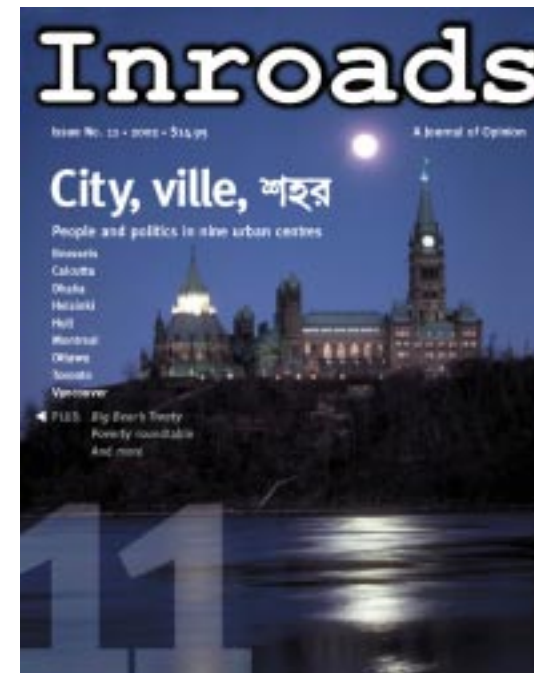


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**Charles Castonguay**

Charles Castonguay grew up in the nation's capital, and now teaches mathematics at the University of Ottawa. He has written extensively on linguistic assimilation and the status of French and English in Canada.

## Nation building and anglicization in Canada's capital region

**T**HE CELEBRATED BILINGUALISM AND Biculturalism Commission of the 1960s used a quotation from Montesquieu: *C'est la capitale qui, fait les moeurs des peuples*. For Canada, the commissioners insisted that Ottawa should not reflect the domination of one language over the other. Nearly 40 years later, Charles Castonguay explores what has actually happened to language use in Ottawa and Hull.

The only reasonable conclusion to draw, Castonguay contends, is that the B&B's recommendations for the capital region have failed. In Ottawa, anglicization of the francophone minority is accelerating. What has preserved francophones in Hull from a similar fate has been maintenance of their strong majority status. The explanation for this continued majority status has been policies of linguistic protection implemented by Quebec City, and a reluctance by anglophones to settle in Hull due to the possibility of Quebec sovereignty.

MARCEL CHAPUT IS ONE OF THE BETTER-KNOWN FIGURES IN THE OTTAWA-HULL area, at least on the Quebec side of the Ottawa River. A native of Hull, he worked as a biochemist for the Defence Research Board in Ottawa. Dismayed by, among other things, the short shrift given the French language and French-speaking civil servants in Canada's capital, in 1960 he became a founding member and, in 1961, the first president of the *Rassemblement pour l'indépendance nationale*, a left-wing political movement advocating Quebec sovereignty, and forerunner of the present-day *Parti Québécois*.

The dust has settled now behind the nation-building bulldozers which, in the late 1960s and early 1970s, brutally transformed the old heart of the City of Hull into an awkward copy of downtown Ottawa. But Chaput's legacy – Quebec's territorial language policy in support of French and, above all, the possibility of Quebec independence – still helps to keep anglicization from getting out of control in the Hull area.

Unfortunately, official bilingualism has done nothing to halt rampant anglicization of francophones on the Ontario side of the river. But the threat of Quebec independence has so far prevented Ottawa's anglophone majority from overflowing to the Quebec side, which would have caused the anglicization of francophones to rise there also.

This underlying language drama is not readily visible to the casual visitor. At the level of official policy, French is in a much-strengthened position relative to that prevailing prior to enactment of the *Official Languages Act* in 1969. This law proclaimed that federal services to the public would be available in both English and French throughout the National Capital Region; it also enshrined federal civil servants' right to work in the official language of their choice throughout the NCR.

But language reality has fallen far short of legislative intentions. A 1994 survey showed that satisfactory service in French was not always readily available in federal offices serving the public in the Ontario portion of the NCR. Another study confirmed that, a quarter century after passage

of the *Official Languages Act*, three out of four French-speaking federal employees in the NCR still use mainly or exclusively English in key work situations.<sup>1</sup> The Treasury Board recently recognized that 20 per cent of civil servants occupying bilingual positions do not in fact have an adequate mastery of French. The level of incompetence reaches 32 per cent among managers.<sup>2</sup> *Plus ça change, plus c'est pareil.*

In the 1960s the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism had thoroughly exposed the dominance of English in the federal civil service and its impact on the capital's French-speaking minority.<sup>3</sup> Today, the federal civil service in Ottawa remains much the same assimilating machine that Chaput had known.

Before surveying the most recent data on the linguistic evolution of the NCR, it helps to review anglicization trends and language policies in the region.

