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Worlds Apart in Acadie: Official Languages Programs in Education in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, 1968-1984¹

MATTHEW HAYDAY

In 1974, the Graham Commission submitted its report on Education, Public Services, and Provincial-Municipal Relations in the province of Nova Scotia. An entire chapter of the report was devoted to the state of Acadian education and French second language (FSL) programs. The Commission recommended several changes to improve the status of Acadian education in Nova Scotia, beginning with the legal recognition of Acadian schools in the *Education Act*.² In New Brunswick, the French-language Acadian daily newspaper, *Évangeline*, commented on the recommendations in an editorial of July 9, 1974.³ The editors of *Évangeline* wondered why the commission did not recommend the dual system of education in New Brunswick as a model for Nova Scotia. They believed that the steps proposed by the commission, rather than leading to better protection of the French language, would do little to halt the trends of assimilation which were ravaging the Acadian population of Nova Scotia.

The *Évangeline* editorial raises issues which are fundamental to scholars of Acadian history. Why did French-language educational services differ so significantly between these provinces? Or, to put it more broadly, how is it possible that the status of the Acadian communities in New Brunswick and Nova

1 This article was written with the financial assistance of SSHRC and OGS grants, as well as travel funds from the Fonds d'émergence de projets de recherche sur le Canada français of the Centre de recherche en civilisation canadienne-française. I would like to express my thanks to Michael Behiels, Yves Frenette, Marcel Martel, Sacha Richard, Matthew Kayahara, and two anonymous reviewers at the *Journal* for their comments and suggestions on earlier versions of this paper.

2 Nova Scotia, *Royal Commission on Education, Public Services and Provincial-Municipal Relations Report. Volume III: Education* (1974). The main recommendations of the commission were the recognition of a right to French-language instruction in communities where 10% of the population was French-speaking, the appointment of a Director of Acadian education at the Department of Education, the parallel development of strong English second language programs, the creation of a task force to study and develop effective Acadian school programs, and the provision of additional funds for French-language materials and teacher training.

3 Claude Bourque, "L'enseignement en français et la Nouvelle-Écosse," *Évangeline*, 9 July 1974, 6.

Scotia could differ so greatly from each other, given their geographic proximity to each other, and their co-existence within the same state? What factors led to the differences between these communities, and are there any indications that these distinctions might be overcome?

An examination of the cleavages within the Acadian community along provincial lines are key to a developing understanding of how Canada's francophone communities, including that of Quebec, began to assume a more provincial orientation in the 1960s and 1970s. Provincial governments grew to assume greater importance as vehicles for Acadian and French-Canadian cultural advancement, replacing the Roman Catholic Church, which was declining in influence.⁴ Educational issues are a useful focal point for an examination of the differences and commonalities of the Acadian communities of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. Schools were long seen as central to the *survival* of French-Canadian and Acadian communities, as they created the francophone leaders who would help to defend these communities against assimilation. As provincial governments took over responsibility for French-language education from the Roman Catholic church, French-Canadian and Acadian communities began to view the governments which funded and controlled these schools as central to the protection of their language and cultural heritage. This article will examine how issues of official languages in education were dealt with in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia from 1968 to 1984, a key transitional period for French-language education programs in Canada.⁵ Following recommendations from Book II of the Report of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism (RCBB),⁶ the Canadian government allocated funding to the provinces to encourage them to expand their minority language education and second language instruction programs. This measure preceded the existence of a constitutional right to official minority language education, which would not exist until the adoption of the *Charter* in 1982. The manner in which these two provinces developed their French-language education programs differed sharply from one another.

4 Marcel Martel, *Le deuil d'un pays imaginé: rêves, luttes et déroute du Canada français: les rapports entre le Québec et la francophonie canadienne, 1867-1975* (Ottawa: Les Presses de l'Université d'Ottawa, 1997).

5 This paper is based on research being conducted for my PhD thesis, which examines the development of official languages in education across Canada. The thesis looks at six Canadian provinces, representing the West, Central Canada, and the Maritimes. The province of Prince Edward Island, which also contains an Acadian population, was excluded. The choices of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia were based on the size of their larger Acadian communities and their influence on the development of national policies of official languages.

6 Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism (RCBB), *Report of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism - Book II: Education* (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1968).

It would be tempting to simply attribute the differences on issues of official languages between New Brunswick and Nova Scotia to the different sizes of their Acadian populations (New Brunswick's accounting for about a third of the provincial population, Nova Scotia's at only about five percent). Indeed, this demographic reality was a key factor which does help to explain some of the differences between the two provinces. However, in order to determine why official language programs in education evolved in different ways in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, a more complex web of factors must also be considered. It will first be necessary to look at the demography and geography of the Acadian communities, as well as the history of French-language education in these provinces up to the 1960s. We will then examine the demands that Acadian community organisations placed on the provincial government. The success of the approaches taken by these groups can be partially measured by the types of initiatives that were undertaken by their governments in this period. It will also be necessary to consider how these changes, and the demands which led to them, were received by the majority English-speaking populations, as well as the Acadian populations that these community organisations purported to represent. Moreover, one cannot discount the important role of key politicians and bureaucrats who were committed to changing the system of education in these provinces, without whom it is unlikely that change could have occurred nearly so rapidly. Through this examination, it will be possible to explain the different paths taken in official language programs in education in these provinces.

Historiography

The present state of historiography of Acadian education in the post-World War II period is rather limited. The initial wave of studies on post-war Acadian education was conducted as part of the work of government commissions. The first major work addressing Nova Scotia was George Rawlyk and Ruth Hafter's *Acadian Education in Nova Scotia – An Historical Survey to 1965*, which chronicles the major policy changes in Acadian education up to 1965. Produced for the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, it paints a bleak picture of Acadian education in the province. Both Rawlyk's work and the Graham Commission Report of 1974 provide broad overviews of the state of Nova Scotian Acadian education up to the period covered by the present study, and made recommendations for how to improve this education. Both reports were extensively used by the Nova Scotian Acadians in their quest for improved French-language schools. In a similar vein, some brief chronologies of the development of French-language education can also be found in the *Journal of the Association canadienne des enseignant(e)s de langue française (ACELF)* of 1976, when the Association undertook a major study of franco-phone education in Canada.

In the 1980s and early 1990s, some broad historical overviews of Acadian education in all three Maritime provinces were written for Jean Daigle's compilations *The Acadians of the Maritimes* and *Acadia of the Maritimes*.⁷ However, these studies are rather cursory and descriptive in their coverage of the post-war era, and provide little analysis of the underlying causes for the evolution of education policy. On the second language front, Viviane Edwards produced a solid M.A. thesis in 1986 dealing with the development of the immersion movement in New Brunswick.⁸ More recently, a pair of books by Sally Ross, *The Acadians of Nova Scotia* (co-written with Alphonse Deveau) and *Les écoles acadiennes en Nouvelle-Écosse, 1758-2000*, chronicle the history of Acadian schools up to the present day. Ross relies very heavily on oral history rather than archival sources for the latter book, which focuses more on the experience of attending an Acadian school than on issues of education policy development. On the whole, there is very little historical work addressing the development of Acadian education policy since the Second World War.

