

CONDENSED
Report Of The Conference

BRITISH, FRENCH AND "OTHERS"



HELD AT
Lakehead University Thunder Bay Ontario
November 21-23, 1969

SPONSORED BY
Lakehead University Ukrainian Club
Alma Mater Society Lakehead University
Citizenship Branch, Department Of The Secretary Of State

Statement of Conference Purpose

Précis of Results, Program, and Other

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Statement of Conference Purpose

"British, French, and Others"

A community-university conference to discuss the ramifications of the Official Languages Act on minority linguistic-cultural groups; and the question of: Cultural Minorities in the mass technological society.

The purpose of this conference is to allow minority linguistic and cultural groups to meet and exchange views on the continued development of cultural diversity in Northwestern Ontario. Along with the views of the English and French speaking dominant cultures, the conference will consider the needs and wishes of well-established ethnic groups. It is the intention of this conference to allow interaction among all these linguistic-cultural groups for the purpose of defining common problems and goals.

Further, the conference will examine some of the technological imperatives of our total society and will consider the theme:

"Our technological Society, in wanting to make its output and consumption efficient, is intolerant of cultural and linguistic diversity. Cultural diversity is in essence humanistic. When it requests acknowledgement from the total society it challenges mass technological constraints."

It is hoped that these discussions will give new perspectives and understanding in the identification of this area's rich cultural-linguistic resources.

Precis

Under the initiative of a student organization, the Lakehead University Ukrainian Club, a conference entitled British, French and "Others" was held at Lakehead University November 21-23, 1969 under the sponsorship of L.U.U.C., with the support of the Alma Mater Society, Lakehead University and the Citizenship Branch of the Department of The Secretary of State.

Over seventy (70) representatives of 15 ethnic groups took part in a programme which: first, allowed the representatives of ethnic groups to state their needs; then, examined the actual position of minority linguistic/cultural groups in Canadian society and, finally, examined some of the sociological and technological imperatives that govern the actions of our total society.

The participants of the Conference exchanged opinions in small discussion groups; discussions continued as well in the Summation Committee which now makes the following recommendations and conclusions:

- I In view of the concerns that were expressed, the Conference invites the Lakehead University Ukrainian Club (L.U.U.C.) to act as an ad hoc continuing committee and asks that L.U.U.C.
 1. Call an Open Forum Discussion on January 31, 1970 at Lakehead University for the purpose of continuing discussions on all subjects of interest to minority linguistic/cultural groups; and,
 2. that the Open Forum Discussions establish a permanent co-ordinating committee to allow Northwestern Ontario's diverse cultural linguistic groups to continue to express opinions on all issues of concern to them.
- II The Conference was pleased to note the presence of representatives of the French community, and recommends that efforts be made to gain further participation from all ethnic groups particularly English, Irish, Scottish and Welsh cultural/linguistic groups. It was felt that total participation from every community cultural/linguistic group would strengthen mutual respect and act against community cultural/linguistic polarization.

- III The Conference expressed its wish for speedy release of the IV Volume of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, and expressed its view that Governmental initiatives must be made to assist the positive functions of all minority groups.
- IV The Conference expressed deep concern about the lack of information made available to cultural/linguistic communities, particularly in reference to:
1. The Official Languages Act and its long range socio-economic effects, especially upon non-official languages and cultures.
 2. The status of ethnic groups, in regard to:
 - (a) The Citizenship Act and the privileges extended to "British citizens".
 - (b) The Broadcasting Act and the lack of government initiative with regard to non-official languages; and, the use of the word "foreign" to describe non-official languages.
- V The Conference expressed its opinion that cultural/linguistic minorities are a desirable and integral asset to Canada, and fulfill significant and needed functions while taking part in creating the character of Canada. It expressed a wish for the acknowledgement of minority cultural/linguistic groups and felt that much had been done in this Conference towards specifying the measuring of Canadian citizenship through bringing together and highlighting the diverse citizenry of this area.

All specific documents, pre-conference position papers, transcribed speeches, and further copies of this condensed report may be obtained by request from the:

Lakehead University Ukrainian Club,
c/o Alma Mater Society,
Lakehead University,
Oliver Road,
Thunder Bay "P", Ontario.

