

PROSE and CON

By PAUL McISAAC

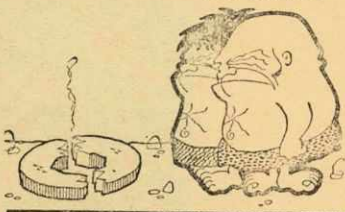
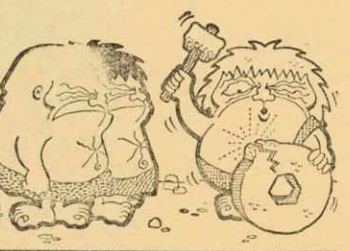
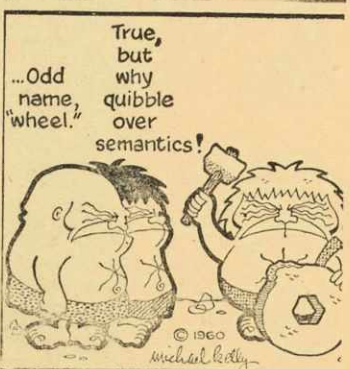
BILINGUALISM

The Honourable Lester B. Pearson recently gave a speech in the House of Commons on the subject of Bilingualism in Canada. The speech took the form of an investigation into the implications of the breakdown in contact between English-speaking and French-speaking fellow Canadians as a result of difficulties in realizing the goals of Confederation "without the imposition of racial, cultural, or linguistic uniformity."

Pearson feels that the understanding of an "acceptable and equal partnership" in plotting and fulfilling the destiny of Canada has been more academic than actual, and has been "more often honoured in the breach than in the observance." Consequently, on the eve of the centenary of Confederation, there exist two interpretations of Confederation, and it is this difference of interpretation that causes trouble, Pearson feels. "To French speaking Canadians confederation created a bilingual and bicultural nation. It protected their language and their culture throughout the whole of Canada. It meant partnership, not domination. French speaking Canadians believed that this partnership meant equal opportunities for both the founding races to share in all the phases of Canadian development . . . most English speaking Canadians felt that, for all practical purposes, there would be an English speaking Canada with a bilingual Quebec."

The conflicts between the French and English speaking founding races began with the Manitoba school crisis, then developed over the question of Canada's participation in the first World War. "French speaking Canadians . . . felt they had failed somehow in their attempt to secure acceptability of their culture in other parts of Canada. Hence, they tended to withdraw . . . into what has been called at times the Quebec reserve." Pearson feels that the slowness of French Canada in adjusting itself to the industrial environment accelerated in the twenties can be explained by the fact that French Canadian leaders, trained in theology, law, or agriculture, for the most part, believed that the new industrialization would "break up French Canada's cohesion and weaken its special values, special traditions, and special culture." These fears were increased when the personnel and capital required for industrial growth were imported from English speaking Canada or from the United States. They could not appreciate that they were excluding French Canadians from the development of their province.

Pearson sees separatism as an "extreme reaction to what had been going on for at least fifteen years in industrial and social changes." French Canadians wish a hand and a voice in the "economic and cultural destiny of their own changed and changing society . . . and equal and full opportunity to participate in all



federal government services, in which their own language will be fully recognized." Both French and English speaking Canadians must accept the changes to be involved in realizing full partnership and they must take the "immediate and concrete steps" to achieve this reality. Facing up to the task would mean a new era of strength and unity which will enable us to overcome any economic, cultural and political differences and to go forward together as Canadians." If not this, then "we will continue to drift from one difficulty to another until a majority of people on both sides will have had enough of this unique Canadian experience. The final result of this would, indeed be separatism."

Pearson suggests that there could be no better start than to take "effective steps now to deepen and strengthen the reality and the hopes of confederation, so that all Canadians . . . may feel with confidence that within this nation they can realize, without discrimination and in full partnership, a good destiny for themselves and for those who follow them."

PROFILE

By DON BRAZIER

"Africans are given a much greater chance to better themselves in Basutoland than they are in the Republic of South Africa". This is the opinion of Peter Pitso, a student from Basutoland, who is studying on scholarship for an honors Classics degree at Kings College.

