

# Editorial Page

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## Do we really need Bill 8?

Bill 8 was passed in parliament Nov. 18 and with it comes a whole new series of rights which the French are entitled to in Ontario.

I can understand the reasoning for enacting such legislation. After all, the French played a major role in the foundation of Canada and continue to have a large role in Canada's identity today.

But some parts of the legislation must be questioned. For instance, why must services be provided in French, when requested, in areas that have as little as 10 per cent of the population who speak French.

Under Bill 8, the government has identified 22 areas across the province which are subject to the Bill. Terrace Bay is one of these communities.

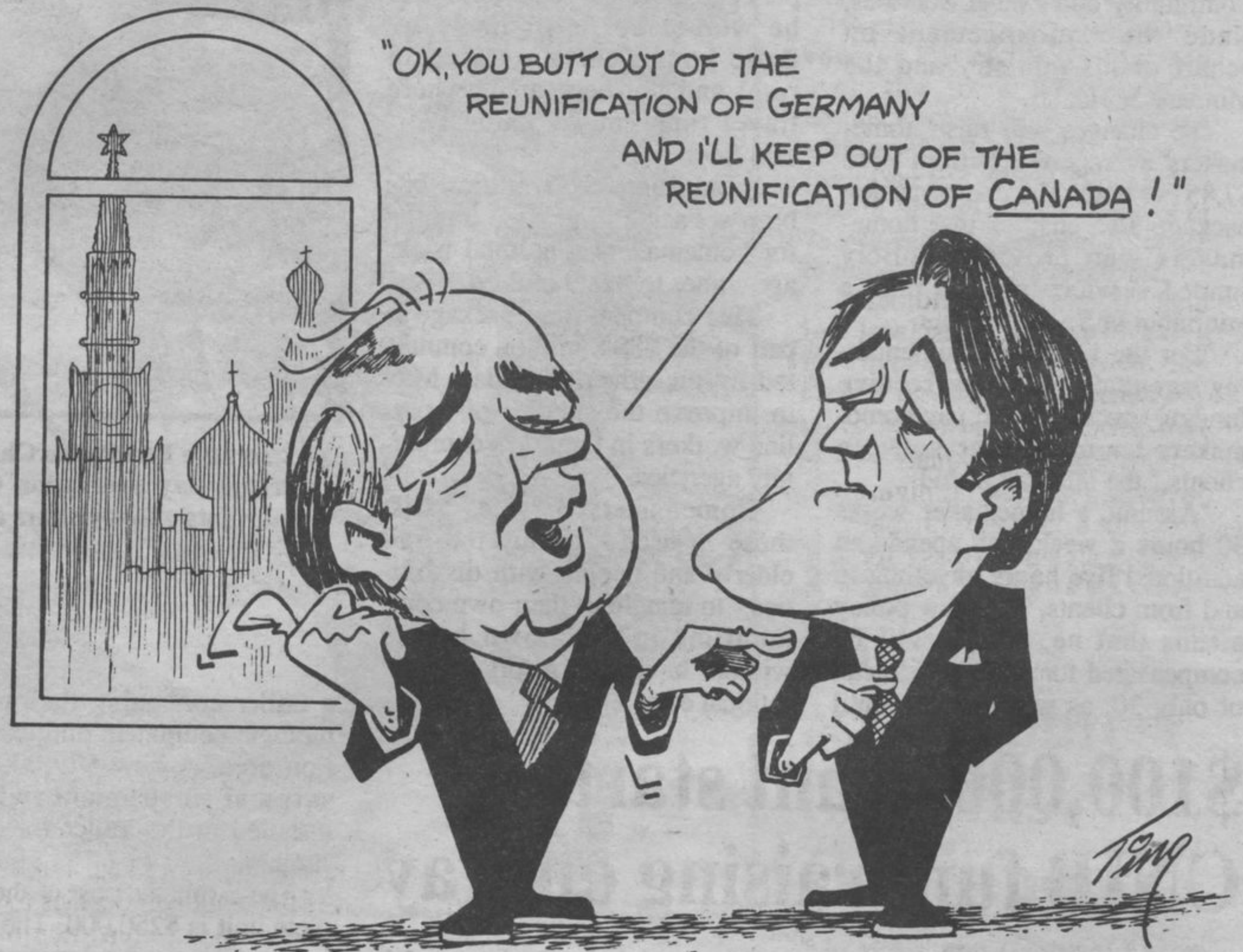
Let's face it, this area does not have a large French speaking population. But, the government, in its infinite wisdom, has said certain services in this area must be provided in French.

