

# OUR READERS WRITE:

## Real issue is safety

So many words have been written during the past 10 days regarding the bilingual air/ground communications issue - many of them hollow words, half truthful words, and some outright false words. Granted, there have been a few well-written accounts of the situation but for the most part the tendency has been to discuss the French/English ramifications rather than the real issue, which is safety in bilingual air/ground communications in Canada. And the two are totally different concepts!

Let us for a moment stop and consider the role of a professional airline pilot in today's crowded airways. One must be made aware of the fact that only the most competent pilots are employed by the country's commercial airlines. And this achievement has been preceded by countless hours of ground school as well as hundreds of hours of flying time.

Therefore, it is safe to assume that the airline pilots of the world are the most professional, proficient people in the world of aviation.

Beyond this, it is also a fact of aviation that all pilots are governed by an Act of Parliament known as the Aeronautics Act, which simple states that, "the pilot-in-command has the full and sole responsibility for the safety of his flight."

Now, let us go one step further and take a hypothetical airline trip anywhere at all. Once on board the pilot in command announces he will not take this particular flight due to a mechanical malfunction, or a series of severe thunderstorms, a fault in the electrical system, or whatever. This is what he is paid to do - exercise his professional judgement and technical expertise to get you from Point A to Point B in the safest way possible. Now who, in the name of sanity, would be foolish enough to insist the pilot take-off in any of the above circumstances (the fact that he wouldn't anyway is irrelevant), and who would be arrogant enough to feel his layman's point of view should take precedence over the professionals? Only a man who didn't fully understand the seriousness of the safety factor - or a madman! This hypothetical situation is a direct parallel to the issue of safety which is at stake at present.

Regardless of what some politicians would have you think, the bilingual air/ground communications debate is no more a political issue, or a French/English issue, than if the safety factor were of a mechanical nature. It is a safety issue wherein the pilots across Canada and, ultimately, the pilots of the world, have collectively decreed that the safest environment in which to fly is a unilingual one, and why should they be party to a system that would find them degrading one of the safest flight environments in the world (namely Canadian airspace) simply to pacify a few misguided politicians with unrealistic political aspirations?

It is most interesting to note that our own Federal M.P., Dr. Frank Philbrook, has been insensitive to the pleas of his constituents. Although many of his constituents are pilots and controllers who have repeatedly met with him, and telephoned him, to explain the safety aspects and to point out that the Aeronautics Act takes precedence over the Official Languages Act (which incidentally is the stand taken by Languages Commissioner Keith Spicer), he continues to uphold the Party line and state simply that his attitude is unchanged and

that the Transport Minister Otto Lang will implement bilingualism into Air Traffic Control only when it is proven safe by a Commission. The pilots and controllers, again I stress exercising their prerogative under the Aeronautics Act, have already stated it is unsafe, so how can a Francophone Judge from Quebec and a Judge from Calgary who is allegedly a bilingualism sympathizer, who together may or may not have technical knowledge of the field of aviation, be expected to evaluate the situation in a more professional, objective, unemotional way than the 2800 members of the Canadian Air Line Pilots Association? Rubbish! And Dr. Philbrook should realize this, but he seems committed to bilingualism at any costs.

Here is a man who was a committed abolitionist in the Capital Punishment debate, fully capable of exempting a premeditated killer from the death penalty. Yet now an airline crew and passengers (innocent bystanders in this political arena) risk a mid-air collision for a political cause. Somehow the parallel is not compatible and may I suggest he re-think his priorities.

Here is a man who also informed me at a meeting I attended some two months back, that he was elected by you, his constituents, to use his "good judgment" on all issues and not to take the views of his constituents back to Parliament. "Good judgment" he calls it! "Lack of backbone" is what I call it. Does he honestly believe that his "good judgment" in this issue is a more credible stance than the good judgment of 2800 professional pilots?

But putting the Dr. Philbrooks, the Otto Langs, and the Pierre Trudeau aside, possibly you would be interested in how your Liberal Government has evaluated the "demand" for bilingual Air Traffic Control in Canada. (Quite apart from the false notion that a "demand" should necessarily lead to a change).

In 1974 the formation of a Task Force was implemented by the Ministry of Transport to study the implications of using French in Air Traffic Control. The Task Force held public meetings at 10 locations in the Province of Quebec, two in Northern Ontario, one in Alberta and one in British Columbia. This means that 6 of the 10 provinces and both Territories, in addition to the heavily populated Southern Ontario area, were virtually ignored.