### The B&B analysis

During my boyhood years in Ottawa, the City of Hull was an industrial working-class town. To white- and high-collared Ottawa, Hull and the nearby towns of Gatineau Point and Gatineau Mills were simply run-down and ugly. The B&B commissioners saw things that way too. They viewed the distinct societies in Hull and Ottawa as symbolizing Canada's Two Solitudes: the one wealthy and predominantly English, the other poor and French-speaking. They identified two quite different problems in the capital area. The French language suffered from inequality of status vis-à-vis English on the Ottawa side of the river, and the

francophone population suffered from economic underdevelopment on the Quebec side.<sup>4</sup> Considered this way, the capital region provided a twofold argument for Quebec separatism.

The Commission consequently laid out recommendations to improve the status of the French language on the Ontario side, and to spread the wealth more evenly by allocating federal offices and departments to the Quebec side. In advocating large-scale transfer of federal civil servants to Hull, the Commission failed to consider the social and cultural impact on life in the city. More specifically, it failed to appreciate that urban upheaval might export the causes of assimilation among francophones to the Quebec side of the river.

The Commission's grasp of language dynamics was overly shallow. Admittedly, it pointed out that 60 per cent of the region's French-origin minority declared itself able to speak English, whereas only 10 per cent of its British-origin majority claimed ability to speak French. But the 1961 census (the latest available to the B&B commissioners) offered more telling information. The French mother-tongue population in the Ontario part of the Ottawa-Hull Census Metropolitan Area (CMA), which covers the urbanized portion of the NCR, showed a deficit, or *net ancestral anglicization rate*, of 14.3 per cent relative to the French-origin population (see Table 1). The corresponding rate in the Quebec part was an insignificant 0.1 per cent.

Language shift of this type is called *ancestral* because a person's mother tongue and ethnic origin tell us something about change in language behaviour among that person's

parents, grandparents, or more distant ancestors. A question on the respondent's main home language at the time the census is taken would have supplied more up-to-date information. When compared to the respondent's mother tongue, present home language data would yield information on *current* language shift, that is, on change in language behaviour carried out by the respondent during his or her actual lifetime. This would allow calculation of a *current anglicization rate*. Such data were first collected in 1971.

The Commission could nevertheless have compared the 1961 data with those from earlier censuses – as Chaput had done some 10 years earlier<sup>5</sup> – to see how current language shift was unfolding. Net ancestral anglicization of the French-speaking population in the Ottawa-Hull CMA was only 4.2 per cent in 1941, as opposed to 7.6 per cent in 1961. Ancestral shift could not grow that fast without being stoked by a significant increase in current anglicization.

**Table 1: Ancestral language shift, Ottawa-Hull CMA, 1961 census**

	ETHNIC ORIGIN / MOTHER TONGUE		
	British/English	French	Other
Total area (population 429,752)			
Ethnic origin (1)	189,227	175,374	65,149
Mother tongue (2)	239,287	161,980	28,483
Net shift ((2) – (1))	+ 50,060	– 13,394	– 36,666
Net ancestral anglicization rate ((2) – (1)) / (1)	n.a.	– 7.6%	– 56.3%
Ontario part (population 332,899)			
Ethnic origin	177,641	93,394	61,864
Mother tongue	225,845	80,084	26,970
Net shift	+ 48,204	– 13,310	– 34,894
Net ancestral anglicization rate	n.a.	– 14.3%	– 56.4%
Quebec part (population 96,851)			
Ethnic origin	11,586	81,980	3,285
Mother tongue	13,442	81,896	1,513
Net shift	+ 1,856	– 84	– 1,772
Net ancestral anglicization rate	n.a.	– 0.1%	– 53.9%

The 1941 census publications do not give distinct mother tongue data for the Ontario and Quebec components of the Ottawa-Hull CMA. But they do for the relevant counties. Carleton County corresponds closely to the Ontario portion of the NCR. Net ancestral anglicization among Carleton's French-origin minority more than doubled in 20 years, increasing from 7.2 to 14.8 per cent between 1941 and 1961. Hull County contained most of the French-origin population in the NCR's Quebec part. It was over 90 per cent of French origin, and in 1941 its French mother-tongue majority was a little stronger yet than its 90 per cent French origin rate. This was still the case in 1961.

Thus, the B&B commissioners could have illuminated two essential facts concerning language dynamics in the NCR. Anglicization of the francophone minority in the region as a whole was on the rise. And anglicization varied inversely with the percentage weight of the local francophone population within the region.

Similar points were made in a brief presented to the Commission by Richard Joy, an Ottawa resident and engineer. Based on the historical evidence concerning the language situation in much larger regions of Canada, Joy concluded "that two languages of unequal strength cannot co-exist in intimate contact and that the weaker must, inevitably, disappear."<sup>6</sup>

In this connection Russell County, Carleton's neighbour to the east, is also worth a comment. Russell County was then thoroughly rural, and its strong French-origin majority (80 per cent of the population in 1941, 77 per cent in 1961) showed no sign of anglicization. The relative isolation of mid-century rural life and predominance of the French-speaking majority neutralized the assimilating power of English in the county, even if it was in Ontario.