I fail to see why. If a language service is to be provided, why not make it something else such as Italian. I'm sure there are far more people in this area who speak Italian than French.

But the problem is, other areas do not have as large a number of Italians as there are who speak French. Besides, Italians didn't play a significant role in forming this country did they? Neither did the Ukrainians or the Finnish or the Chinese. Right?

At a time when English language rights in Quebec are being restricted, the government, both federal and provincial, are catering more and more to the French. Most government departments, prior to the implementation of Bill 8, already offered services in both "official" languages. Many of these departments are grossly over-represented by French speaking people compared with those who speak English only.

Because these services were already being offered to the French, Bill 8 did not need to be passed.



## What is a Canadian?

Dear Editor:  
What is a Canadian? How many times have you been asked this question?

If you said maybe once, then you probably only thought about it once. I was asked this question in my Canadian Issues class, and to my surprise, I came up with a lot of views and had to ask

myself some really tough questions.

The next time you have an opportunity to ask a foreigner what he thinks a Canadian is, ask him: or her.

The fact of the matter is that people known as Canadians identify with their local or regional cultures...more than they do with

one national umbrella culture.

All wishful thinking aside, there is no singular Canadian identity; there is no singular Canadian culture with which to identify.

If you feel you have an answer to my question, please write back to the Editor.

Lynda Velanoff

## And now for a little environmental good news

Can you stand to read one more column about what man is doing to the environment?

Wait! Before you fast-forward to the sports section or wad up the newspaper and throw it in the wastebasket, just bear with me a moment here.

This is a different what-man-is-doing-to-the-environment column. It's about the good things that are happening. Don't look now, folks, but I believe we are beginning to win a few rounds here and there. Now, don't get me wrong. We're not out of the swamp or anything like that. The rain forests are still burning, too many of our lakes are still turning to vinegar, Glad bags full of used Pampers and aerosol cans are still piling up on our landfill sites and the chemical stew we inhale with each breath is still several light years away from pure mountain air, but here and there, if you look really hard, you might see the odd flower sprouting out there in no man's land. There is light at