However, outside of the historical field, the issue of official languages and language policy has been the subject of significant discussions. Demographers and sociolinguists – Richard Joy, Angéline Martel and Claude Castonguay, to name three – have extensively studied official languages issues related to assimilation, exogamy, and language transfers. Since the passage of the *Charter* in 1982, the legal quest for French-language education rights has also been a very fruitful area of scholarly work, including studies by Joseph Magnet, Michel Bastarache, Michael MacMillan, and Michael Behiels. The philosophy underlying the official languages policy of the Trudeau era has also been hotly debated by political scientists, including Kenneth McRoberts, Kenneth McRae and Leslie Pal. Studies of official language policies in education preceding the *Charter*, however, are for the most part yet to be undertaken.

What is the Official Languages in Education Program?

This paper will examine the development of Acadian education programs through the lens of the Official Languages in Education Program (OLEP). The program originated with the recommendations of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, which argued that the federal government should assume a role in encouraging the development of minority official

7 Alexandre-J. Savoie, "Education in Acadia: 1604-1970," in *The Acadians of the Maritimes*, ed. Jean Daigle (Moncton: Centre des études acadiennes, 1982), 383-428. Gilberte Couturier LeBlanc, Alcide Godin, and Aldéo Renaud, "French Education in the Maritimes, 1604-1992," in *Acadia of the Maritimes*, ed. Jean Daigle (Moncton: Chaire d'études acadiennes, 1995), 523-562.

8 Viviane Edwards, "French immersion in New Brunswick : the early years (1969-1985)" (M.A. thesis, University of New Brunswick, 1986).

language education programs, and should provide funding to the provinces to cover the additional costs of this education.⁹ The OLEP, which originally went by the unwieldy name of the Federal-Provincial Programme of Cooperation for the Promotion of Bilingualism in Education, was created by the federal government in 1970 to help provinces with the cost of providing minority official language education and second official language instruction. Its two main objectives were to allow Canadians the opportunity to educate their children in the official language of their choice, and to give children the opportunity to learn, as a second language, the other official language of their country.¹⁰ Federal funds were channelled directly to the provinces under the program's two main components: Formula payments, which paid for a percentage (nine percent and five percent respectively) of the costs of these two types of education, based on student enrolment figures, and Annex programs, including teacher bursaries and student travel grants. The annex programs also included special projects that were funded fifty-fifty by the provinces and the federal government, and were aimed at very well-defined development initiatives in official language education, as opposed to broad funding of the entire education system. Implementation of the OLEP and decisions of how federal funds were to be used were left entirely to the discretion of the provinces, which had exclusive constitutional jurisdiction over education.

The OLEP was funded through a series of multi-year agreements (the first from 1970-74, the second from 1974-79), followed by a series of one-year agreements (from 1979-80 to 1982-83), and then a three-year protocol agreement reached in 1983.¹¹ The OLEP still exists, in the protocol form, to the present day. Over the period from 1970 to 1984, covered by this study, well over one billion dollars was spent by the federal government on the development of minority language education programs and second language instruction. As we shall see, however, the programs did not develop at the same pace, nor in the same manner, in all the provinces. To understand why this was the case, we now turn to the development of these programs in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia.

9 Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism (RCBB), *Report of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism - Book II: Education* (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1968), 302.

10 Archives of Ontario (AO) – Education, RG 2-200, Council on French Language Schools, April 1972 to December 1972 – Federal-Provincial: Bilinguisme 1972 - News Release No. 9-970E, "Federal-provincial program on Bilingualism in Education agreement reached with provinces concerning financial assistance," 9 September 1970.

11 For a more detailed study of some of the mechanics of federalism involved in the formation of the Official Languages in Education Program, readers may consult Matthew Hayday, "Confusing and Conflicting Agendas: Federalism, Official Languages and the Development of the Bilingualism in Education Program in Ontario, 1970-1983," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 36/1 (Spring 2001): 50-79.

Setting the Stage – Demographics and Assimilative Pressures

A significant factor which determined the capacity of the Acadian community organisations of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia to influence their respective governments was the demographic weight of the Acadian communities with respect to the rest of the population, as well as their ability to develop strong community linkages and a sense of community identity firmly rooted in a common language and culture. By the 1960s, the Acadians of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia differed substantially in these respects, largely as a result of long-term patterns of development, stretching back to the era of Acadian re-settlement in the Maritimes following the Deportation.

It is not surprising that the key event which was to shape future development of the Acadian communities was the Deportation of 1755. Following the deportation, Acadians gradually returned to the Maritime provinces, establishing settlements which largely determined their geographical distribution of the 1960s. In New Brunswick, Acadians driven out of Nova Scotia by manhunts, which continued until 1763, moved inland and settled up the Saint John River Valley and around the Baie de Chaleur, far from the reach of the British authorities.¹² The New Brunswick Acadians were able to establish fairly homogeneous communities, situated close both to each other and to the current Quebec border, which had the effect of creating a continuous belt of francophone populations. New Brunswick was established as a separate political entity from Nova Scotia in 1784, and the Acadian population grew to about one-third of the population of the province. Most of the New Brunswick Acadian communities were quite homogenous and isolated from the anglophone communities of the province. These communities developed their own networks of services and businesses, which made it possible for the New Brunswick Acadians to live their lives almost entirely in French. This homogeneity, as well as their significance within the provincial population, helped to keep assimilation levels very low.¹³ By the early 1970s, when the rates of language transfer from French mother tongue to English were relatively high in other French-Canadian communities, that of the New Brunswick Acadian community was quite low at eight percent.¹⁴ This degree of community cohesiveness and resistance to assimilation remained strong throughout the period under study.

Resettlement in Nova Scotia followed a very different path. The Acadians were permitted to resettle in the colony only in 1764, and then only under the conditions of taking the oath of allegiance and settling in distant parts of the

12 Muriel K. Roy, "Settlement and Population Growth in Acadia," in *The Acadians of the Maritimes*, ed. Jean Daigle (Moncton: Centre d'études acadiennes, 1982), 163.

13 "Situation actuelle de l'enseignement en français," *Journal de l'ACELF* 6/3 (1976): 13.

14 Roy, "Settlement and Population Growth in Acadia," 177.

colony.¹⁵ This distance was not likely to be seen in a negative manner by the Acadians, who were no doubt wary of further harassment by the British government. Accordingly, the Acadians settled on the south-western tip of the colony, around Baie-Ste-Marie in the counties of Clare and Argyle, where they were able to form the majority of the population until the 1970s. The second major concentration of Acadians was on Cape Breton Island, in the counties of Richmond (centred around Chéticamp) and Inverness, where the Acadians made up about fifty percent of the population by the 1970s.¹⁶ After the Second World War, increasing numbers of francophones made their way to the provincial capital, Halifax. By 1971, the Acadian population was split close to evenly between the three regions, although the French-speaking population in the provincial capital did not account for a significant proportion of the city's population.¹⁷ Moreover, aside from Clare and Argyle counties, the Acadian communities of Nova Scotia were far less homogenous than their New Brunswick counterparts.