The B&B Commission could have avoided considerable turmoil over urban renewal in the Hull area – and over constitutional politics throughout the country – had it heeded Joy's observations. What made sense was a language policy aimed at eradicating the growing linguistic inequality in the Ontario part of the NCR, while not destabilizing the position of French in the Quebec part.

But the Trudeau administration's ideology of national unity was based on individual rights. This ideology ignored the empirical evidence that a territorial policy guaranteeing the predominance of French in the Quebec part was a more appropriate basis on which to fulfil the Commission's

### **The dust has settled now behind the nation-building bulldozers which, in the late 1960s and early 1970s, brutally transformed the old heart of the City of Hull into an awkward copy of Ottawa.**

mandate of an "equal partnership between the two founding races" in the capital area. Along with its recommendation that the capital's wealth be shared with Hull, the Commission opted for a uniform language policy, together with complete freedom of movement throughout the NCR:

*...public policy should not be an instrument promoting linguistic concentration [...] we suggest a policy that maximizes effective freedom of choice of where one lives [...] any resident should be able to live in any particular residential area he chooses without encountering linguistic inconveniences.<sup>7</sup>*

### **Hull sacrificed on the altar of national unity**

In line with the prevailing anti-territorial ideology of the times, the National Capital Commission (NCC) – which wields decisive power over urban development in the capital region – diligently planned for interprovincial migrants to follow on the heels of the bulldozers at work on the Quebec side. After a decade of separatist agitation in Quebec, preserving Canadian unity in the capital region meant tearing down Hull's town centre.

The city's historical landmarks – Notre-Dame church, the Post Office, the Standish Hall Hotel, the Court House, the City Hall – disappeared. Between 1969 and 1974, a total of 1,315 dwellings were levelled and 4,265 persons relocated. The local elite and Liberal party courtesans manoeuvred smoothly to benefit from the fallout.<sup>8</sup>

French-speaking areas in the City of Ottawa – Lebreton Flats and Lower Town – had already been hit hard by urban renewal NCC style. But the City of Hull literally had its heart torn out. Alice Parizeau has described the scene in the following words:

*An evening stroll along the streets severed by expressways and among the little houses overpowered by office towers is enough to make anyone understand that the social fibre, the very foundation of this city has been destroyed: it no longer resembles what it would have wished to become.<sup>9</sup>*

Committees of concerned citizens sprang up in reaction to federal doings in Hull.<sup>10</sup> Increasingly frustrated with the problems deriving from the division of authority over the capital region among many levels of government and federal departments,

Douglas H. Fullerton, who had chaired the NCC since 1969, informed Prime Minister Trudeau early in 1973 of his intention to resign. Trudeau immediately commissioned him to undertake a special study of the problems of governing the capital area.

### **The Fullerton Report – too little too late**

Fullerton's terms of reference reawakened fear in Quebec that the former NCC chairman would recommend creation of a Federal District. The idea that the capital would best be governed as a federal district like Washington, D.C., has been in the air since Confederation. The B&B Commission had found "most persuasive" the argument that a capital territory would "open the way to the eventual attainment of complete linguistic equality" throughout the capital area.<sup>11</sup>

But Fullerton was a man of some intellectual independence. He acknowledged the existence of

*a legitimate concern in the Hull area about the impact of the anglophone invasion on its culture [...] centred around the threat to [the French] language and culture posed by the "invasion" of the Outaouais region by large masses of anglophones working in the new federal buildings in Hull, and by the small but rapidly growing number of anglophones buying or renting homes on the Quebec side.<sup>12</sup>*

He recommended against the federal district idea, because Quebec "ultra-nationalists" had been successful in giving the NCC a Trojan horse image.

He concluded instead that the federal government should cool down the rate of growth in the NCR by decentralizing op-



**NATION BUILDING:** The Museum of Civilization in Hull and Parliament Buildings across the river in Ottawa.

erations to other parts of the country, and advocated a shift to a more territorial language policy. When moving federal departments or agencies to Hull, the Canadian government should give priority to those with a relatively high proportion of francophones. It should also encourage a greater concentration of French or English language groups in certain residential areas within the NCR.<sup>13</sup>

The Société nationale des Québécois de l'Outaouais (the Outaouais region is the Quebec counterpart to Ontario's Ottawa Valley) had expressed its concern to Fullerton about the anglicization of francophones in the Ottawa-Hull metropolitan area. Its brief made use of the just-published 1971 census results, which for the first time included data on present main home language and hence allowed estimates of current, as opposed to ancestral, language

shift.<sup>14</sup> Although Fullerton labelled the SNQO as "strongly separatist," he was familiar with Joy's work, took the new information seriously and reproduced the SNQO's observations in his own report.