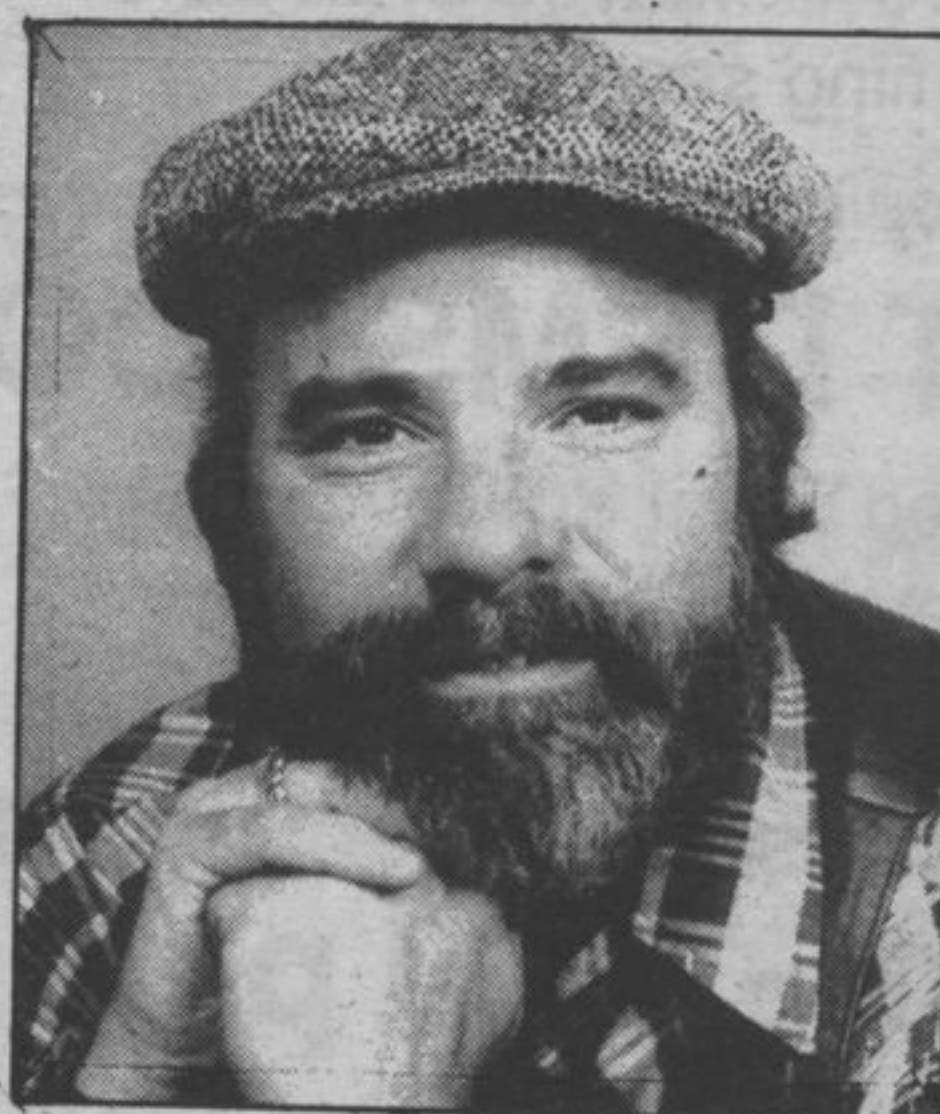
the end of the tunnel, and it just might turn out to be sunshine. Whence cometh my Polly-anna optimism? Oh, just one or two things that have ap-peared in the news over the past few days. You in the market for a little environmental good news? Help yourself.

ITEM: Canada has sent its first corporate polluter to jail. His name is Sam Siapas. He owns Best Plating Incorporated in Toronto--a company that has been charged literally dozens and dozens of times with pouring poisons into the environment. Siapas got away with it 48 times. On the 49th, the court decided he wasn't getting the message so they threw him in the slammer. Mister Siapas is currently cooling his heels in the Don Jail, where he is expected to reside for the next six months.

It might be wishful thinking, but I like to believe I can hear a chorus of self-conscious "ahems" and much nervous tapping of gold Mont

Blanc pens in various corporate boardrooms across the land.

Speaking of corporate boardrooms, did you catch that guy spouting off on the environment the other day? He was ranting about the



Arthur Black

Temagami region of Ontario, where the last stands of red and white pine in the province are slated to face the chainsaw. I copied down some of his choicer quotes: "Standing amid such natural beauty, I recalled the wood panelling in

boardrooms across this country, and I wondered if my children, or their children, would ever see a natural forest." Well, you get the drift. This guy--Jon Grant, his name is--went on to blast big business and government for raping the land and leaving it covered in filth.

All of which would be just one more depressing environmental sermonette if it sprang from the lips of a tree hugger like Farley Mowat or David Suzuki. But Jon Grant is not a card-carrying environmentalist. He is president of Quaker Oats Company of Canada--and the first major Canadian businessman I've heard speak honestly and forthrightly about the mess we're in and the culpability of big business in putting us there. One last upbeat environmental story. This one concerns the stopping of a \$3 billion dollar hydro-electric dam which would have flooded an area of exceptional natural beauty, killed untold numbers of wildlife, and

polluted the drinking water of large human populations living nearby. A group of environmentalists toiled for six years to block construction of the dam. Last week, parliament voted to terminate the project.

And where did this happen --in democratic, forward-looking Canada? In environmentally conscious Sweden or Denmark?

Nope. It happened in reactionary old Hungary, a country where air pollution and water con-tamination have traditionally been considered a minor industrial cost and environmentalists are routinely arrested for being 'unpatriotic'.

The river they won't be damming is the famous Danube. Who knows? Maybe someday they'll even turn the Danube blue again.

And after that, perhaps the Hungarians could come over here and teach us how to do the same for the St. Lawrence, the Fraser and our not-so-Great Lakes.