Communication among the Acadian communities of Nova Scotia was very limited. The community newspaper, *Le Petit Courrier*, did not achieve province-wide distribution until 1972. Even then, it was a weekly publication, as opposed to the daily *Évangeline* in New Brunswick. There was likewise no province-wide Acadian organisation until 1968, when la Fédération acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse (FANE) was established, replacing the two regional, and largely religious, organisations which had served the south-western and Cape Breton regions.¹⁸ A lack of community cohesiveness, and serious pressures from English-language media in the post-Second World War era had major, devastating effects on the size of the Acadian communities. While Nova Scotia's Acadian community had never had the demographic strength of its New Brunswick counterpart, peaking at around ten percent of the population, by the 1970s this figure had dropped to around five percent.¹⁹ The assimilation rate of the francophone population, at thirty-five percent in 1971, was much more significant in Nova Scotia than in New Brunswick.²⁰ This pattern was largely the result of high levels of exogamy, or marrying outside of the French-

15 Sally Ross and Alphonse Deveau, *The Acadians of Nova Scotia Past and Present* (Halifax: Nimbus Publishing, 1992), 74.

16 Ross and Deveau, *The Acadians of Nova Scotia*, 78-98. This grouping includes the smaller settlements of Pomquet and Tracadie in Antigonish County, located at the north-eastern tip of the Nova Scotia mainland, close to Cape Breton Island.

17 Muriel Roy estimates that in 1971, 30% of the Acadian population lived in the north-east of the province, 25% in the south-western counties, and 27% in Halifax. "Settlement and Population Growth in Acadia," in *The Acadians of the Maritimes*, ed. Jean Daigle (Moncton: Centre d'études acadiennes, 1982), 163.

18 Ross and Deveau, *The Acadians of Nova Scotia*, 159.

19 *Ibid.*, 156.

20 Roy, "Settlement and Population Growth in Acadia," 177.

language community, which usually resulted in the use of English as the language of the home. In 1986, only eight percent of exogamous families claimed to use French as the language of use in the home.²¹ Clearly, the Acadian population in Nova Scotia in the early 1970s lacked the numerical weight and geographic cohesiveness of its New Brunswick counterpart, and was clearly on the road to assimilation by the anglophone majority of the province.

History of French-Language Education in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia to 1970

The development of official language programs in education before the advent of federal funding also differed significantly between these provinces. Both began on a fairly similar track for minority language education programs. Before the 1960s, both provinces tolerated the existence of “bilingual schools” which offered instruction in both English and French. However, in neither province did these schools have official legal status, nor was support forthcoming from either Department of Education in terms of curriculum planning. Indeed, the Nova Scotian policy of allowing French-language education at the primary level, which dated from 1939, has been regarded as nonsensical, unless its overall aim was to assimilate the Acadians.²² The two provinces diverged substantially in the 1960s. The 1960 election of the Liberal government of Louis Robichaud, the first elected Acadian premier in Canada, and the 1963 Byrne Commission in New Brunswick led to rapid changes in the province’s education structure. In 1967, all funding and decision-making was centralised in the Department of Education, and the province was divided into school districts along language lines.²³ In 1968, the Robichaud government announced its intention to pass the New Brunswick *Official Languages Act*, and the province set about improving the status of French in the province, a process which required major changes to the staffing of the Department of Education, and an improvement in funding levels to French-language schools.²⁴ No such revolution occurred in Nova Scotia. The only significant

21 Angéline Martel, *Rights, Schools and Communities in Minority Contexts: 1986-2002 – Toward the Development of French through Education, an Analysis* (Ottawa: Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages, 2001), 66.

22 George A. Rawlyk and Ruth Hafter, *Acadian Education in Nova Scotia, An Historical Survey to 1965* (Ottawa: Information Canada, 1970).

23 Interview with Armand Saintonge, former New Brunswick Deputy Minister of Education (14 March 2002). The division of school districts initially included English-only, French-only and bilingual school districts. The bilingual districts would prove to be problematic over the 1970s.

24 Centre d’études acadiennes, Université de Moncton (CEA), Fonds 146, Armand-Saintonge, Fiche 146.86, Langues officielles au Nouveau-Brunswick - Domaine de l’éducation, Memorandum from Pierre Vachon to Department of Education officials, 14 April 1970.

change to occur in Nova Scotia was the 1969 hiring of a consultant at the departmental level, who was assigned the task of coordinating modern languages, including French.²⁵ Acadian schools continued to be tolerated, but without any official government support.

Programs in second-language instruction reflect this division between the two provinces. New Brunswick instituted a policy of compulsory second-language instruction in 1965, with French as a required subject in Grades 5 to 10 for anglophones, and English a required subject in Grades 3 to 10 for francophones.²⁶ New Brunswick also began developing its first French immersion school for English-speaking children in 1970 in Moncton. Another immersion program had been established earlier in Saint John, although this grew out of a French-language program and was primarily aimed at the small Acadian population of the city, which lacked the French-language skills to follow the standard provincial French-language programs.²⁷ Nova Scotia, in contrast, had almost non-existent French second-language programs at the primary level. Programs were more developed at the secondary level, although students began dropping out of French in increasing numbers as universities abandoned their second language requirements. One must also question the quality of this instruction, since a 1955 study showed that sixty-seven percent of FSL teachers lacked the capacity to carry on a conversation in French.²⁸ In 1970, there were no French immersion programs in Nova Scotia, and it would be another six years before any were developed.

Initial stages of the OLEP in the Provinces

The development of official language programmes in education prior to the advent of the OLEP clearly shows that by 1970 the governments of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia were on very different paths. This divergence was reflected in the manner in which these provinces initially approached the federal program of co-operation for the promotion of bilingualism in education. As was noted earlier, New Brunswick had already begun its education reforms in 1967. With the passage of its *Official Languages Act*, New Brunswick had embarked on a path of major development of its minority-language education programs. New Brunswick's representatives thus took a keen interest in the Constitutional Conference's subcommittee on official languages which devel-

25 Interview with Jean-Roland Aucoin, former Assistant Director of Curriculum, Nova Scotia Department of Education (13 March 2002).

26 Edwards, "French immersion in New Brunswick".

27 Provincial Archives of New Brunswick (PANB), RS 306, Department of Education - Administration Records, File D1 - Conference on French Immersion, 27 January 1977, *Immersion: an alternate approach to second language learning*, 4 February 1977.

28 Rawlyk, *Acadian Education in Nova Scotia*, 43.

oped the OLEP. Louis Robichaud saw official language programs as giving provincial expression to the English-French partnership in Canada.²⁹

New Brunswick enthusiastically endorsed the underlying principles enunciated by the RCBB, and was very open to the federal program of assistance.³⁰ A study of the costs that improving French-language education would entail revealed that the province would need the federal funds from the OLEP, plus an additional \$3.2 million per year to overcome disparities between its English and French programs.³¹ Initially, funds from the federal government were deposited in the consolidated funds of the provincial treasury, rather than being specifically earmarked for provincial education programs.³² However, the province did spend significantly more on improvements to its French-language education programs than it received from the federal government. Moreover, the province began to engage in experimental programs, including French immersion for its English-speaking population.³³

Nova Scotia displayed significantly less interest in the initial development of the OLEP. At the constitutional conferences of the late 1960s, Nova Scotia was lukewarm on issues of bilingualism. Indeed, the proposal for bilingual education was treated as a bargaining chip by Nova Scotia, which it hoped could be exchanged for compensation on the basis of regional economic disparity.³⁴ Premier Smith believed that the compulsory education of all or most subjects in French would not be acceptable in Nova Scotia. Moreover, his government was reluctant to pass legislation guaranteeing French-language education which would precede its ability to deliver services.³⁵

29 PANB, RS 416, Louis Robichaud, 1967, File 109: Conference of Tomorrow 1967, Opening Statement of Louis Robichaud at the Confederation of Tomorrow Conference, 24 November 1967.

