

By CHARLES McALLISTER

The English-Speaking Association has received headline news on a number of recent events. Premier Hatfield, speaking to the association in favour of bilingualism, was booed by some members. When a Campbellton news reporter handed over her recorded tape of a ESA meeting in answer to the demands of the members, they returned the tape reportedly erased.

The association was formed two years ago. Its main object is "to Protect, Preserve, Promote and Project our English Language and Culture, and to maintain our constitutional rights..." Other objectives include "To ensure that Canada remains a unilingual English-speaking country, but permitting freedom of speech or culture of any language subject to the laws of Canada," opposition to excessive expenditures of public funds for the promotion of bilingualism, and loss of employment or promotion because of bilingual policies.

This provincial association claims to have 10,000 members, with 6,000 in Moncton. Gordon Hum is president, but has informed the association of his intention to resign. Hum dislikes the Official Languages Act (OLA) because it is not broad enough and does not have fair application to the minorities. By proclaiming English and French as the official languages of Canada, other minorities become third rate. He is not opposed to bilingualism but wants a "fair and clean policy" on it, favouring a regional bilingual policy based on supply and demand for bilingual services (especially in public relations and essential services). He does not mind bilingual services in Quebec and New Brunswick, but implementing such services in a Saskatchewan town, where the demand is not great enough, is "utter nonsense."

Hum believes in the merit principle for government employment, although he concedes that English-French ratios in the civil services should be equal to the population ratio in each region. He stressed that some people are unable to learn a second language and are discriminated against by bilingual job requirements. Hum is against a long range attainment of a bilingual Canada through education stating that emigrants would face a disadvantage (probably having to learn French.)

Hum is opposed to the N.B. government's separate school policy because of its cost and its tendency to foster English-French hostilities. He wants bilingual schools (where applicable), in which students can be taught either in English or French.

Hum called the demands for a High School in Fredericton for a few French students unreasonable. He contrasted this with the University of Moncton, which, he claims, was to be a bilingual university when funds were asked for. The Deutsch Report on Higher Education in N.B. (1962) recommended that "the Legislative Assembly grant a charter to establish the U. of M. as the sole degree-granting French-language

institution of higher education in N.B..." In 1963, the province did pass such an act. Hum is not against a French language university in the North Shore where it would raise education standards.

Hum does not see eye to eye with all ESA members concerning bilingualism. He agrees that the association's newsletter — The Maple Leaf News — is sometimes filled with propaganda and extremism. A letter published in their newsletter concerning the recent Moncton city by-elections stated, "Let's have all English voters out next time, and keep the city English."

The newsletter sometimes contains anti-French business tones — "Spend at the store of your choice." Hum is against this type of action. The newsletter jumps on any anti-English incidents, but members say there are plenty of useful facts printed.

Hum claims a desire to have moderate co-operation between English and French. More directly, Hum asked the Society of Acadians to have a public debate on bilingualism with the ESA — they refused. Claude Bourque of Evangeline stated "Acadians should confer with 'reasonable' representatives of the English-

speaking population, and certainly not with a group of fanatics..."

Hum says the Society of Acadians do not attend multicultural conferences because they believe themselves a majority. The Society responds that they do not, because the French people are recognized as one of the founding nations in the OLA, and French is an official language.

The ESA members all feel the press has given them a bad name. Hum contends the press has given him a "bad image" as a racist or a bigot. He points out this is detrimental in finding employment. Ronald Owen, the Fredericton branch president of the ESA, says many people are scared to belong to the ESA because of its image painted by "prejudiced reporters in local papers."

Anti-bilingual feeling in the ESA stems from the "force-feeding" aspects of present policy. They contend that other cultures don't force their language or culture on others. Yet they are forcing the English culture on the French, without realizing that the French language and culture is more viable than any other cultural minority in Canada — with 27

percent of the Canadian population French, and 87 percent of Quebec French.

On Oct. 10, I attended a meeting of the Fredericton Branch of the ESA. Sixteen members showed up (out of a stated 300 members) for a meeting scheduled for the election of officers for a new year. Ronald Owen, president of the branch, cancelled the election and said there was a problem of attendance (possibly due to parking difficulties and location of meetings).

This branch believes the federal OLA does not represent the wishes of the "average Canadian". They want a plebiscite on it. One can easily observe that a plebiscite would only increase any English-French hostilities.

Owen pointed out that, unlike the Society of Acadians, ESA receives no federal or provincial grants. They claim Acadian groups receive grants unknown to the press. He stated that the main concerns of this branch are the loss of employment or promotion because of bilingualism, and the cost of bilingualism.

One member declared (jokingly or seriously I wonder?) that "the best thing for Canada is to get rid of Quebec."

## SOUND

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### Official Languages Act

The Federal Official Languages Act was instituted in 1968, proclaiming "The English and French languages are the official languages of Canada for all purposes of the Parliament and Government of Canada, and possess and enjoy equality of status and equal rights and privileges as to their use in all the institutions of the Parliament and Government of Canada".

The Act established the office of the Commissioner of Official Languages, presently held by Keith Spicer. The Commissioner ensures recognition of the status of English and French with reference to the OLA, sees that the spirit of the Act is being complied with, and investigates complaints. In 1971-72 he received 43 complaints on bilingualism from New Brunswick.

"If large scale injustice exists anywhere it essentially diminishes the rights of our French-speaking countrymen, both as private citizens and as federal employees. Federal services

available (and taken for granted) anywhere in Canada in English are still too frequently denied as exorbitant for French-speaking Canadians. And the 82 percent English-speaking bastion of the Public Service cannot be regarded as beleaguered. To seek promotion, or even work, with most federal agencies as a unilingual French-speaking Canadian remains incomparably more difficult than for unilingual English-speakers. In 1971, of the 66,675 jobs filled by the Public Service Commission and departments, little over 8 percent allowed for a unilingual French-speaking incumbent, nearly 80 percent required English only."

Of Canada's population, 27 percent is French-speaking. In Quebec 87 percent are French, in New Brunswick - 35 percent; with 95 percent of all French people living in Quebec, New Brunswick and Ontario. The B & B Commission (1967) using the latest available census found there were 700,000 English in Quebec, and 850,000 French outside Quebec. The Commission

recommended that provincial municipal services be federal bilingual districts. New Brunswick is a federal district.

Federal bilingualism named where there is 10 percent official linguists, or where flexibility aspect is Spicer's question, 38,000 native French people of Toronto federal service language?" In the federal services multilingual capacity. "principle offices in bilingual district, municipal public can obtain services and can cover both official languages known as institutionalism. Spicer indicates does not require employee or private become bilingual bilingual capacity in services is to serve person. He states that services must be offered."