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Our Polyglot Press

By BERNARD MUDDIMAN

"THE great hindrance to Canada's literature," a literary friend of mine the other day remarked, "is the fact that we are a bilingual nation. Look at Belgium, for example, there you have a bilingual nation, and just think what years it took her to produce a Maeterlinck."

I replied by alluding with patriotic pride to our noble array of writers, already a goodly host, and wound up by stating my firm belief that we were big enough to support two or even three languages under the same flag.

"My dear fellow," was his answer, "you say 'two or even three languages.' Have you any idea in how many languages publications are issued in Canada?"

Not being a walking encyclopaedia, I had to answer negatively, and that was his chance. He simply douched me under a shower bath of facts. And when I recovered my breath and was able to reappear again in the world at large, I had some of the following ideas on our polyglot press:

First of all, of course, at the present time, there are more English dailies, weeklies and monthlies than French; but the French are by no means a bad second. Quebec issues about 88 publications in its provincial language, Ontario has eight French or semi-French newspapers, Manitoba has three, New Brunswick two, and Prince Edward Island and Alberta one each.

Besides English and French, newspapers are published in the following languages in Canada: Slavic, Japanese, Chinese, Icelandic, German, Polish, Swedish, Ruthenian, Magyar, Danish, Finnish, Hebrew and Italian. Spanish and Russian seem to be the only two major European languages unrepresented.

However, with our fifteen printed tongues we do pretty well. Nova Scotia and the Yukon press are the only two provinces that can claim pure, uncontaminated English. The Acadians have left, it would seem, no vestige of their language in the modern printed paper in the land of Evangeline, while it must be admitted that the Yukon only runs three news-sheets.

Quebec is, of course, more French than English, Montreal being the centre of the French publishing world just as Toronto is of the English. New Brunswick is practically pure English, Shediac with its "Moniteur Acadien," and Moncton with its "Evangeline," alone varying the English. Ontario produces more printed matter than the rest of Canada, and it is practically all English, with a mild sprinkling of French and German, a Danish paper, "Danebrog," at Ottawa, and the "Tyokansa," a Finnish publication at Port Arthur.

The farther west we go, of course, where the most recent immigrants have located, the more varied becomes this Babel Tower of tongues. Manitoba has a French patch at St. Boniface; otherwise its second printed tongue is easily Icelandic, Winnipeg alone producing five publications in this language. British Columbia is pure English with the exception of some Oriental newspapers such as the "Tai-Hon-Yat-Bo" (Chinese), and the "Tairika-Nippo" (Japanese), of Vancouver. Of the newer provinces Alberta is evidently German, and Saskatchewan very English, as it has only three foreign papers.

Her Proof.—"Yes," said Mr. Cumrox, earnestly; "but what convinces you that the Duke loves our daughter deeply and devotedly?"
"The fact," replied his wife, icily, "that he is willing to accept you as a father-in-law."—Washington Star.

A Black Outlook.—De Daub—"Poor Smaro is painting nothing but night scenes now."

O'Impresso—"How's that?"
De Daub—"He has only a tube of black paint left."—Kansas City Star.

Changed Ends.—"I understand you have just bought an automobile?"
"Yes, I saw seven or them chasing one pedestrian the other day, and I decided that I was on the wrong end of the sport."—St. Louis Post Dispatch.



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