30 PANB, RS 416, Louis Robichaud, 1969, File 131: Committee of Officials on the Constitution, Statement of Robichaud concerning federal financial aid to achieve parity in education in the official languages in New Brunswick, 6 November 1969.

31 PANB, RS 632, Education Minister, Box 2-11-1-1, Cabinet Committee on Official Languages, New Brunswick Discussion Paper on Official Languages, 1970.

32 Interview with Harvey Malmberg, former New Brunswick Deputy Minister of Education (7 March 2002).

33 PANB, RS 924, Education - Deputy Minister Armand Saintonge, Box 2-11-6-2, File: Secrétariat d'État, Federal-Provincial Programme of Cooperation for the Development of Bilingualism in education at the pre-university levels - Provincial Reports - New Brunswick, May 1973.

34 Nova Scotia Archives and Records Management (NSARM), RG 100, Office of the Premier, Volume 109, File 3: Federal-Provincial Constitutional Conference 10-12 February 1969, Address by the Hon. G.I. Smith to Federal-Provincial Conference on Constitutional Matters, February 1969, and Memo from H. Stevens to John MacDonald and Innis MacLeod, 29 January 1969.

35 NSARM, RG 100, Office of the Premier, Volume 110, File 9: Federal Provincial Constitutional Conference, Committee on Official Languages, Excerpts from Confidential report to the Minister of education on the activities of the subcommittee on official languages, 4 July 1968, and Memorandum on Constitutional Conference, 2 July 1968.

Once agreement was reached on the OLEP, Nova Scotia adopted a rather hands-off approach to the program. Departmental officials indicated that their interest in the program would be dictated largely by the degree to which people and local authorities requested it, rather than adopting an activist policy at the provincial level.³⁶ Funds from the program were distributed directly to school commissions, based on enrolments in French programs. This approach did allow interested local jurisdictions to improve their programs, and to develop special projects, the vast majority of which were approved by the Department.³⁷ However, as was noted in a 1973 progress report, several jurisdictions spent the funds on audio-visual materials and equipment which often had only a tenuous connection to the needs of French-language programs.³⁸

Lacking provincial direction, French-language programs initially developed in a haphazard fashion across Nova Scotia. While major achievements were possible in regions with large Acadian populations and committed teachers and administrators, other regions remained adrift. Moreover, unlike the situation in New Brunswick, the provincial government was reluctant to contribute its own financial resources to the development of French-language programs, except in the case of the special projects.³⁹ Nor were there any major changes at the departmental level, with the exception of the Consultative Committee on Acadian Education appointed in 1973.⁴⁰

Calls for Change from the Acadian Community Organisations

The Acadian community organisations were quick to respond to the new programs being funded by the federal government and implemented by the provincial governments. Again, however, the strategies employed in the two provinces were quite different. The Acadian organisations enjoyed drastically different levels of support from their communities. Furthermore, members of the two communities had differing objectives. The New Brunswick organisations were powerful lobby groups, enjoying fairly broad support, which called

36 NSARM, RG 100, Office of the Premier, Volume 109, File 6: Federal-Provincial Constitutional Conference 18-20 December 1969, Nova Scotia position on official languages in education, December 1969.

37 Interview with J.-R. Aucoin.

38 PANB, RS 924, Education - Deputy Minister Armand Saintonge, Box 2-11-6-2, File: Secrétariat d'État, Federal-Provincial Programme of Cooperation for the Development of Bilingualism in education at the pre-university levels - Provincial Reports - Nova Scotia, May 1973.

39 CEA, Fonds 146 Armand-Saintonge, Fiche 146, Sous-comité sur les langues officielles: Documents, Troisième réunion du sous-comité des langues officielles - compte rendu sommaire des délibérations, 12 May 1969.

40 Archives du centre acadien, Université Ste-Anne (ACA), MG8, Fonds Fédération Acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse, Vol 16, B.4, Fiche 21b: L'école acadienne et la loi 65. La Fédération Acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse vis-à-vis l'éducation acadienne, (November 1972?).

for dramatic changes to the system of education in the province. In contrast, the demands from the Nova Scotian organisations seem quite timid, reflecting their smaller size and the challenges which they faced in rallying community support.

In 1970, the New Brunswick charge was led by the Société Nationale des Acadiens (SNA). The Acadian community in New Brunswick had undergone a renaissance in the 1960s, helped along by the improvement of French-language government services. Their main lobby group, the SNA, had also become significantly more radical and aggressive during this period, particularly as student activism at the Université de Moncton began to rise.⁴¹ Right from the outset, the SNA took a keen interest in how New Brunswick used the federal funds. The SNA claimed that the province was not using the funds for their intended purpose, and passed these allegations on to *Évangeline*, which routinely printed articles about the “scandal” of how these funds were used.⁴² In 1972, the SNA lodged a complaint with the federal Commissioner for Official Languages, alleging misuse of federal funds.⁴³ In 1973, the SNA changed its structure, becoming an umbrella organisation for pan-Maritime issues of interest to Acadians, and the Société des Acadiens du Nouveau-Brunswick (SANB) was formed to take over responsibility for provincial issues in education. The SANB would prove to be just as persistent in its lobbying efforts over the OLEP.⁴⁴ Its 1976 report for *Les Héritiers du Lord Durham*, produced by the Fédération des francophones hors-Québec (FFHQ), listed the use of federal funds for minority language education as one of its key priorities for change.⁴⁵ The SANB would later demand that it be allowed to participate directly in the renewal process for the 1979 round of agreements, and called for a complete re-organisation of the use of the Secretary of State’s grants.⁴⁶ The

41 Joel Belliveau, “Chronique d’une affirmation collective : identité, altérité, et rapport à l’autorité dans le journal *Liaisons* de l’Université de Moncton, 1958-1967,” presented at the Canadian Historical Association Annual Meeting, May 2002. Philippe Doucet, “Politics and the Acadians,” in *Acadia of the Maritimes*, ed. Jean Daigle (Moncton: Chaire d’études acadiennes, 1995), 309-312.

42 *Évangeline*: 28 October 71, p.4; 3 March 72, pp.1, 5; 13 October 72, p.6; 28 June 73, p.6; 9 October 75, p.6.