Change in main home language most often occurs when young adults strike off on their own. The 1971 census showed that 20 per cent of all young adults aged 25 to 44 on the Ontario side of the CMA were of French mother tongue and that, of these, 27 per cent had switched to speaking English most often in their new home. On the Quebec side, 80 per cent were of French mother tongue and only 5 per cent of them had shifted to English. This confirmed what trends in ancestral shift had indicated.

Fullerton admitted that a territorial arrangement made sense. As a refinement of the B&B Commission's philosophy, he proposed a Limited Hiving Principle or *Principe*

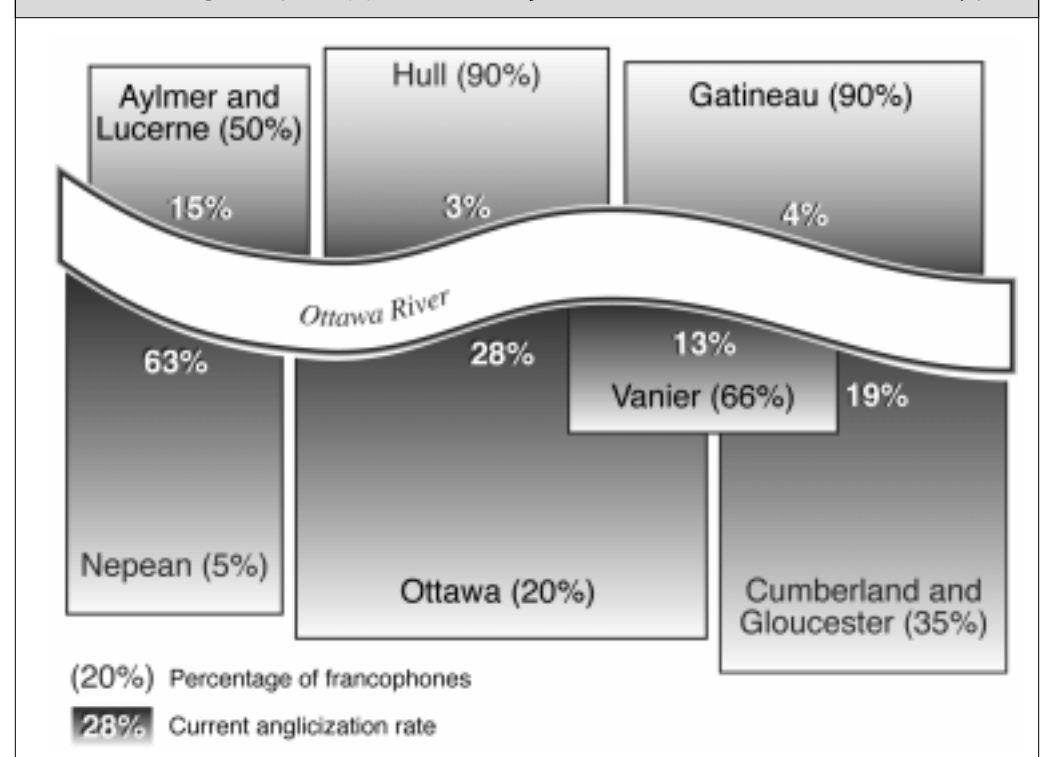
*de concentration raisonnable*. This principle would lead to

*encouraging the grouping of francophones on a territorial basis, but within the limits of practicality. Superficially, [this] may seem unattractive because it conjures up the idea of a French-Canadian ghetto: because it somehow seems to build walls rather than tearing them down [...] I would reply that intercultural understanding can be built up only when both parties are secure in their own identity; that it is only when a culture no longer feels threatened that it reaches out; and that hiving or concentration is the best method in sight to prevent assimilation.*<sup>15</sup>

He gave the town of Aylmer as an example of an anglophone "hive" or "borough" on the Quebec side, and, likewise, Ottawa's Lower Town, the City of Vanier, and part of Gloucester Township as a francophone borough on the Ontario side.

Figure 1 shows the relation in 1971 between the concentration and anglicization of francophones in the major municipalities on either side of the river, based on the population aged 25 to 44. High anglicization and low concentration of francophones go hand in hand, both in Ontario and Quebec. Anglicization is higher in Aylmer, Quebec than in Vanier, Ontario. The basic explanation appears to be the relative weight of the local francophone population.