Mr. Pitso is well qualified to speak on the subject. He spent the last four years teaching Latin in both his native land and in the Republic. In Basutoland, there is no discrimination. The Legislative Assembly consists of 80 members, 76 of which by law must be Africans. The Cabinet consists of 8 representatives and the Resident Commissioner (British). Of the eight, four represent various Government departments. Up until recently these four were always held by Europeans. With the increase in higher educational opportunities for the Africans, these and other high Government posts have been relinquished by the British to them. Invoked Mr. Pitso, "It is a Government Policy that the European must give way to qualified "Africans." Since the war there has been an attempt to do away with illiteracy. "Quite a number of schools have been built, especially of higher education", commented Mr. Pitso.

In contrast, education has been paralyzed in South Africa. For the most part the Africans are regarded as inferior and as a consequence the educational facilities open to the African are not as great as those open to the European.

"Even so", added Mr. Pitso, "Africans can still get decent jobs if they have been to the schools regarded as okay by the administration. But in fairness to the South African Government", he admitted, "they have made quite a difference



Mr. Don Brazier Mr. Peter Pitso

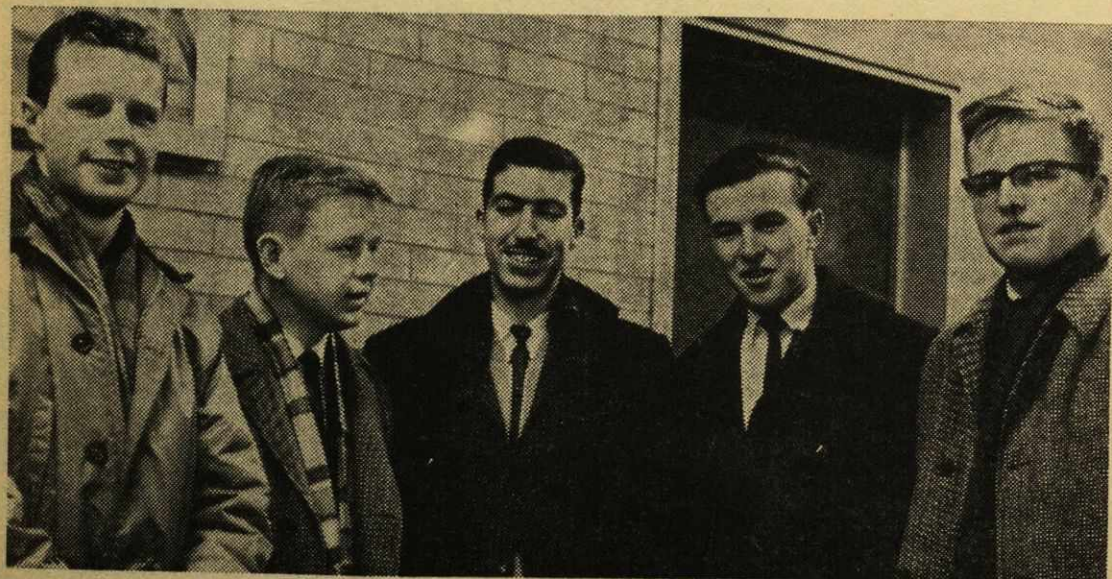
in the living conditions of Africans in the past 10 years, such as clearing up the slums in Johannesburg".

It is Mr. Pitso's opinion that the apartheid policy in Johannesburg of the Verwoerd Government is objected to by a "few" of the European population, whereas in Basutoland the Europeans feel that "The Africans should be given a chance".

In Basutoland farming is the mainstay of the economy, especially sheep and cattle. Since the war the British have attempted to industrialize the country but as of yet the results have "not been worth mentioning".

Mr. Pitso, a Roman Catholic, was born in the tribal village of Ramabanta's in the district of Maseru. He was educated first at the local mission school and later received a degree at Pius XII College in the Roma Valley. He then went into teaching.

It is Mr. Pitso's intention upon graduating to go back to Basutoland to continue teaching.



(Photo by Dave Cooper)

FELLOW TRAVELLERS gather together at the Atlantic Regional NFCUS Conference held at Memorial University of Newfoundland, St. John's. From left to right: Graham Read, Dalhousie Student Council Vice-President; Stewart Goodings, NFCUS President; Les Cohen, Dalhousie NFCUS Committeeman and Gazette Features Editor; Fred Arsenaull, NFCUS Atlantic Region President (St. Joseph's) and Henry Muggah, Dalhousie NFCUS Chairman.