43 CEA, Fonds 41, Société nationale de l’Acadie, Fiche 41-18-3, Correspondence, Letter from Marcel Blas, Directeur du service des plaintes, COL, to Hector Cormier, 9 March 1972, and CEA, Fonds 41, Société nationale de l’Acadie, Fiche 41-18-2, letter from Hector Cormier to Keith Spicer, 29 February 1972. Ultimately, this complaint was symbolic, as the COL was unable to conduct inquiries in areas of provincial jurisdiction.

44 Interviews with Armand Saintonge and Harvey Malmberg.

45 Fédération des francophones hors-Québec (FFHQ), *Les Héritiers du Lord Durham – Plan d’action – Société des Acadiens du Nouveau-Brunswick* (Ottawa: FFHQ, 1977), 89.

46 CEA, Fonds 42, SANB, Fiche 42-2-14, Administration, Excerpts from 1977 Annual report re: education, 1977.

SANB was also frequently supported in its demands for change by the Association des enseignants francophones du Nouveau-Brunswick (AEFNB).

The Acadian community organisations of New Brunswick were also incredibly active with respect to strictly provincial reforms to education. The primary change sought by the community was the abolition of so-called "bilingual schools" and bilingual school districts. The following extract from an editorial in *Évangeline* aptly sums up the concerns of the community regarding these schools:

Un système scolaire bilingue est une utopie et un instrument d'assimilation. Sciemment ou non, c'est fonder une génération de jeunes qui ne seront ni francophones ni anglophones. Bravo, diront certaines personnes bien pensantes, enfin nous aurons des Canadiens. N'allons-nous pas plutôt former des monstres qui n'auront plus d'attache avec leur héritage culturel dans le sens large du mot.⁴⁷

These organisations fought pitched battles to eliminate bilingual schools and school districts. The Acadian associations lobbied until bilingual districts in Moncton, Dalhousie, Bathurst, and other regions were replaced by two overlapping districts, one French-language and one English-language.⁴⁸ Ultimately, the Acadian leaders sought the creation of a new school map for the province, which would consist of two sets of school districts, English and French, each of which would cover the entire province. Moreover, the associations fought to keep francophone students under the control of the French-language districts, going so far as to fight a legal battle to prevent francophone students from bilingual families from attending French immersion schools administered by the English-language boards.⁴⁹

A significant lobbying effort was also extended to reforming the structure of the Department of Education. The department had employed two deputy ministers, one francophone and one anglophone, since 1964.⁵⁰ However, this arrangement was not seen as sufficient, but rather as mere tokenism. Accordingly, the SANB and the SNA worked to push for full duality in the

47 Claude Bourque, "Un problème épineux," *Évangeline*, 26 May 1972, p.6.

48 PANB, RS 417, Richard Hatfield, Box 13-5-6-3, File: 2803-3, French School districts and Boards - French 1977, Remarks of Leon Laforest, AEFNB, at a meeting with Premier Hatfield and Charles Gallagher, 18 March 1977. Also CEA, Fonds 42, SANB, Fiche 42-4-1, Mémoires, Mémoire par Michel Bastarache, soumis au comité de planification du Ministère de l'Éducation du N.-B., 13 June 1973

49 PANB, RS 417, Richard Hatfield, Box 41-11-4-4, File: 2803-2, Public Schools - Immersion Classes 1983, Memo from P.H. Malmberg to School Board Chairmen re: Admissions Procedures, 24 October 1983.

50 New Brunswick Department of Education. *Education: Two Centuries of Progress, 1784-1984* (1984).

Department of Education, calling for a complete section of the department dedicated to French-language education. Once the government accepted this idea in principle in 1974, the associations continued to press for its full implementation.⁵¹ Some individuals went even further in their demands, calling for the creation of a completely separate Department of Education to administer French-language education, headed by its own francophone Minister.⁵² While this proposal was never realised in practice, it is nevertheless indicative of the confidence and strength of the Acadian lobby in New Brunswick, which was willing to push for very significant changes to the manner in which education was delivered in the province.

The approach taken by the FANE was significantly less confrontational, and its demands less radical than those of the New Brunswick groups. While the FANE did take an early interest in the OLEP, its interest was more on an information level. Inquiries to the Minister of Education were aimed at finding out more about the program, what types of funds were available, and what progress had been made to date under the program.⁵³ In the early years of the OLEP, FANE seemed to be relieved that funds were finally being made available to support development of French programs, rather than aggressively seeking to account for every penny of how the funds were used. Admittedly, the process by which the funds were allocated was more transparent in Nova Scotia, but there was no major effort to investigate allegations of misuse of funds until much later. In 1977, FANE began to complain about misuse of the funds; however, these complaints seem to have been driven by the Fédération des francophones hors-Québec, which spearheaded a nation-wide investigation of how OLEP funds were used.⁵⁴

Indeed, FANE had more pressing problems to overcome. Chief among these was the need to convince the Acadian parents of Nova Scotia that sending their children to French-language schools would benefit them. An early stand taken by FANE in favour of unilingual French schools was met in the Acadian communities with “méfiance et de nombreuses inquiétudes.”⁵⁵ Thus,

51 CEA, Fonds 42, SANB, Fiche 42-4-16, Mémoires, Présentation de la SANB au Premier Ministre du N.-B. M. Richard Hatfield touchant à l'éducation, les langues officielles, l'économie et la santé, 20 March 1976.

52 CEA, Fonds 41, Société nationale de l'Acadie, Fiche 41-43-384, Dualité linguistique, Jean-Bernard Lafontaine, SANB, “Pourquoi pas la dualité complète au ministère de l'éducation du Nouveau-Brunswick?” 31 May 1981.

53 ACA, MG8, Fonds Fédération Acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse, Vol 16, B. 7, Fiche 55, Correspondence - J.A. Comeau – coordonateur, Programmes des langues minoritaires, Exchange of correspondence between Paul Gaudet and J.A. Comeau, 8 October 1971.

54 “Funds for French misused,” *Montreal Star*, 14 September 1977, p. A18

55 ACA, MG8, Fonds Fédération Acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse, Vol 16, B.3, Fiche 16a: Foyer Ecoles, Communiqué de presse de la FANE, Comité régionale de Clare, “Nous voulons des étudiants bilingues” (no date).

for the better part of the decade, the main focus of FANE's efforts was on province-wide information campaigns, working in communities to reassure parents that their children would not lose the English-language skills which were so critical for economic advancement in Nova Scotia.⁵⁶ As FANE noted in its report for *Les Héritiers du Lord Durham*, "les parents souffrent d'apathie, d'indifférence à l'endroit de l'éducation française de leurs enfants."⁵⁷ The provincial government was aware of the lack of a broad base of support for FANE's more assertive positions, which made it all the more critical for FANE to work on community development, if it were to change the positions and policies of the government.⁵⁸

This is not to say that FANE did not take steps to lobby for change. The FANE, as well as the Consultative Committee on Acadian Education, lobbied the Department of Education for increased numbers of staff dedicated to French-language programming. In 1975, there were only two staff people within the department who dealt with French-language programming, and this work was merely a subset of their responsibilities for modern languages.⁵⁹ The other major front for FANE was an ongoing lobby to have Acadian schools recognized in the *Education Act* of the province. Until 1981, there were Acadian schools, but they had no official status in the department, and existed at the sufferance of the Minister and the Cabinet.⁶⁰

Efforts were also made to improve the curriculum of the Acadian schools. In comparison to New Brunswick, the contentious issues appear quite shocking. The Consultative Committee on Acadian Education was working to ensure that French textbooks would be available for fifty percent of courses at the elementary level.⁶¹ Acadian teachers lobbied the department to produce French-language curriculum plans for their courses, so that they would not have to improvise or adapt English-language courses themselves.⁶² The first of these

56 ACA, MG8, Fonds Fédération Acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse, Vol 16, B. 7, Fiche 53: Correspondence - Premier Ministre de la Nouvelle-Écosse, Letter from the Federation Francophone de la Nouvelle-Écosse to the Premier of Nova Scotia (1972?). Also FFHQ, *Les Héritiers du Lord Durham - Plan d'action: Fédération Acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse* (Ottawa: FFHQ, 1977), 90-91.