**Figure 1: Concentration and anglicization of francophones aged 25 to 44, main components of Ottawa-Hull CMA, 1971**



The map illustrates the power of assimilation of English throughout the area. In a situation so far out of kilter, Fullerton's solution held no real hope of reducing the overall anglicization of the NCR's francophone minority. The uniform bilingualism proposed by the B&B Commission was even worse. A French first policy for the Quebec side combined with generous and vigorous support for the francophone minority on the Ontario side is the only course of action that might effectively curtail anglicization in the capital region.

While Fullerton's solution was inadequate, it at least recognized the underlying dynamic of assimilation. It also ran counter to the NCC's grand design. At the same time his report was published, the NCC indicated it had no intention of being diverted from its plan:

*a stronger interplay between the two sides of the River would encourage achievement of a Capital area more representative of a Canadian society devoted to the premise that cultural identity can be reinforced by close economic and social relationships.<sup>16</sup>*

The NCC considered it desirable to "preserve the predominantly francophone character of the population of the Quebec portion of the Region," but proposed that tens of thousands more federal employees be allocated to offices on the Quebec side, and that Quebec's share of the regional population be increased from 25 per cent to 35 per cent by the end of the century.<sup>17</sup> Based on NCC estimates of regional growth, this would have tripled the population on the Quebec side. As most newcomers would have been English-speaking, this meant a severe weakening of the Hull area's francophone majority, leading in turn to increased anglicization in the Outaouais.

The Trudeau administration would not hear of concentrating its francophone employees in its Hull offices – even less of encouraging the residential concentration of francophones. The Quebec Liberals, in power in Quebec City, did nothing to rock the gravy boat. They pretended to be able to square the circle: to pursue the development of Hull as laid out by the NCC while *strengthening* its French character. More realistically, both major Quebec planning agencies for the region agreed that, just to maintain its French character, the Hull area must keep its 80 per cent francophone majority.<sup>18</sup> But neither showed how this could be accomplished while accelerating the region's growth.

### Anglophones were really on the move

The 1971 and 1976 census results show population trends during the crucial years of unifying the capital region. Comparing with 1961-1971 puts things into perspective.

### The Trudeau administration would not hear of concentrating its francophone employees in its Hull offices.

The limits of the CMA in 1976 serve as basis for the comparisons in Table 2.

Growth was evenly spread over both sides of the river during the initial decade.<sup>19</sup> Growth was similar too for both official mother-tongue populations on the Quebec side (main home language was not asked in 1961 and 1976). On the Ontario side, the English mother-tongue population grew more than twice as fast as the French. Anglicization is one of the major factors behind this inequality.<sup>20</sup>

In contrast, between 1971 and 1976 growth on the Quebec side was almost double that on the Ontario side. And the English mother-tongue population grew much faster than that of French on both sides of the river. Anglicization remained a major cause of imbalance on the Ottawa side. As for the Hull side, an outside city planner concluded:

*the plastic surgery carried out by the federal government and the NCC is a success. In the minds of Ottawa's anglophones, they have created a bilingual vision of Hull which henceforth generates growing migration of English-speaking Ontarians to the Quebec side.<sup>21</sup>*

The 18 per cent growth in the Quebec part of the CMA was the highest of all metropolitan areas in Canada between 1971 and 1976, even topping oil-boom Calgary's 16 per cent. The nation building perpetrated in Hull pushed the francophone majority on the Quebec side down from 82.4 to 80.9 per cent in just five years, outstripping the 1.1 percentage point decline of the francophone minority on the Ontario side.

### The tides turn in 1976

Hull area residents met federal and provincial plans and claims with increasing scepticism as the anglophone invasion made its presence felt in everyday life. The growing sense of alienation explains why Parti Québécois candidates won the ridings of Hull and Gatineau in the 1976 provincial election, even though the federal government is the greatest purveyor of jobs in the area. "It's not cricket to bite the hand that feeds you," Marcel Chaput's superior once reminded him. But bite some did. And the invasion came to a halt.

The tide of federal spending and centralization was also turning. Other parts of Canada were calling for their share of the cake. The subsequent decentralization of federal civil servants lowered the local growth rate. The NCC never got its Canada Boulevard, connecting centre-town Hull to the Parliament buildings in Ottawa via a circular route across the Portage and Interprovincial bridges. This ring physically linking Quebec to the rest of Canada was to be

**Table 2: Population growth rate by province of residence and mother tongue, Ottawa-Hull CMA, 1961 to 1976**

	Total	English	French
	Per cent of initial populations		
1961 to 1971			
Quebec part	33.8	29.8	33.9
Ontario part	31.2	35.9	15.7
1971 to 1976			
Quebec part	18.0	25.4	16.0
Ontario part	9.9	11.8	4.5

paved in red asphalt, a concrete symbol of Canadian unity.

The new Lévesque administration in Quebec was acutely aware of the situation in the Outaouais. Lévesque named Jocelyne Ouellette Minister of Public Works. She had campaigned in her home riding as a *pur produit du vieux Hull*. More generally, the future of French in Quebec as a whole had become a burning issue during the last years of the Bourassa government.

