

Acadian Associations Buy Le Courier

by Paul Creelman

Fifty-seven per cent of the shares in Le Courier, a Nova Scotian Acadian newspaper, have been sold to a consortium of Acadian provincial and regional associations, says Marie-Germain d'Entremont, interim executive director of FANE (Fédération Acadienne de la Nouvelle-Ecosse).

"Mr. LeBlanc was a major shareholder in Le Courier, which was not profitable, and he wanted out," said d'Entremont. The consortium is a non-profit organization which now controls the newspaper.

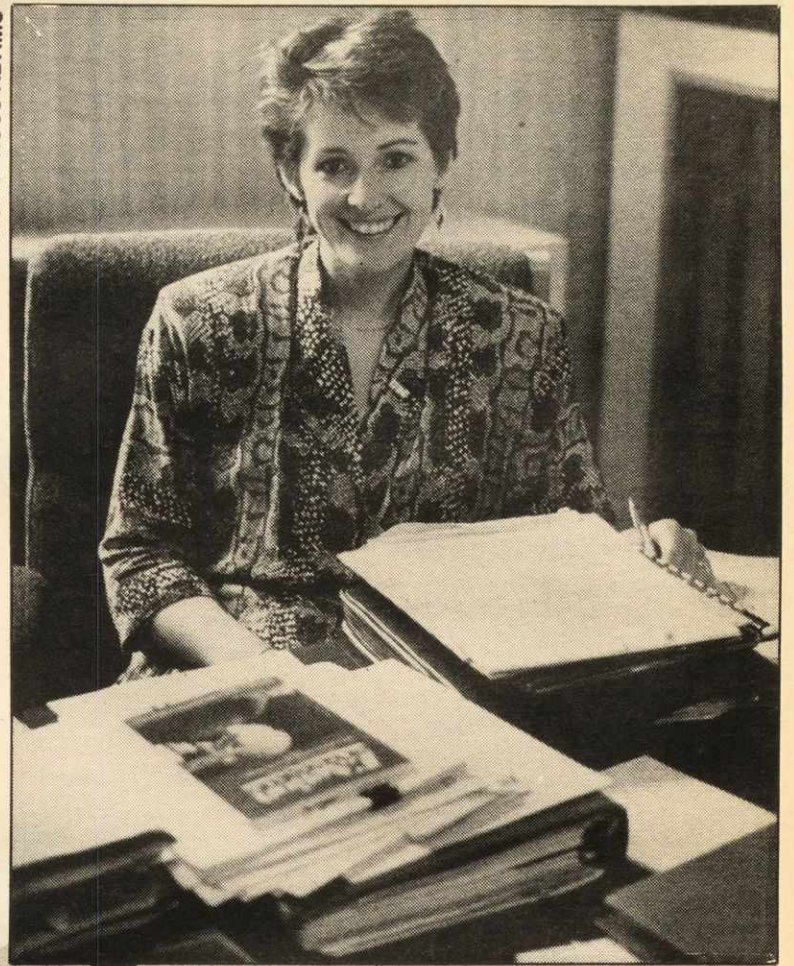
The weekly Le Courier is the only French-language newspaper in Nova Scotia. It is funded by \$50,000 a year from the federal

government. Funds were raised to the value of \$40,000 in the francophone community in Nova Scotia, and the Acadians are now hoping the federal government will match it with another \$40,000.

D'Entremont feels the editorial direction of Le Courier will not change greatly because of the takeover. "Le Courier will still be very much pro-French — that without a doubt. That is its mandate," she said. However, she said the paper would be more anti-conservative with a small 'c' rather than anti-conservative with a large 'PC'.

"Le Courier sees its role to promote the official languages and rights of Acadians," said d'Entremont.

PHOTO: RUSS ADAMS



Marie-Germain d'Entremont, interim executive director of FANE.

by Geoff Stone

The Metropolitan Immigrant Settlement Association (MISA) is a non-profit settlement association for immigrants coming to the Halifax area.

MISA works with around 200 government-sponsored refugees and others per year, providing direct services and linking newcomers to other agencies which can help them.

MISA was established in 1980 to provide assistance to Vietnamese who came to Canada as refugees.

Joan Rankin, a coordinator of MISA, said MISA receives 200 refugees from the 12,000 coming to Canada each year. Most of the funding for MISA comes from Employment and Immigration.

The association has around 65 volunteers, said Rankin, including people working in international development, people interested in teaching English as a second language, and people who just want to help.

Volunteers work in such areas as preparing for jobs, working with refugee claims, and helping

with income tax.

Rankin said that when applying for jobs, immigrants have a hard time getting skills from their native country recognized in Canada. "Most of the people have to start from the bottom," she said.

Rankin said while people may have experience as a professional, because documentation from their native country is not interpreted correctly, they may end up at low-paying service jobs. "Many people get jobs in services. There are a lot of kitchen jobs," she said.

Rankin said there was recently a case of an accountant from Guatemala with twelve years' experience who was cleaning buildings at night. "It's because you don't have any contacts here," said Rankin.

Part of the problem is a lack of resource people with the association to teach immigrants how to find work. "There is a lack of resource people to develop skills. Finding a job is difficult even for Canadians," she said.

Rankin was also concerned with the perception Halifax peo-

ple have that there are no immigrants in the city. "They don't know there is this number (200) coming in each year," she said.

The number of government-assisted refugees coming to Canada currently includes 3100 from Eastern Europe, 3200 each from Southeast Asia and Latin America, 1000 from Africa, 900 from the Middle East, 300 from other world areas, and 300 from the Funded Management Reserve.

The quota system is set up each year by the government. Quotas have decreased slightly in recent years, and include disproportionate numbers from the mainly white Eastern European countries as opposed to Africa and Latin America.

Rankin said of the refugee bill C-55 that there has been a lot of misunderstanding about refugees "jumping the queue". "There seems to be a lot of disinformation going around," she said.

Rankin said the "queue" idea is a myth, and the immigration and refugee processes are in no way related to each other. "It is important that public information come out," she said.

MISA