57 FFHQ, *Les Héritiers du Lord Durham - Plan d'action: Fédération Acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse* (Ottawa: FFHQ, 1977), 73.

58 ACA, MG8, Fonds Federation Acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse, Vol 16, B.4, Fiche 21b: L'école acadienne et la loi, Statement by the Acadian Federation of N.S. on Acadian Education, 1973, 65. Interviews with J-R Aucoin and Gerald McCarthy, former Nova Scotia Deputy Minister of Education (27 March 2002).

59 Interview with J.-R. Aucoin.

60 "Situation actuelle de l'enseignement en français," *Journal de l'ACELF* 6/3 (1976): 35.

61 ACA, MG8, Fonds Fédération Acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse, Vol 16, B.3, Fiche 16a: Foyer Ecoles, Statement on bilingual education in N.S. (no date).

62 Interview with J.-R. Aucoin.

guides did not appear until 1975. Briefs to the Graham Commission recommended that instruction in the French language as a subject should be made obligatory in Acadian schools, indicating that this was not yet the case!⁶³ When the issue of creating officially designated Acadian schools was raised in 1979, the Acadian community leaders were still quite hesitant to push for the types of objectives sought in New Brunswick; a recommendation to have a floor of fifty percent instruction in French at the secondary school level in Acadian schools was considered quite bold.⁶⁴

Thus, we can clearly see that the goals of the Nova Scotian Acadian organisations were much more modest than those of their New Brunswick counterparts. They were generally more willing to allow anglophones to attend their schools, provided that French was the language of communication.⁶⁵ Unlike New Brunswick, where battles were fought to keep francophones out of immersion schools, in certain districts of Nova Scotia, particularly Halifax, francophone parents worked together with anglophone parents to create French immersion schools so that their children could at least have a modicum of French instruction. It would take a great deal of effort to convince the Acadian population to support FANE's objective of French unilingual schools;⁶⁶ creation of French-language school boards and duality in the Department of Education, so critical in the minds of the New Brunswick Acadian leaders, were not even on the radar in Nova Scotia in the 1970s.

Governmental responses

The vigorous campaigning by New Brunswick's Acadian associations proved to be very successful. Following the adoption of the *Official Languages Act*, the Department of Education undertook a period of major restructuring, implementing new services and structures to fulfil its mandate of providing services in both official languages.⁶⁷ This process was helped in no small part by the firm commitments to official languages programs on the part of both Liberal

63 ACA, MG8, Fonds Fédération Acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse, Vol 16, B.7, Fiche 44, Mémoire présenté à la commission royale d'enquête sur l'éducation, les services publics et les relations provinciales-municipales, par la Fédération francophone de la NE, December 1971.

64 ACA, MG8, Fonds Fédération Acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse, Vol 16, B.7, Fiche 57: Correspondence - Terence Donahoe, Ministre de l'éducation. Letter from FANE to Premier and Minister of Education, 23 March 1979. Indeed, the final draft of the Acadian schools bill placed the floor much lower than this.

65 ACA, MG8, Fonds Fédération Acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse, Vol 16, B.4, Fiche 21a: L'école acadienne et la loi 65, Rencontre entre la FANE, Premier Gerald Regan et George Mitchell, Minister of Education, 7 October 1977.

66 ACA, MG8, Fonds Fédération Acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse, Vol 16, B.8, Fiche 59b: Enseignement du français divers, Objectifs de la FANE face à l'éducation en français, 1978.

67 Interview with A. Saintonge.

Premier Louis Robichaud, and his successor, Conservative Premier Richard Hatfield. Both men have been described by senior civil servants and academics as having a concrete vision for a bilingual New Brunswick, which they were determined to implement.⁶⁸ The demands of the Acadian associations were therefore falling on very receptive ears in the government. Indeed, over Premier Hatfield's fifteen-year tenure as premier, his core support evolved from the predominantly anglophone constituencies to encompass the Acadian regions, which had hitherto traditionally voted Liberal, a clear indication of the close relationship he was able to develop with this community.⁶⁹

The good will of the New Brunswick government rapidly transformed itself into action. In 1974, the Department of Education was completely restructured. Below the two deputy ministers, the department was divided into three sections, one to deal with French-language schools, one with English-language schools, and a third to address joint issues of finance and administration.⁷⁰ As noted above, concrete steps were taken to eliminate the hated bilingual school districts, beginning with Moncton in 1970, and rapidly spreading across the province. A special weighting factor of 1.05 was added to grants for French-language schools, and by 1978, the province was able to produce conclusive evidence (in response to criticisms from the SNA and SANB) that it was spending much more than the federal grants allocated to it for minority language education.⁷¹ Following the Finn-Elliott report on the organisation and boundaries of New Brunswick school districts of 1979, the government adopted a policy in 1980 of organising all schools by mother tongue, and completing the establishment of school boards on a linguistic basis.⁷²

New Brunswick also stepped up its efforts at the national level to organise support for minority language education programs. Premier Hatfield took a leading role in organising the 1977 St. Andrew's declaration, in which the nine anglophone premiers stated their support for minority language education rights.⁷³ He would also be one of the key supporters of the campaign to

68 Interviews with H. Malmberg, Barry Toole, formerly Deputy Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, New Brunswick (14 March 2002), A. Saintonge, and Boyd Pelley, Council of Ministers of Education Canada Secretariat (9 January 2002).

69 Interviews with B. Toole and H. Malmberg.

70 Interview with A. Saintonge.

71 Peter Atkinson, "Study on School Finances and Language Learning in the Canadian Provinces." 12 July 1978; and Provincial Archives of Manitoba (PAM) E14, Bureau de l'Éducation Française, GR 1384, Box 24, File 83, Canadian Parents for French, Jurisdiction in Language Issues. Notes for a speech by Georges Tsai, to the CPF Annual Conference, Calgary, 12 October 1978.

72 PAM, E14, Bureau de l'Éducation Française, GR 1449, Box 71, File 74.5.2, Entente, Bilingualism in Education - Position Paper by the Government of New Brunswick, 1 May 1981. Also PANB, RS 417, Richard Hatfield, Box 42-4-7-2, File 2803-3, Unilingual School Board and Districts 1981, NB Press Release, 31 December 1981.

