

**FRANK H. VIZETELLY**

**NEW YORK**

173 West 188th Street,  
April 12, 1926.

Wilfrid Bovey, Esq.,  
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Montreal, Ont., Canada.

Dear Sir: --

My suggestion of the issuance of a Canadian Dictionary to your Principal was not so much concerned with the spellings of the English language as indorsed by Oxford University as it was concerned with the language of your own people throughout the Dominion, on which Oxford University can not reasonably be said to exercise any power.

The language of the Canadian people, in so far as its particular vernacular is concerned, is singularly idiomatic. It belongs to them, and whereas a Canadian university, such as McGill, might well exert its influence upon the purification, if it is deemed desirable, of that vernacular, it would not be called upon to in any way modify even Orders in Council which, after all, are, in so far as the language itself is concerned, nothing more than mere scraps of paper.

You will pardon me for writing to you again upon the subject but, as in thirty-five years of work in lexicography, I have found the need of such a book as was outlined, it is only natural that I should bring the matter to the attention of other educational institutions, or to that of my good friend, the Right Honorable Mackenzie King, for further consideration.

In so far as I am personally concerned, all I hope is that I may live long enough to see the Canadians with a book worthy of their race that reflects the different varieties of speech to be found throughout the Dominion. Naturally, interested in the languages of the English-speaking races, I made a similar suggestion that has met with favor to the Australian Commonwealth and the Dominion of New Zealand, and I feel quite sure that somewhere in Canada, I shall find an institution willing to embark in such an enterprise for the good of the country or itself, even if it be not affiliated with an educational establishment.

I came to Ottawa hoping to interest your institution; I shall now go to Toronto hoping to interest some one there. Failing in this, it may be necessary for me to turn to the Canadian press. It is a somewhat sad reflection that a half a continent, peopled by 8,788,483 souls, seems to take little interest in the language that it speaks outside of that which is based upon the Mother tongue.

It is a truism that no dictionary can be authority for words that it does not contain. How the Oxford Dictionary can be authority for terms in use in Canada that are not to be found in that work is a matter which, of course, only the omniscient can explain.

I take pleasure in sending to you under separate cover a paper that I have recently written bearing upon the subject of the vocabulary of our speech which may perhaps be of sufficient interest to repay perusal.

Yours very faithfully,

*Frank H. Vizetelly*