Camille Laurin, Lévesque's Minister in Charge of Cultural Development, proposed in section 73 of his *Charte de la langue française* to restrict access to English public schools to children having at least one parent who had been schooled in English in Quebec or who already resided in Quebec and had been schooled in English in another province or country. Public schooling would be in French for children of all newcomers from Canada or elsewhere. This was known as Bill 101's "Quebec clause." Bill 101 was passed in August 1977.

The Quebec clause was accompanied by the proposal of reciprocity agreements with other Canadian provinces, whereby access to English public schools would be open to newcomers from any province which agreed to offer its francophone minority access to public education in French on a par with that available in English to Quebec's anglophone minority. No other province took up the offer.

Tailor-made for the Outaouais, the Quebec clause worked as a filter. It required anglophones moving from Ontario or the rest of Canada to the Hull side of the capital region to send their children to French public schools – as I had done after moving from Ottawa in 1964. If they wanted to avoid French-language instruction for their children, anglophones coming to the capi-

tal area from the rest of Canada could have their children educated in an English private school or simply take up residence on the Ontario side.

Two weeks before the second reading of Bill 101, Laurin tabled a study showing that, between 1972-73 and 1976-77, the number of children enrolled in the Outaouais' English schools had grown by 5.4 per cent, while those schooled in French had decreased by 6.5 per cent.<sup>22</sup> He pointed out in his opening speech that two thirds of all newcomers to Quebec arrived from the rest of Canada, and referred to disproportionate growth in the number of anglophone arrivals.

A few years later, writing about the "hot" summer of 1977 and the Cabinet discus-

**The Quebec clause of Bill 101 was a rational answer to the views of the B&B Commission and the bulldozers of the NCC. For the Outaouais, it was an act of legitimate self-defence.**

sions over Bill 101, Laurin recalled that Lévesque initially preferred a "Canada clause," but that the Quebec clause had been maintained on the basis of studies documenting the disconcertingly strong growth of the English school system and the importance of linguistic assimilation in the Hull and Montreal areas.<sup>23</sup>

The Quebec clause was a rational answer to the views of the B&B Commission and the bulldozers of the NCC. For the Outaouais, it was an act of legitimate self-defence in the face of the federal refusal to take into account the French character of Hull and the formidable power of assimilation of English in the NCR.

Ontarians who had already moved to the Hull side before Bill 101 retained free access to schooling in English. The possibility of Quebec independence nonetheless produced a net migratory loss of close to 7,000 anglophones for the Outaouais between the 1976 and 1981 censuses.<sup>24</sup>

After Lévesque lost his 1980 referendum on sovereignty, the governments of Canada and the nine other provinces unilaterally reduced Quebec's powers in education, language, and cultural matters. In 1982, section 23 of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* replaced the Quebec clause by a Canada clause. The courts upheld this action, and Canadians schooled in English anywhere outside Quebec regained access to English schools if they moved to Quebec. The French-speaking population in the Hull area had nevertheless gained some pre-

cious time. Between enactment of Laurin's *Charte* and Trudeau's Charter, the federal government expansion into Hull was curtailed.

### Anglicization trends through 1996

The capital region can be seen as a testing ground for language policies aimed at protecting Canada's French-speaking minority – the federal linguistic free trade approach versus Quebec's moderately territorial policy favouring French. Trends on either side of the river offer a small-scale model of language trends in Quebec compared to the rest of Canada. This is best illustrated using the Ottawa-Hull CMA, which is adjusted at each census to include new suburbs strongly relating with the urban core.

**Table 3: Current assimilation trends, Ottawa-Hull CMA, 1971 to 1996**

	1971	1991	1996
<b>Anglicization of francophones</b>			
Net shift from French to English (1)	18,145	35,639	38,697
Francophone population (2)	220,840	324,052	338,088
Net current anglicization rate (1) / (2)	8.2%	11.0 %	11.4%
<b>Relative francization of allophones</b>			
Net shift of allophones to English (3)	16,810	44,563	51,779
Net shift of allophones to French (4)	900	2,993	3,983
Relative francization rate (4) / ((3) + (4))	5.1%	6.3%	7.1%
<b>Overall outcome of assimilation</b>			
Net gains for English (1) + (3)	+ 34,955	+ 80,202	+ 90,476
Net losses for French (4) – (1)	– 17,245	– 32,646	– 34,714



**HOMMAGE À MONET:**  
Parliament Buildings  
and the Ottawa River,  
photographed at night  
from Hull.

share of allophone shift since 1971 is largely due to the preference given by Quebec since the late 1970s to immigrants having prior knowledge of French and to compulsory schooling in French for their children following Bill 101. Of course, this pertains only to the

small allophone population on the Hull side of the river.