And what of the number of people "demanding" French Air Traffic Control? The M.O.T. based its recommendations on the demand for French elicited by a bilingual questionnaire mailed to 7,551 licensed pilots in Quebec, to which there was a 38 per cent response. Just 430 pilots, or a mere 5.7 per cent of the pilots to whom the questionnaire was sent, indicated they would choose to use French in Air Traffic Control. There is a very clear English-only majority here among the only group in which one could expect to find a wish for French A.T.C. So it comes down to the fact that 430 pilots out of a total of 41,048 (Statistics Canada) licensed pilots in Canada would choose to speak French - that's about 1 per cent.

Those are only two of the many glaring discrepancies between fact and what Mr. Otto Lang would have the public believe about bilingual air/ground communications and the Government's guarantees about putting safety first.

I leave you to draw your own conclusions!

Pamela Sheldon

## Will boomerang return?

June 23, 1976

Acton Free Press  
Acton, Ontario

Dear Sir:

I would like to enquire regarding a boomerang throwing competition that is to be held in Acton sometime in July. What are the dates of the competition, who is sponsoring it and how does one register for it? I wrote the Acton Chamber of Commerce some two months ago but unfortunately I have not yet received a reply. I am an ardent boomerang thrower myself

and would like to participate in this event if it is to be held.  
I thank you for your consideration of this request and look forward to your reply.

Yours very truly,

Wilfried E. Rauser  
Associate Professor

(Editor's note: If anyone can answer this gentleman's question, will he or she please phone the Free Press and let us know, too? We want to be there.)

## Memories of Acton

845 Willow Avenue,  
Milton, Ontario.

The Editor,  
Acton Free Press,  
Acton, Ontario.

At this time I would like to express my thanks to everyone in Acton, especially the pupils, their parents and the staff of M.Z. Bennett school. During my years as vice-principal at the school I have formed many friendships with pupils and their parents and have been most impressed by their helpful spirit. The willing way in which everyone has donated their time and

energies towards all manner of school activities has helped immensely in making M.Z. Bennett a pleasant and stimulating atmosphere for both pupils and staff.

I would especially like to express my thanks to Helen and Eric, reporters at the Free Press, who have covered school events so thoroughly and enthusiastically.

As I complete my last week at the school, I am left with many warm and satisfying memories of the past 2½ years in Acton.

Many thanks to all of you.

A. Zanatta  
Vice-Principal

## July program



### Acton Animal Care Centre

will be  
**CLOSED FOR HOLIDAYS**  
**JULY 1st - 12th**

IN CASE OF EMERGENCY CALL:  
GUELPH ANIMAL HOSPITAL  
9 Elizabeth Street  
**836-2782**

If you're looking for something to do the weekends of July 2 to July 25 Mountsberg Wildlife Centre is one place to go.

Every Saturday and Sunday for those three weeks an interpretation program call "Conservation For People By People" will be presented courtesy of the Halton Region Conservation Authority.

The cost of the program is \$2.50 per car with open hours from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

The purpose of the program is to promote a greater understanding of the endeavors of the Conservation Authority through slide and film presentations.

Film showings  
These slides and films will be shown regularly in the Wildlife Centre Auditorium. Films are "One Day in May" (about water control), "Partners" (about Conservation Authority functions), "The Grand" (about other conservation projects) and "No One Told Me" (also about water control).

Maps of the Conservation areas in Ontario will be given to each car participating in the program and regular wagon rides will allow conservation area visitors to view some of the many regular features of the Wildlife Centre, including wild and domestic animals on display, nature trails, fishing, picnicking and barbecuing facilities.

## Car, tree collide

A single car accident happened Saturday on the Fifth Line, a half mile north of No. 7 Highway. Driver James McLaughlin of Lot 22, Con. 8,

Erin was not injured but his car had estimated \$1,000 damage. It went off the road and struck a tree.

## Garbage

Police are investigating a report that garbage has been dumped on the Nelles property south of Mill W.

## Theft

The theft of two CB antennae was reported to police. The antennae were taken from a parked car on Kingham.

## MAKE SOMEONE HAPPY



## SELL WINTARIO TICKETS!

Make you and yours happy this summer by earning a regular commission, bonuses, awards, and a chance to win up to \$1,000 for selling a winning ticket.

Make your friends, neighbours, clients, customers, fellow workers and anyone else in Halton County and Fergus\* happy by offering each of them the opportunity to win up to \$100,000 tax free.

If you are over 18 years of age and would like to sell Wintario tickets in Halton County, call (collect) Burlington 634-2104 between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. weekdays.



\* This offer good in Halton County and Fergus area only.

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- NO. 45 INTERNATIONAL BALER ... \$300<sup>00</sup>
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