

Committee rules on all nomenclature issues involving Canada. Toponyms within the provinces become decisions of the Committee upon a ruling by the provinces involved. The Committee is assisted in its work by four advisory committees in charge of names, linguistic policy and research. There are about 300,000 officially approved names in Canada.

The Official Languages Act and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms determine the policy of the Federal Government as far as the policy of the Canadian Standing Committee on Geographical Names is concerned. The Committee must therefore see to it that when members of both official language groups use federal maps they are served with consistency and fairness. Toponymy is also one of the essential elements which help create our national image as a country where both official language groups share a common heritage, each one designating major geographical entities in its own language.

To better meet the needs of Canadians of both official language groups, names which appear on federal maps must first of all match those used in legal documents, that is the names adopted by the provincial authorities within their own province and by federal authorities within the regions under their jurisdiction.

The purpose of a federal approach would be to determine which are the place names of geographical entities that are of national interest in both official languages. These names should be considered part of the collective ownership of the Canadian people, or in other words of its national heritage.

Mr. Speaker, the Canadian Permanent Committee on Geographical Names has been guided for a long time by the principle that, excluding entities under the jurisdiction of the Canadian government such as Indian reserves, national parks and Canadian Forces bases, geographical names are a provincial matter. The names of the provinces themselves, of course, are a different problem. According to the Department of Justice, the name of a province is that used in the Constitutional Act under which that province entered Confederation. In the case of Nova Scotia, that act of course is the British North America Act, a statute originally passed in English only. The Department of Justice is currently preparing an official French version of that act. However, all previous French versions of that act referred to "Nouvelle-Écosse". There is therefore no reason to believe that the latest text will be any different.

Be that as it may, since constitutional documents are involved, the Canadian Government could not make changes without having them approved by the provinces. In the same way, provinces could not change their names without requesting the Canadian Government approval. We may therefore conclude in my view that this is an area of joint jurisdiction, where the lead should preferably come from the Legislative Assembly of the province concerned.

With respect to geographical names, past and present practice has been and is one of the main elements to be considered. Now, the use of the name "Nouvelle-Écosse" in

Designation of Nova Scotia

treaties, in historical works, on maps and in geographical documents dates back to the 18th century. It has been in continuous use since then and remains current usage not only among French-speaking Nova-Scotians and Canadians generally, but throughout the French-speaking nations. That was the name used in the 1713 Treaty of Utrecht, under which France finally yielded Nova Scotia to Britain. It must be remembered that, first settled by France under the name of "Acadie", Nova Scotia was under French rule from 1667 to 1710. On the other hand, even if the name "Nova Scotia" is indeed of Latin origin, it has long since ceased to be perceived by people in that province and Canadians in general as anything but the English name of a very predominantly English province.

Mr. Speaker, this may be but a technicality, but one should not overlooked the fact that if Nova Scotia's official name were to be changed, changes would have to be made not only to federal statutes but also to all official documents, maps, and so on, bearing the name of that province. On the other hand, such a change, at a point in time where over-all Canadian attitude to bilingualism is entering a phase of greater tolerance and more general acceptance, might very well stress relations between those two linguistic groups and polarize their mutual positions. The name "Nouvelle-Écosse" is part of the cultural heritage of Nova-Scotians and all Canadians.

[English]

Ms. Sheila Copps (Hamilton East): Mr. Speaker, as the great great grandchild of a person who came to Cape Breton from the great country of France in the 17th century, it pains me to see that the motion introduced in this House today would see only one version of *le beau nom de la Nouvelle Écosse* in documents from this day forward if this Bill were to pass. It also pains me as a student of Latin who has taken some interest in how languages are developed to look at the rather irregular logic of the Hon. Member for Annapolis Valley-Hants (Mr. Nowlan) in proposing this. He is suggesting that, because the origin of the two words "Nova Scotia" are Latin, it continues to be a Latin name. I think if he takes the opportunity to study the evolution of languages, including English, he will no doubt be aware, as was stated by the previous speaker, that when a word is incorporated into a language for many years, in some cases for many centuries, it becomes part of the idiom of that language. This is clearly the case in the use of the two words "Nova Scotia". The words "Nova Scotia" are incorporated into the English language and, as such, deserve a French translation.

• (1730)

I would point to other current uses of words in the English language which can be drawn from French origin such as the word "serviette". Serviette is a French word which has been incorporated into the English language to illustrate a small