73 Interview with B. Pelley.

entrench these rights in the *Charter*.⁷⁴ New Brunswick was also particularly active in negotiations for the Official Languages in Education Program, pushing strongly for the development of new programs. This support extended to a willingness to enter into a separate agreement with the federal government, when other provinces were quibbling over jurisdictional issues.⁷⁵

The support shown by New Brunswick for official language programs extended beyond minority language education into the realm of second language programs. In 1978, the province launched an ambitious 1200-hour program in second-language instruction, up from 750 hours in its existing program.⁷⁶ The province was also keenly interested in developing its French immersion programs, and developing a concrete policy to standardize and regulate access to these programs.⁷⁷ One may thus discern a multi-pronged strategy to expand and develop official language programs in education in New Brunswick over the course of 1970s and early 1980s, under the firm guidance of the provincial government's leaders.

Our discussion of the Acadian leadership in Nova Scotia revealed a divided Acadian community, and a fairly moderate approach to change in the province. However, the provincial government did introduce some significant reforms during this period, albeit not nearly on the scale of the rapid change witnessed in New Brunswick. Initial developments in the minority language education sector were quite minor. Over the period from 1975 to 1982, the Department of Education's staff dedicated to French-language programs grew from two to five staff members.⁷⁸ In 1975, the department began to produce teaching guides for Acadian schools, as well as curriculum guides for French-language social studies courses.⁷⁹ In 1977, Collège Ste.-Anne, the only French-language post-secondary institution in the province, became Université Ste.-Anne, helping to raise the prestige of French-language education in the province.⁸⁰

74 PANB, RS 417, Richard Hatfield, Box 15-9-3-5, File: 2803-1 Public Schools - Language 1980, Bilingualism in Education Position Paper of the Government of New Brunswick, October 1980.

75 PAM, E14, Bureau de l'Éducation Française, GR 1449, Box 71, File 74.5.2 Entente, CMEC memo re: Protocole proposé des ententes bilatérales, 2 November 1983.

76 PANB, RS 417, Richard Hatfield, Box 12-12-3-3, File: 2322-1, New Brunswick *Official Languages Act* 1979, Memo from P. Malmberg to Richard Hatfield and Charles Gallagher re: Implications of Federal moves in renegotiation of official languages agreement, 31 January 1979.

77 PANB, RS 417, Richard Hatfield, Box 12-12-3-3, File: 2803-1, Public Schools - Language 1979, Memo from P. Malmberg to Viviane Edwards re: Changes in French as a Second Language, 13 March 1979.

78 Interview with J.-R. Aucoin.

79 Nova Scotia Department of Education, *Annual Report* (1976).

80 Sally Ross, *Les écoles acadiennes en Nouvelle-Écosse 1758-2000* (Moncton: Centre d'études acadiennes, 2001), 106.

The Graham Commission, which reported in 1974, had recommended that the government give legal recognition to Acadian schools, and that programs should be set up to provide instruction in French in areas with at least a ten percent francophone population.⁸¹ Initially, these aspects of the report were largely ignored by the Liberal government of the day. Fortunately for the Acadian population, Terence Donahoe, appointed as Education Minister in 1978 by the newly elected Conservative government of John Buchanan, was quite supportive of the Acadian community's aspirations. Together with his deputy minister, Donahoe worked closely with FANE to create the mechanisms to officially recognize Acadian schools in the *Education Act*.⁸² The government began to circulate Bill 65 around the Acadian communities in April 1981. It was introduced in the provincial legislature in May, and received royal assent on June 24, 1981, having received the support of all three parties.⁸³ Bill 65 was rather modest in its scope. While giving recognition to Acadian schools for the first time, the onus was placed on local school boards and communities to request that schools, or parts of schools, be designated as Acadian. Moreover, the French-language requirements for such schools were not particularly extensive; at the secondary level, less than half of the students' instruction had to be in French.⁸⁴

Progress in second-language instruction was less substantial. The province's first French immersion school was established in Halifax in 1977, and a certain degree of interest was shown in the expansion of these programs by Canadian Parents for French (CPF).⁸⁵ Very little was done, however, in the area of core French second language programs. While some schools did begin to introduce primary-level French instruction, it was sporadic and differed widely even within individual school boards. On the whole, government officials observed that there was little popular interest in French second-language instruction, and the government did little to try to give direction to these programs at the provincial level, or to make these courses compulsory.⁸⁶

81 Nova Scotia, *Royal Commission on Education, Public Services and Provincial-Municipal Relations Report. Volume III: Education* (1974).

82 ACA, MG8, Fonds Fédération Acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse, Vol 16, B.7, Fiche 57: Correspondence - Terence Donahoe, Ministre de l'éducation, An interview with the Honorable Terence Donahoe, Minister of Education, on the occasion of the Cabinet meeting at Université Ste.-Anne, 8 November 1979.

83 "Bill guaranteeing Acadians' right to education in French welcomed," *Halifax Chronicle-Herald* 16 May 1981. Also ACA, MG8, Fonds Federation Acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse, Vol 16, B.7, Fiche 46: Education - rapports et réunions divers, Report by John Levangie, Dept. of Education, on Ministerial response to recommendations re: Acadian schools, 22 October 1981.

84 "La loi en education - ce que ça change," *Le Courrier*, 24 June 1981.

85 Nova Scotia Department of Education, *Annual Report* (1978).

86 Interviews with G. McCarthy and J.-R. Aucoin.

The role of the Anglophone majority population

Demographics, Acadian community-association activism, and political support from politicians and civil servants can only account for only part of the developments in official languages education. Without a certain degree of acceptance from the majority language population of the two provinces, these initiatives could have been easily undone or blocked. Once more, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia are a study in contrasts in this respect.

The road to entrenching minority language education programs in New Brunswick was not without its obstacles. The changes to New Brunswick's education programs were set against a backdrop of declining student enrolment in the province as a whole. The establishment of new programs such as immersion and minority language education entailed the creation of new schools and programs, the teaching jobs for which required a solid capacity in the French language. Fearing job losses and redundancy, the New Brunswick Teachers' Association (NBTA) expressed bursts of opposition to the changes taking place in official languages education. French immersion, which the Association believed was the government's panacea for improving second-language instruction, was targeted by the NBTA, which wanted more money and attention pumped into core second language programs and teacher retraining programs to enable existing teachers to meet the new job requirements.⁸⁷ There were also small pockets of anglophone resistance to official bilingualism, which manifested themselves through mail-in campaigns to the provincial government, in which expenditures on bilingualism in any form was denounced.⁸⁸

On the whole, though, there was a fairly broad base of anglophone support for official languages programs in the province. The provisions of both the New Brunswick and federal *Official Languages Acts* meant that bilingualism was increasingly a job requirement for civil service positions, a strong motivator for anglophone parents to support solid language programs for their children. This response was particularly true of urban areas. By 1983, fifteen percent of all New Brunswick anglophone students were enrolled in immersion programs, including seventeen percent of Fredericton students, and twenty-seven percent of Moncton students.⁸⁹ Core second language programs also enjoyed significant enrolments. Around sixty percent of elementary students and seventy percent of secondary students took second-language courses throughout the

87 PANB, RS 417, Richard Hatfield, Box 16-14-9-4, File: 2803-1, Public Schools - Language 1978, Brief from the NBTA to the ministry on Second Language Instruction, 20 December 1978. Interviews with H. Malmberg and B. Toole.