The “bottom line” of assimilation calculated in the last part of Table 3 reveals the growing imbalance between English and French in the overall CMA. Fullerton had imagined that by the 1981 census, the Canadian official languages policy would have begun to reduce the anglicization of francophones in the area.<sup>25</sup> Instead, their net anglicization has increased. The 1991-1996 comparison is especially significant. Between the last two censuses there has been no change in the limits of the Ottawa-Hull CMA nor in the language questions on the census questionnaires.

The upper part of Table 3 shows that the net current anglicization rate of francophones in the CMA has been growing steadily since 1971. By 1991, the CMA included all of Carleton and Russell Counties. Despite the addition of Russell County’s native francophones, who show very high resistance to assimilation, anglicization still continues to rise.

The middle part of Table 3 brings out the superior assimilating power of English relative to French among allophones, those with neither English nor French mother tongue. Among allophones who shift to English or French, the vast majority choose English. The slight increase in the French

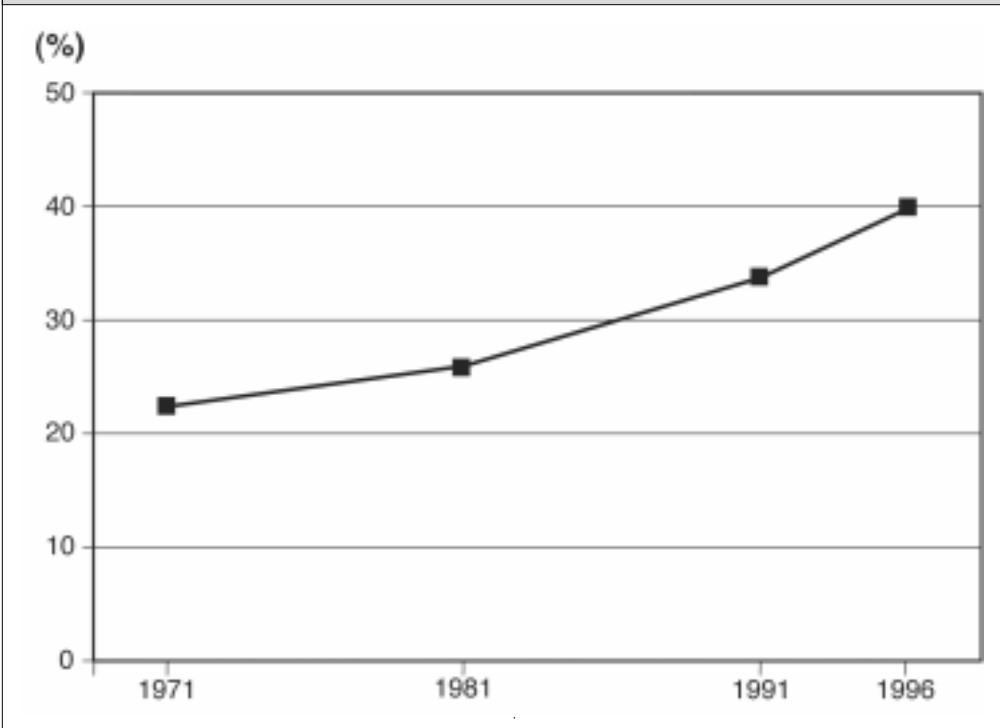
The inefficiency of Canadian language policy stands out more clearly when trends are compared for the different sides of the Ottawa River. On the Ontario side, the current anglicization rate of francophones has grown from 15.6 per cent in 1971 to 23.0 per cent in 1991, and 24.7 per cent in 1996.

The situation is quite different on the Hull side. The slowly increasing relative francization of its small allophone population is now almost sufficient to counterbalance the slight anglicization of its francophone majority. More precisely, the “bottom-line” deficit for French due to assimilation on the Quebec side has dropped from 1.7 per cent of its French mother-tongue popu-

lation in 1971, to 0.3 per cent in 1991, and 0.1 per cent in 1996.

Linguistic imbalance in favour of English nevertheless subsists here too. From the “bottom-line” point of view, the overall surplus gained by English through the process of assimilation on the Quebec side was equivalent to 14.6 per cent of its English mother-tongue minority in 1971, 14.5 per cent in 1991, and 13.7 per cent in 1996, a far cry from the approximately zero “bottom line” performance of French. The persistent power of assimilation of English among francophone and allophone populations in the Hull area is no doubt related to the dominant position of English in the overall capital region.