BRITISH, FRENCH and 'OTHERS' Conference

November 21-23, 1969

LAKEHEAD UNIVERSITY, PORT ARTHUR, ONTARIO

DETAILED PROGRAMME

FRIDAY, November 21, 1969

6:00 - 7:00 pm.	Registration	UNIVERSITY CENTRE FOYER
7:00 - 7:30 pm.	Press Conference by invitation	OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AMS.

CONFERENCE OPENING

7:30 - 8:30 pm.	GUEST ADDRESS: Mr. N. Rebin, Department of The Secretary of State	ROOM 124 GROUND FLOOR, CENTENNIAL SCIENCE BUILDING
	Questions	
8:00 - 10:00 pm.	Informal discussions and refreshments	AESTHETIC'S GALLERY, 2nd FLOOR, UNIVERSITY CENTRE

SATURDAY, November 22, 1969

8:00 - 9:00 am.	Late Registration	UNIVERSITY CENTRE FOYER
9:00 - 10:00 am.	Opening Comments	UNIVERSITY CENTRE THEATRE

ETHNIC GROUP POSITIONS

1.	Finnish Community	- Mr. M. Mannila
2.	Indian Community	- Mr. X. Michon
3.	Italian Community	- Mr. A. Morpurgo
4.	Polish Community	- Mr. R. Zelinski
5.	Slovak Community	- Mr. P. Sebesta
6.	Ukrainian Community	- Mr. W. Kuzik
10:00 - 11:00 am.	Small group discussions	GROUP 1 - Rm. 128.1 SCIENCE BLDG. GROUP 2 - Rm. 128.2 SCIENCE BLDG. GROUP 3 - Rm. 128.0 " GROUP 4 - Rm. 126.2 " GROUP 5 - Rm. 126.1 " GROUP 6 - Rm. 126.0 "
10:30 am.	(Coffee brought to small groups)	

DETAILED PROGRAMME CONT'D.

11:00 - 12:00 am.	GUEST ADDRESSES: Mr. H. F. Dougall, CKPR Television/Radio Mrs. L. Shatford, French Section, Lakehead Board of Education Questions	UNIVERSITY CENTRE THEATRE
12:15 - 1:15 pm.	LUNCH (Identification by plastic name tag)	MAIN UNIVERSITY CAFETERIA
1:30 - 2:45pm.	PANEL: Dr. Assimi, Sociology Mr. Bernt, Anthrology Mr. North, Engineering	UNIVERSITY CENTRE THEATRE
2:45 - 5:15 pm. 3:30 pm.	Small Group Discussions (Coffee provided)	SAME ROOMS AS OCCUPIED AT 10 - 11 am.
5:30 - 7:00 pm.	INTERNATIONAL SMORGASBORD DINNER (It is hoped delegates will use this opportu- nity to mingle)	MAIN UNIVERSITY CAFETERIA
7:30 - 8:45 pm.	Plenary Sessions, Report by group recorders.	ROOM 124, GROUND FLOOR CENTENNIAL SCIENCE BUILDING
8:45 - 11:00 pm.	Informal discussions and refreshments	AESTHETIC'S GALLERY, 2nd FLOOR, UNIVERSITY CENTRE

SUNDAY, November 23, 1969

1:00 pm.	Summation Committee Final Report - Group recorders and Conference Organizing Committee asked to be present. Open to all delegates.	AMS COUNCIL CHAMBER, UNIVERSITY CENTRE
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APPENDIX

Reports of Small Group Discussions

REPORT - Group No. 1

Canadian identity cannot be defined only in terms of British and French culture.

If a unique Canadian culture develops, it will be a combination of the cultures of all national groups.

Canada must become more than a country that tolerates diverse ethnic groups. Canada must attempt to develop an understanding of, and sense of community among all people in the country.

In order to develop understanding, the first step must occur among the ethnic groups themselves for there has been no unified approach among these communities.

We propose the following:

1. The establishment of a governmental advisory council, first on the local and then national level, to be composed of representatives from all ethnic groups in our society.