88 PANB, RS 417, Richard Hatfield, Box 16-14-9-4, File 2803-2, Public Schools - Immersion 1978, Mail-in Petition Cards, 6 March 1978. In the 1980s, this resistance would gain political representation in the Confederation of Regions Party.

89 Viviane Edwards, "The Social and Political Implications of French Immersion in New Brunswick." Article prepared for *Language and Society*, 31 August 1983.

1970s, by far the highest levels in the country, excluding Quebec.⁹⁰ Canadian Parents for French was also very active in the province, demanding increased opportunities for immersion and second-language instruction.⁹¹ This acceptance, and in some cases active promotion, of bilingualism in the province certainly made it easier for the Hatfield government to improve education programs for its Acadian population. It also did not hurt that a very substantial portion of the funding for the expansion of these programs came from the federal government, which reduced the opposition that might have arisen if the province were seen to be “wasting” its own funds on the programs.⁹²

The road was much bumpier in Nova Scotia. As was noted earlier, there was not even a strong consensus in the Acadian community in favour of increased French-language instruction in Acadian schools. The anglophone population of the province was even less supportive. Efforts to create a French-language school in Halifax in the early 1970s were met with rampant hostility in the press. No fewer than six editorials denounced the plan to create the school, and those promoting the project were accused of being separatists.⁹³ In regions such as Argyle, where only thirty percent of students in the school board were anglophones, the School Commission functioned in English. When plans were launched to amalgamate the board with that of Clare, where ninety percent of the students were francophones, the Argyle commissioners fought vociferously to make English the working language of the new board.⁹⁴ They were so confident of their position that they believed that the provincial government would side with them, and allowed the Education Minister to decide in which language the new commission would operate. Minister Donahoe chose French.⁹⁵

Support for French second-language instruction was somewhat stronger. Secondary level participation in FSL remained steady around sixty-five percent throughout the 1970s, and rose at the elementary level from ten to thirty-seven

90 Statistics Canada. *Minority and second language education, elementary and secondary levels, 1978-79.*

91 PANB, RS 417, Richard Hatfield, Box 15-9-3-5, File: 2803-2, Public Schools - Immersion Classes 1980, Exchange of correspondence between Richard Hatfield and Susan Purdy, CPF, 7 August 1980.

92 Donald J. Savoie, *The Politics of Language* (Kingston: Institute for Intergovernmental Relations, 1991), 21.

93 ACA, MG8, Fonds Fédération Acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse, Vol 16, B.3, Fiche 20: École française de Halifax, Le comité de l'école française - mémoire soumis au commission Graham, 1 December 1971.

94 ACA, MG8, Fonds Fédération Acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse, Vol 16, B.6, Fiche 30: Fusionnement Clare-Argyle School Board, Letter from Léger Comeau, FANE, to Terence Donahoe re: Clare-Argyle, 24 January 1982, and Letter from Léger Comeau, FANE to Terence Donahoe re: Walker Commission, 22 January 1982.

95 Interview with G. McCarthy.

percent throughout the decade. However, these are still relatively low figures in comparison to the New Brunswick figures. One must also bear in mind that these are quantitative figures, which give little indication of the quality of this instruction. Moreover, there was very little pressure on the Department of Education to expand these programs, as French language capacity was not widely seen as a necessary skill in Nova Scotia. Under the guidance of Canadian Parents for French, French immersion programs expanded steadily, increasing from two to ten schools over the latter half of the decade.⁹⁶ However, total enrolment in these schools was still only one-tenth of that of New Brunswick, out of a larger total population. Given this lack of enthusiasm for French programming in Nova Scotia, it is understandable that development was slower in this province. Indeed, it is a credit to the determination of FANE, the existence of federal OLEP funding, and the support of Minister Donahoe that Acadian schools were able to make the progress that they did before the introduction of the Charter.

Conclusion – looking to the future

Despite the passage of the *Charter*, which constitutionally guaranteed minority language education rights in the provinces, and the recent conclusion of the OLEP negotiations, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia were perhaps even further apart in 1984 than they had been in 1968. Over the prior decade and a half, New Brunswick had passed an *Official Languages Act*, instituted complete duality within the Department of Education, recognized the principles of unilingual school boards and homogeneous French-language schools, and made major strides to improve its immersion and second-language programs. Moreover, New Brunswick had entered into a separately negotiated plan with the federal government under the Official Languages in Education Program to further develop these programs.

Nova Scotia, in contrast, had finally given official recognition to its Acadian schools. However, these schools were scattered throughout many school divisions in the province, were often mixed English-French schools, and were not completely under the control of the Acadian communities. While French immersion had made certain gains, core second-language programs were still quite limited, and the province was not in the process of doing anything significant to improve these programs. Nova Scotia had also opted to stay with the Basic Program Option of the OLEP. It would be a long time before Nova Scotia would really begin to close the gap with New Brunswick. The province-wide French-language school board, the Conseil Scolaire Acadien Provincial (CSAP), was not instituted until 1996. As recently as summer 2001,

⁹⁶ Statistics Canada. *Minority and second language education, elementary and secondary levels, 1978-79.*

the Fédération des Parents Acadiens de la Nouvelle-Écosse (FPANE), was still fighting court challenges to institute the principle of homogeneous French-language schools.⁹⁷ Moreover, the Acadian community of Nova Scotia remains deeply divided on education issues. The community of Chéticamp was ripped apart over the implementation of Bill 65 in the mid-1980s.⁹⁸ Despite the changes which had occurred over the 1970s and early 1980s, French-language skills continued to be seen as less relevant in the Nova Scotia provincial context when the language of work in the province remained overwhelmingly English. FPANE was unable to get a statement of support from FANE for its court challenges in the late-1990s, as the membership of FANE was still hopelessly divided on its objectives for Acadian education.

Returning to the 1974 editorial of *Évangeline*, it is clear why the commissioners who produced the Graham Report would not recommend the dual system of New Brunswick to their provincial government, and why official language education programs developed so differently between the two provinces. The historical development of the two Acadian communities had forked with the 1755 Deportation. The Nova Scotia Acadians never reached the same level of community confidence and demographic strength which would enable them to push for the changes that were possible in New Brunswick. While both provinces had key leaders in the government who were supportive of Acadian education and official languages programs, those in New Brunswick were more assertive, and more senior than their Nova Scotian counterparts. Leaders who favoured extended French-language programs also enjoyed significantly more backing from the general electorate of New Brunswick, which was quite supportive, particularly when compared to the Nova Scotia anglophone community, which was at best ambivalent to the concerns of the Acadians. Nova Scotians, including the majority of the Acadian population, did not want the type of system which was being implemented in New Brunswick, and the imposition of this type of system would not have been responsive to their needs and aspirations. Despite their common origins and geographic proximity, on issues of language and education, the Acadian communities in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia had grown worlds apart.

97 Interview with Marie-Claude Rioux, Executive Director of FPANE (26 June 2001).

98 Ross, *Les écoles acadiennes*, 130.