has defined itself as a “host society”, setting in place its own citizenship education strategies, integration measures and policies of social inclusion and interaction between communities (Gagnon and Iacovino 2003; Gagnon and Iacovino 2007; Bouchard 2012).

The possibilities that official and constitutional recognition offer has been fueling the hopes and the criticism of multinational federalism theorists for many years. We have recently witnessed the emergence of a school of thought on diversity in Canada, but its main protagonists outside of Quebec are most likely to support a first-level type of diversity (procedure) than a second-level type of diversity (community) (see Taylor 1992). In Québec, the approach to diversity, mainly inspired by Gérard Bouchard, Jane Jensen, Guy Laforest and Charles Taylor, has mainly focused on community elements all the while simultaneously defending human rights.

CITIZENSHIP REGIMES, INTEGRATION MODELS AND THE HIERARCHY OF BELONGINGS

Before becoming a model for managing ethnic diversity known here and abroad as the country’s

trademark “Canadian model” (Kymlicka 2003; Choudry 2007), the term “multiculturalism” espoused a variety of somewhat diverging and often contradictory meanings and was brought forth in order to replace the notion of biculturalism as the B&B Commission’s core concept (see Haque 2012: 94-128). The notion was believed to be better suited to deal with Canada’s cultural diversity, as biculturalism became considered too narrow. For some critics, the arguments take on the appearance of a zero-sum game where, as Laurendeau observed first-handily, “somewhat oddly (...) to grant something to Francophones seems to equate to the act of taking something away from their groups” (1990: 68). This understanding, based on the imagery of a zero-sum game, which sets in opposition the recognition of Canada’s multicultural character to the notion of Quebec as home to a “francophone society” as if they were two mutually exclusive options, was officialised in 1971 as part of an approach pursuing the idea of a mononational multicultural and bilingual nation. However, the multicultural policy thus formulated considerably distorted and simplified the portrait drawn by the Commission and validated the demands of an obstinate but very circumstantial and unnatural opposition. As a matter of fact, one of the ideas introduced by Laurendeau but barely touched upon in the report was that, *on any given level*, majorities would benefit greatly from being more open towards minorities (ibid.: 344-345; *Book I*: xlvi). Laurendeau thought that would be the case not only for the relationship between Anglophones and Francophones, but also between the two majority groups and the “others”.

“both societies, the French-speaking as well as the English-speaking, accept newcomers much more readily than they have done in the past; and that the two societies willingly allow other groups to preserve and enrich, if they so desire, the cultural values they prize. We believe that they should go further.” (Book I, p. xv).

According to his colleagues Paul Lacoste and Neil Morrison, Laurendeau’s opposition to “multiculturalism” should be understood as the refusal of a model giving precedence to one type of diversity over another instead of acknowledging their possible complementarity (see Comeau and Beaudry 1990: 207-218).

Implementing a citizenship regime unique to Quebec, built around integration policies that define

Quebecois “interculturalism”, would counterbalance multiculturalism’s pervasive and standardizing discourse. This implementation contradicts in practice one of the regime’s fundamental principles, since it considers that cultural diversity should be recognized within a unique pan-Canadian framework. In implementing interculturalism, we would institutionalize the duality present in Canadian society, a model which, even though not flawless, would be better suited than the one used by the central government (see Bouchard and Taylor 2008; Bouchard 2011: 425-430). Following a much longer, more hazardous and unstable path than the one the Commissioners’ would have probably hoped for, two societies have come to assert themselves; those two societies, whose social structures follow a similar asymmetrical pattern that was exposed in the Commission’s report, are largely determined by the leading practices espoused by their respective majority (for Canada, see Mackey 2002 and Winter 2011; for Quebec, see Armony 2010 and Salée 2010).

At the present moment, we should try to assess the different ways citizens live their lives in Canada. This assessment should take into account the limits inherent to the conceptualisation of the language and culture issues that exist amidst the two main citizenship regimes in Canada. How can Canadian and Quebecois societies, to paraphrase the commissioner’s wish, “go further” in their efforts to recognize their citizen’s diversity? This issue appears to be even more relevant in a context where Anglophone and Francophone majorities seem to share an increasingly “strong” and traditional conception of citizenship and belonging (Winter and Sauvageau 2012). However, the tendency of some citizens who are part of the majority to stake a claim on the definition of citizenship belonging recreates the same asymmetrical patterns between majorities and minorities on which the Commission’s reading was based on. (Re)thinking citizenship-belonging to Canada and to Quebec in a way that takes into consideration both the historical development of those communities and the profound diversity of contemporary societies involves a reassessment of the power dynamics set in place through the use of those categories, dynamics which are typical of the logic of unitary and standardizing nation-states. We should not be afraid to conceptualize citizenship while referring to new analytical and interpretative frameworks. This will be possible through a renewal of the institutional and daily discourses we hold on “diversity”, discourses in which diversity is conceptualized as an exception more

than anything else, a fact that is external to Canadian reality and which has to be accommodated and regulated by the majority. We should prioritize approaches that focus on the involvement of citizens of all backgrounds and the empowerment of communities inhabiting the country that we all share and belong to.

CONCLUSION

The Laurendeau-Dunton Commission showed impressive insight when it identified the main challenges that Canadian communities had to face over the last half century, such as recognizing and institutionalizing Canada's multinational character and broadening the definition of citizenship so as to include individuals from different backgrounds. Revisiting the Commission's work today also allows us to better understand the enduring effects as well as the limits associated with how language and culture issues were framed and how definitions of citizenship-belonging were structured according to the asymmetrical relationship between the majority and the minority, a group of citizens' legitimate aspirations becoming subordinated to the majority, hence preventing them from having an equal role in creating the society we cohabit.

The next few years will be crucial for the future of the Canadian federation. Many fundamental questions still remain. To what extent will the federation be able to respect the federal pact binding the communities that have formed the country? To what extent will these communities be able to eliminate the injustices that prevail within them and which often define the social structures in place? The Commission's expectations regarding the achievement of a true equality between the communities remain, sadly, and even fifty years after the Commission's was launched, often confined to an ideal. It is important not to distance ourselves too much from the project of building a just society, an ideal which was at the heart of the Commission's endeavours, even in our age of excessive neo-liberalism where there is a strong tendency to disregard such considerations. In many respects, the future of the country is far more dependent on its capacity to defend justice and equality than on the tendency to let the rule of might prevail.

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