

Opinion

Alan Small

Why have language laws?



Right wingers in Canada say that the government should get out of the economy. Sell off Air Canada, Petro-Canada, and the rest of them, and it will help reduce the deficit and fine tune our economy.

Lawmakers in this great land of ours should take heed of this. Apply this laissez-faire ideal to the language hassles that have plagued this country since Wolfe beat Montcalm on the Plains of Abraham.

Why have language laws in the first place? Let the dominant language in the area take precedence naturally.

Alberta has practiced this ideal for a while now. There are Chinese signs in downtown Edmonton, French signs in Morinville and St. Paul, and there are Ukrainian signs in Radway. Of course, English, the most commonly spoken language in Alberta, has signs throughout the province.

Of course in Quebec, French signs would be seen all over, save for some townships in Montreal. That's the way it should be, for most of the people in places like Quebec City, Chicoutimi, and Shawinigan are Franco-phones.

In provinces like New Brunswick and Manitoba, both French and English signs would be seen, depending which area you were in. In Toronto, you would probably see many different languages on billboards, if King of Kensington is correct.

A total lack of language law in Canada would solve nearly all of our problems. English would be spoken and read in the English parts of Canada, French would be spoken and read in the French parts of Canada, and other minority languages would be spoken and read in their own natural areas. There is no need for a French only law in Quebec or an English only law like is being banded about in Alberta.

With a law (or the lack of one) like that, there wouldn't be the hassle over the signs in Montreal or the worry over assimilation of the French culture in Alberta. If you want your particular language to exist somewhere, it is up to the individual (or a group of people) to make sure it survives.

If you, an Anglophone, moved to Quebec, you had better know French to make your life easy, for Quebecois won't speak English all the time. Conversely, Francophones should have to learn English before they move out West, because without English, you are lost in Alberta.

The Gateway

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CONTRIBUTORS

PAM HNYTKA, RACHEL SANDERS, ERIC BAICH, JASON BODNAR, OSCAR STRELKOV, ROSS GRAY, DAVID DUDAR, JIM GIBBON, BRIAN JORGENSEN, IAN HUNSCH, JIM KNUTSEN, P. J. GROENEVELDT, PAUL MENZIES, RON KUIPERS, MARIO TRONO, WINSTON PEI, MICHELLE LAZORKO, AJAY BHARDWAJ, ROBERTA FRANCHUK, ROB GALBRAITH.

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AT THE MOVIES!



Letters

Expand education experience

Re: Education lacking (Jan. 24)

Your concern over the apparently inadequate quantity of practical teaching experience offered in the BEd program is a legitimate one shared by many education students of both undergraduate and graduate status. Certainly, then, it should be addressed — and it has been. As of September of last semester, a volunteer student teaching program has been organized in E.S.A. to provide students with an opportunity to teach in the community and to thereby gain as much of this practical experience as their schedules will allow. The student is required to contribute a minimum of three hours per week at a school which will be chosen with the student on the basis of his or her subject preferences, schedule, and location. There will be no pressure of a formal evaluator, so the student will be able to try out different things in the classroom.

The response from the public and

private schools to this program has been very encouraging; however, there seems to be a lack of student interest. This low student participation factor is perhaps most due to a lack of information on our program; we are currently trying with all possible means to reach the student body.

Most importantly, we'd like to stress that it is highly probable in the near future that Edmonton schools will be checking resumes for extra teaching experience over and above the required portion for a degree. Taking time now as a student to expand your experience will be a positive reflection on your commitment to becoming a qualified teacher. Participating in the E.S.A.'s volunteer student teaching program is therefore an excellent opportunity for all education students to supplement their practicum experience and to improve their chances out in the job market, which we all realize is very competitive.

Kari Anderson
 Education III

False fire frights foolish

Re: Students snooze through clangor (Jan. 26)

With a fire alarm that is triggered as often as the one in HUB, it's not surprising that it's ignored. Who wants to waste time standing outside and freezing at midnight because some idiot can't think of a way to amuse himself/herself other than by annoying people? Those who trigger false alarms are not cute, they're dangerous. Dangerous because they're making a vital warning system ineffective by crying "wolf." If someone dies in a fire because they've ignored yet another alarm, all the jokers who have triggered the alarm in the past will have to share responsibility for that. Is it worth it? No.

As for Mr. Dahlstedt's claim that all "students are given fire evacuation instructions when they move in," it's simply not true. We were handed a piece of paper advising us of the penalties for tampering with our smoke detectors or sprinklers. That's it. End of story.

It's really up to the people starting the false alarms to stop them. When firefighters respond to false alarms they are wasting time and diverting energy that may be needed elsewhere. Also, the fewer firetrucks speeding through Edmonton with sirens blaring, the better. If these mental giants use whatever grey matter they have to reflect on the consequences of their actions, perhaps they'll leave the alarm alone.

Fiona K. Cameron, Arts I
 Manjot Randhawa, Arts IV
 Culley Schweger, Sci. III