**Figure 2: Current anglicization rate of francophones aged 25 to 34, new City of Ottawa, 1971 to 1996**





## Conclusion

Figure 2 tells it all. As a fixed basis for comparison, it uses the limits of the Ottawa-Carleton Regional Municipality, which just recently has become the new City of Ottawa. It shows that a quarter century of Canadian bilingualism has not improved the picture regarding French in the capital one iota. The net current anglicization rate for young French mother-tongue adults aged 25 to 34 has almost doubled, rising from 22.4 to 39.6 per cent over the four censuses shown. Worse still, the concave upwards shape of the resulting curve suggests that assimilation among this most crucial of all age groups is actually accelerating.

Book V of the B&B report opens with a quote from Montesquieu: *C'est la capitale qui, surtout, fait les moeurs des peuples; c'est Paris qui fait les Français*. The goal for Canada's capital, according to the B&B Commissioners, was

*a state of equilibrium in terms of the official languages [...] For if the capital of a bilingual country is to command the respect and loyalty of its citizens of both official languages, it should not reflect the domination of one language over the other.*<sup>26</sup>

The only reasonable conclusion is that the Commissioners' recommendations on how to realize that goal have failed. It is time to rethink Canadian language policy. ■

## Notes

1. See Mary-Lou Bragg, *Service to the Public: A Study of Federal Offices Designated to Respond to the Public in Both English and French* (Ottawa: Commissioner of Official Languages, 1995); Victor C.

Goldbloom, *Annual Report 1994* (Ottawa: Commissioner of Official Languages, 1995); and *Language of Work in the National Capital Region* (Ottawa: Commissioner of Official Languages, 1995).

2. Isabelle Ducas, "Bilinguisme: Ottawa manque de rigueur," *Le Devoir*, April 20, 2002, p. A6.
3. *Report of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism*, Book III, *The Work World*, and Book V, *The Federal Capital* (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1969 and 1970).
4. *The Federal Capital*, *Op. cit.*, p. 27.
5. Marcel Chaput, *Pourquoi je suis séparatiste* (Montréal: Les Éditions du Jour, 1961), p. 114.
6. Richard J. Joy, *Languages in Conflict: the Canadian Experience* (Ottawa: published by the author, 1967 and Toronto: McLelland and Stewart, 1972), p. 135.
7. *The Federal Capital*, *Op. cit.*, p. 54.
8. People involved in the Liberal party, from a federal cabinet minister down, were implicated in land speculation activities. See Guy LeCavalier, "Politicians share in land profits," *City Magazine*, 1:4 (1975), pp. 9-11.
9. Alice Parizeau, preface to Roger Poirier, o.m.i., *Qui a volé la rue Principale?* (Montréal: Éditions Départ, 1986), p. 8 (my translation).
10. Father Roger Poirier (*Op. cit.*) has left a moving account of how the less well-off inhabitants of Hull attempted to cope with federal megalomania between 1968 and 1976, that is, between the election of Pierre Trudeau and that of René Lévesque.

11. *The Federal Capital*, *Op. cit.*, p. 121.
12. Douglas H. Fullerton, *The Capital of Canada: How Should It Be Governed?* (Ottawa: Information Canada, 1974), pp. 187 and 219.
13. Douglas H. Fullerton, *Op. cit.*, pp. 219-220.
14. *Mémoire de la Société nationale des Québécois de l'Outaouais au Comité d'étude sur le développement futur de la région de la capitale fédérale*, *Le Devoir*, September 29, 1973, p. 6.
15. Douglas H. Fullerton, *Op. cit.*, p. 156.
16. National Capital Commission, *Tomorrow's Capital* (Ottawa: NCC, 1974), p. 13.
17. NCC, *Op. cit.*, pp. 48 and 78.
18. Jean Cimon, *Le Dossier Outaouais: réflexions d'un urbaniste* (Québec: Éditions du Pélican, 1979), p. 151.
19. For the population counts underlying Table 2, see Charles Castonguay, "Minorisation des francophones de Hull-Ottawa de 1961 à 1976," *Le Devoir*, August 3rd, 1978.

20. For a discussion of how assimilation erodes Canada's French mother-tongue population and bolsters that of English, see Charles Castonguay, "Getting the facts straight on French: Reflections following the 1996 Census," *Inroads* 8 (1999), pp. 57-76.
21. Jean Cimon, *Op. cit.*, p. 11 (my translation).
22. Michel Amyot, "Quelques données concernant la clientèle scolaire de la région de l'Outaouais, 1972-73 à 1976-77", in Michel Amyot et al. *La situation démolinguistique au Québec et la Charte de la langue française* (Québec: Conseil de la langue française, 1980), pp. 129-131.
23. Camille Laurin, *Une traversée du Québec* (Montréal: Éditions de l'Hexagone, 1999), p. 93.
24. Marc Termote and Danielle Gauvreau, *La situation démolinguistique du Québec* (Québec: Conseil de la langue française, 1988).
25. Douglas H. Fullerton, *Op. cit.*, p. 154.
26. *The Federal Capital*, *Op. cit.*, p. 31.

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