

Opinion

Dragos Ruiu



Feds forcing French

This summer the federal government decided to spend an additional \$195 million on promoting French. This brings the total amount the feds are going to spend on "Official Languages in Education and Promotion of Official Languages" to a staggering \$1.4 billion over the next five years.

This is not millions we are talking about, but billions. To put this number into perspective, the federal government has only spent \$2.4 billion on all direct university funding including student assistance since 1984.

This huge sum is going to be spent on promoting a minority language in Canada (6 million people speak French as a first or second language), just because the poor French people feel picked upon.

Well, I happened to be in Quebec when those poor Frenchmen (and I thought they were Canadians) introduced Bill 101 and oppressed all English speakers, just to ensure the continued influence of their language. English was virtually banned in Quebec, and is still shunned. Now we are supposed to welcome French with open arms. In Quebec you can still be prosecuted for putting up signs in English, and in the rest of Canada we are being forced to translate documents into both languages and spend our money on promoting French.

I have nothing against learning French, indeed the French language fascinates me. I welcome learning it. What repulses me, though, is the feds forcing us to use it; it smacks of fascism. We are paying through the nose to buy the federal government French votes.

Why should we be spending all this money to promote French? If French use is on the decline, should we think we can reverse the trend? Call it evolution in action, after all, the majority of the western world speaks English.

\$1.4 billion dollars could do amazing things... it is a sum of money that can change the world. Imagine what that money could do to improve our educational system, to house the needy, to help the poor — who probably don't care what language they speak as long as they can eat.



Letters

The Gateway welcomes letters to the editor.

The name, faculty and year of study of the writer must be included for publication. The writer's phone number and University of Alberta I.D. number must also be provided, but will remain confidential.

Letters should be double-spaced, and typed if possible. They must not exceed 300 words.

The Gateway reserves the right to edit for length or clarity. Material of a racist, sexist, homophobic, or libellous nature will not be published.

Please submit letters to Room 282, SUB.

to be affected. Social programs that are "universally available" are fully protected under the General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs and they remain so protected. Medicare, UI, and Welfare are all generally available to the Canadian public, so our programs will remain and even grow stronger.

Another important issue for Canadians right now is the environment. The FTA does not affect the environment in the slightest. Canada has the toughest acid rain laws in the world. The environment is now on the agenda for the next US president; therefore, negotiations are ongoing to improve relations on the environment between the two countries.

The absolutely fantastic news about this deal is that our basic alcohol prices will be going down. For those of us who like to drink, it will be cheaper to do so.

I firmly believe that this is a good deal for the continuation of the current economic growth of Canada. We have the potential to become one of the most powerful nations in the world, and this is the first step.

Randy Kerr
President, PC Club
Arts III

Belief misrepresented

Re: Words dangerous (Oct. 25)

Some misconceptions concerning Mr. Spindloe's comments about faith in God must be cleared up.

First of all, being a member of God's community does not subvert the will. True, there are certain rules of conduct, but this is true for any society.

God does not want a community of mindless zombies for worshippers. God, while quite capable of making everyone on this planet worship Him, would much rather have us come to Him freely. The phrase: "If you love something set it free" applies here. God loves us, so He gives us the choice: follow God or ignore him.

"It's okay if I screw up; God will forgive me if I believe in Him" is totally incorrect. Belief in God is the first step, but there are other things required for salvation. After all, even

Satan believes in God, but he does not even want to be saved. The second thing you must do, is love God with all your mind, heart, and soul. The third part, wanting to be saved, is easy, if you can do the second.

Finally, gaining entrance into Heaven is not an unreasonable hope. Jesus Christ died for our sins, so that we would not have to. He rose from the dead so that we could share in His everlasting life. Entrance into Heaven you see, is not some unattainable goal to an imaginary place. It exists as a real possibility for all those who believe in, and love God.

I respect Mr. Spindloe's right to his own opinion on the subject, but I feel that he was misrepresenting the beliefs of my faith. I feel I have an obligation to express those beliefs as I understand them so that other people will have the facts.

Don Moar
Science II

Criticism uncalled for

Re: Humour not amusing (Nov. 1)

Maybe if Paul Yates and Myles McCallum are so dissatisfied with the quality of the writing on the humour page, they could write something of a higher quality for *The Gateway* themselves (preferably a stunning satire that would have us all falling off of our chairs in hysterical laughter as we read it behind textbooks in the middle of a psychology lecture). Perhaps if they could provide some decent writing to fill up the "useless space that we just couldn't leave blank" people might be willing to take their cutting criticism a little more seriously.

It's easy enough to make snarky comments about someone else's work, but it's much harder to come up with an entertaining article that appeals to a variety of tastes. So I will be waiting with bated breath to see an article by Mr. McCallum or Mr. Yates entitled "Fun Times Sharpening My Pencil" or "Wild Times Waiting for the Elevator". But I won't hold my breath too long; chronic complainers aren't usually known for their outstanding wit and humour.

Rachel Sanders
Arts I

The Gateway

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Free Trade facts

Many misconceptions abound in the Free Trade debate which has been going on in our country for the past year. I would like to take this opportunity to provide some facts about the Agreement.

First and foremost for Alberta is the myth that all our natural resources are up for complete control by US companies. Absolutely not true. We cannot be forced to sell anything we don't want to. In the unlikely event of a shortage, Canada has the right to cut back its exports. The US is simply entitled to the same percentage of exports that it had in the 36 months preceding a shortage.

Agriculture is also very important to Alberta. The marketing boards will remain in place to protect our producers. The US farmers have the Department of Agriculture to protect their farmers and we have institutions like the Canadian Wheat Board. I can hardly begin to imagine a farmer flying to Moscow to sell his wheat to the Soviets; therefore, the Boards remain. Also, cheaper US grain cannot flood over our borders because as long as US government subsidies remain higher than that of Canada's, the US will be subject to permits across our border.

Our social programs are not going