We propose that all ethnic groups be informed of a meeting to be held in January 1970 to discuss problems and to promote common experiences for the ethnic communities as a whole. This meeting could decide on what action they might take as a group to promote the welfare of each. This would prevent each ethnic group from becoming a "Ghetto" and would offer the advantage of their communities to a larger number of people.

2. We accept the idea of the necessity of two (2) official "working" languages but we suggest that:

1. the minority languages be recognized by the Federal and Provincial governments as an invaluable resource of our nation.
2. in areas of Canada where there are large numbers of people who are neither French nor English, their language should be recognized and taught in the educational systems in these areas.
 - a) If there are enough students who wish to learn a non-official language, it should be offered as part of the daytime classes.
 - b) If there are not enough for a daytime class then night classes should be offered.
or
Financial assistance should be given to the ethnic communities to promote language and culture.

Where there is a demand for languages in schools, they should be taught commencing in primary grades until the completion of high school, and offered as options in University.

3. with changes occurring through the reorganizing of Ontario's educational system, we suggest that it is an extremely good time to encourage the teaching of ethnic languages, and the history of these groups in our schools.
4. In conclusion we propose that all groups work together for the building of a single civic centre where each culture could be shared by all.

REPORT - Group No. 2

Many aspects of the two themes were discussed and a wide range of views was the resultant product.

The consensus of opinion in group 2 was that this cry for "minority or ethnic recognition" was valueless if the demand could not support it. It was the general feeling that ethnic survival culturally should be an individual thing and that standards should not be legislated due to the fact that some people would like to see rights maintained. The group felt that since demands for the utilization of government services, both on the federal and provincial level, were not made then the government thought nothing of it and did and does not respond to the existence of ethnic groups.

The reasons for no concrete demands being made are primarily twofold:

1. Either the individual ethnic groups are not speaking loudly enough to be heard in government circles, or, governments have not made the effort to properly publicize available resources.
2. Provincially, on the educational level, one hears so much about French facilities but very little about the availability of services for other linguistic/cultural elements. At the national level, (i.e. broadcasting) apparently information has not been disseminated adequately for public consideration and approval.

After these facts had been considered, it was the group's feeling that the conference co-ordinators recommend to the Provincial government that the study of languages, and perfection in other languages is a "human value". That being the case, it was thought that government structures and the educational systems (public and secondary) in this area should operate in such a way to see that this value is realized.

Resources are available at the provincial level to actualize the above recommendation and it is the government's responsibility to publicize these services to its public. It is the group's contention that the local Board of Education should itself become more acquainted with these government resources and subsequently make them available to the people in this area. The Board should make the above comments a reality.

It was also the group's opinion that a community panel should be instituted with the aid of the Provincial government to intensively analyze the effectiveness of French education in this area and to find out what is proposed regarding French education in the next five years, and, what provisions will be made for the instruction in languages other than the main ones cited today by Mrs. Shatford or the Board of Education. This discussion group also wished to emphasize that they noticed that the audience at this event is made up, to a great extent, of young residents.

In regard to mass communication, it was felt that the Government of Canada should take positive steps to inform the public of the availability of Radio and Television time. In this area the local radio and television stations should publicize what services it offers the ethnic communities that are of non-French or non-British origin.

The plight of the Indians was discussed to a great extent and it was the group's unanimous decision that this conference and other conferences of this type should demand speedy legislation that would place the Indian in the type of environment that he desires.

There was great consternation as to the word "Other", "ethnic", "minority" when it is used in a general or nebulous way. It was felt that the Canadian census should ask not what nationality a citizen is, but should categorically inquire into what one's "ethnic origin is". In this way, this could result in a positive eradication of the negative terms, "ethnic", "other", etc. It was the group's contention that until this step is taken the burden of "second class citizenship" would remain upon minority groups.

Lastly, the group thought it imperative to view cultural identity as a personal thing. If the people wish to retain a cultural identity, then they're within their rights. If its own members make no positive individual commitments to ensure its preservation and subsequent viability as part of the overall Canadian scheme, the continuance of an ethnic group should not be placed upon the government to perpetuate through legislation. The onus is on the individuals concerned.

REPORT - Group No. 3

The following points were brought out in the summary in our group. They were put forth by individuals and agreed upon by the majority.

- 1) Canadian ethnic diversity should be continued.
- 2) In reference to point no. 1, the continuation of cultural diversity is both the responsibility of the general population and of government (Federal and Provincial) agencies.
- 3) An office for ethnic affairs should be established by Federal and Provincial co-operation. This office is to be concerned with ethnic problems on full time bases with annual budget allotments.
- 4) Re Broadcasting - ethnic broadcasts on CBC are desired.
- 5) Re Education - facilities are available. Ethnic groups should make demand on them. A demand should be made for ethnic languages in the high school. These languages may be taught as optional.
- 6) Although one person suggested that ethnic affiliation was a dead end for young people to be involved in minority cultural/linguistic groups, the majority felt that it was advantageous for individuals.
- 7) Exception was taken to the use of the word "foreigners" in referring to the third element of Canada's population in the legislation governing the CBC.

The following questions were raised. They were discussed briefly although no conclusions were reached.

- 1) Could or could not ethnic diversity be related to economic reality?
- 2) If people do not identify with ethnic origin, then what does one become?

REPORT - Group No. 4

- Federal and Provincial Governments should give encouragement to minority languages.
- cultural groups are in a stage of transition.
- a distinction is made between personal and public cultures.
- Finns would like grants for language schools.

- Government encouragement to language instruction through grants. However, another person thought that this might weaken the ethnic groups.
- public should be aware of the desirability of various groups and their legitimacy.

We discussed how an ethnic group could become more durable in a strange surrounding.
It could do this by:

- 1) adopting the values of the North American economic and political system so that they could function in harmony with this society and so there would be no conflicts of various value systems.
- 2) Cultural identity should not be a public display and a conspicuous object but rather a personal and private thing.

REPORT - Group No. 5

Discussions in our group revolved around four distinct subjects. The first was: the B & B Report and the position of smaller ethnic groups in relation to the new social and political position of the French-Canadians; the second was the discussion of economics as the underlying fact governing cultural and linguistic development; the third discussion touched on the significance of legislating for one linguistic group; and, as a fourth and concluding subject we examined the many positive aspects which argue for the continued need for and development of ethnic groups.

In beginning discussions, attention was focussed on the position papers which had been presented by the six different ethnic groups. It was noted that the larger communities in the Lakehead (Ukrainian and Finnish) took the strongest position in demanding legislation to aid them in developing their culture. This was linked with the concept of a "critical number" i.e. that these communities are, in their own right, a "society" having a large enough population within them. Other communities such as the Greek, with 125 families, are ethno-centric but are too small to have much impact on general social trends. Opinions were stated that diversity in languages and cultures make Thunder Bay a very stimulating environment. In regard to the official languages act the discussion concluded that, to prevent eventual social polarization, we must either eliminate French as an official language or we must extend similar rights to all the Canadian languages. It was suggested that a dominant working language is a necessary concept but that other languages should be recognized on the provincial level.

In discussing the state of the assimilation of the French language, it was pointed out that this is directly linked to the economics of English speaking corporations in Quebec. To survive economically the French are assimilating as are all other non-English speaking ethnic groups throughout Canada. The meaning of the "Quiet Revolution" is primarily that a break is being made into the present power structure. Language and culture are only manifestations of this change, for indeed language and culture cannot be legislated. It was suggested that in fact this legislation has created many new problems (i.e. outside of Quebec) while nothing has been done to alleviate the basic problems still confronting the Quebecois. The legislation has "been catering to middle class aspirations. The Government wants to keep the 'ship of state sailing'. Governments have no preference nor real interest in culture or ethnic languages."

Discussion then swung onto how this recent legislation now changes the economic conditions under which other different ethnic groups now have to function. Fear was expressed that other ethnic groups will be running into double difficulty. It was suggested that to alleviate this, language privileges should be regional and according to population percentages. It was also suggested that more tolerance could be created for French, if similar privileges were now extended to other minority groups. Despite the benefits of such a suggestion, it was reiterated that our society runs on a power basis (i.e. influence in proportion to economic power) and not on the basis of any morality.

In conclusion, a series of comments were made in regard to the benefits of ethnic groups. It was felt that such groups are closer to their environment and often still function with value systems which include "co-operation" and "help" - a factor missing in modern technological society. It was felt that ethnic societies offer more than materialism, and that these feeling of "ethnic group" arises out of a spirit of common history and spiritual solidarity. It was interesting to note that a continuity was seen between the contemporary youth movements and their search for a communal, democratic morality and the fact that many of these attributes are already in existence in ethnic groups. It was suggested that much could be added to Canadian society if these attributes were developed and spread to the larger society.

REPORT - Group No. 6

The discussion began with the question "of what is the purpose of the Official Languages Bill which was recently passed?" It is as we all know, to establish the fact that a majority of the people in certain areas throughout Canada are mainly English and French speaking, but this does not acknowledge the fact that a good percentage of the people in Canada are of other ethnic languages. In order for these minority languages to progress and thrive, opinions were expressed for the need of a Minority Languages Act. With such an Act, minority ethnic languages of Canada will be able to apply pressure in those areas across the country where the public wishes different languages. In this way, ethnic languages would have a guarantee of support in furthering their languages, arts, and cultures. With such legislation,

financial assistance, properly owing to these tax-paying groups, would help in the development of these resources.

Minorities do not want to lose their identity but wish to retain their dignity, as equal citizens in Canada. It was discussed that the advancement of the dignity of ethnic groups could utilize existing individual organizations, but due to past financial limitations this has not been possible.

Minorities are looking to the future for the development of their languages and cultures, and the only sure way of doing this is with legislation.

People questioned "Canadianism". They asked the question "Who am I?" (with my ethnic background). "We must have something to associate with; if we don't have this, there exists a lack of identity."

Individual languages could be taught in public and secondary schools. Documentation by organizations would be a sound method of introducing these languages into the school curriculum.

Our group asked the questions: "What are the dangers of legislating language rights? Is pluralism a weakening point to the Constitution in Canada? Is it possible to have unity in Canada with diverse languages? Is the B & B Bill a falsity because of minority French groups in areas of Canada which are to be designated bilingual which in reality are not?" There were questions such as "Does the lack of a single dominant language weaken the national unity of Canada?"

Interest was expressed in Slavic studies, but the adults and students are not able to meet University requirements. It was stated that such Slavic studies should be started in Public and Secondary schools, or at night classes such as those offered to immigrants to Canada by the Provincial Department of Citizenship. Each ethnic group could then be able to improve and advance in languages of their own origin. In order to advance minority languages, each organization must prove within their own area in which they live.

A few final recommendations were proposed by the group:

1. Classes for adults, who want to learn their own ethnic language should be established under sponsorship of Department of Provincial Secretary of Citizenship & the Department of Education (e.g. as on basis of classes for new Canadians).
2. Similar conferences such as this one should be held in the future with particular emphasis being put on inviting more young people from diverse ethnic groups to participate.

List of Participants

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Italian Society

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Indian Friendship Centre

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Indian Friendship Centre

Ukrainian Prosvita Ladies Choir

Slovak Community

Ukrainian Women's Organization

Polish Community

Ukrainian Women's Organization

Slovak Community

Lakehead University

Italian Centennial Hall

Slovak Community

Greek Orthodox Church

Sec. of State, Gov. of Canada

Sec. of State, Gov. of Canada

Italian Mutual Benefit Society

Finlandia Club

Finnish Community

Finnish National Society

Finnish National Society

Central Comm. of Finnish Societ

Finnish Community

Ladies of Kaleva

Ukrainian Canadian Committee

Ukrainian Professional and

Business Men's Club

"

"

"

Ukrainian Community

Slovak Community

Slovak Community

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French Canadian Club

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Dante Alighieri Society

Polish Youth Club
Ladies Veneta Society - Italian
Ukrainian National Federation
Slovenian Cultural Society
German Community
Ukrainian Prosvita Society
Finnish Community
Croatian Society
"Reipas" Sports Club
Finnish Community
Ukrainian Community
Ukrainian National Federation
Ukrainian Community

Planning Committee

(Lakehead University Ukrainian Club)

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