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REPORT BY CANADA

ONTARIO'S NEW POLICY ON THE TREATMENT OF ALTERNATE
FRENCH LANGUAGE GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES FOR OFFICIAL MAPS,
REPORTS, SIGNS AND STATUTES

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ONTARIO'S NEW POLICY ON THE TREATMENT
OF ALTERNATE FRENCH LANGUAGE GEOGRAPHICAL
NAMES FOR OFFICIAL MAPS, REPORTS, SIGNS
AND STATUTES

Twenty two years ago at Geneva, on the recommendation of the representative of Austria, the First United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names adopted, under Recommendation D of Resolution 4, the following toponymic guideline with respect to the official treatment of names in multilingual areas:

It is recommended that, in countries in which there exist more than one language, the national authority as appropriate:

- (a) Determine the geographical names in each of the official languages, and other languages as appropriate;*
- (b) Give a clear indication of equality or precedence of officially acknowledged names;*
- (c) Publish these officially acknowledged names in maps and gazetteers.*

Two years later, in 1969, Canada enacted official languages legislation addressing English and French minorities across the country, and in the same year, Ontario enacted legislation providing for establishment of an Ontario Geographic Names Board and proclamation of provincial autonomy in matters addressing the processing and treatment of geographical names and information pertaining to their toponymic applications and entry into the official provincial record. Quebec published its first gazetteer in the same year. Ontario assumed sovereignty over field and office treatment (interview surveys, questionnaires, etc.), and ministerial approval and rescission of names of lakes, rivers, islands, etc., populated places (unincorporated villages, hamlets, etc.) and localities within its 412,582 square mile territory.*

Operational since 1971, the OGNB faced, at the outset, the challenge of acknowledging and drafting policy provisions for a growing public awareness and demand and statutory need for recognition of long established and currently used minority language toponyms in the French, Ojibway, Cree and other languages for features and places officially referenced in the English orthographic tradition. The not unrelated question, and frequently issue, of treatment of diacritical marks and signs, with all the variables pertaining thereto, remained on the Board agenda for some years to come.

In limiting official status to names possessing established majority local usage, as defined by the Board, consistent with Board policy of according recognition only to one official name per feature or place at one time, the OGNB (then unaware of the significance of Austria's 1967 recommendation anticipating, acknowledging and addressing the same need) ordered into the Provincial record all names not approved as official forms as either (a) simply unofficial names, or (b) names for which no indication of equality or precedence vis a vis other names in the record were made.

* 1,068,587 km²

In 1975 the OGNB published its Principles of Geographical Naming, two guidelines of which specifically address minority language toponymies in an official univocity policy field. These are as follows:

Principle 2(a) on Local Usage:

In recommending or approving geographical names, the Board accords first consideration to those which are well established and in current local use. This principle shall take precedence over any of the following - unless there are convincing reasons to the contrary.

Equal consideration is given names of features geographically remote from centres of population which are also well established and in current use.

.....

Principle 4(a) on French Names:

In areas of the Province where both English and French are languages of government and administration, choice of a single official name for a geographical feature or populated place shall be in accord with the language of local government and administration in the area directly associated with the feature or place concerned.

French geographical names which are well established and in current use shall be recommended for adoption as official names in accordance with orthographic norms (accents, apostrophes, hyphens, etc.) appropriate to that linguistic tradition.

.....

.../

In 1981 the Ontario Geographic Names Board formulated and issued a new policy respecting treatment of French language names in particular, and all unofficial names in general. The 1981 policy statement particularly addressed the growing need on the part of the provincial Government to:

- (a) Officially acknowledge the multilingual reality of the Province within the context of an officially bilingual Canada;
- (b) Clarify the distinction between bilingualism and double naming through translation (to be the subject of the 1985 toponomastic conference at Bozen/Bolzano);
- (c) Standardize, or regularize, procedures at the provincial level designed to ensure the equitable recording of French toponymy based on current local usage for Ontario Government publications and media;
- (d) Officially recognize those names constituting confirmed French usage in the interests of ensuring official acknowledgement and recognition through the OGNB and the Ontario government's Translation Bureau.

Accordingly, the OGNB, in endorsing its position on the treatment of Ontario's toponymy in multilingual areas, recommended that:

1. *There should be only one approved name for each geographical feature. This name should be determined according to the naming principles of the OGNB, with their emphasis on well-established local usage. Whereas the generic element in approved names may be in either English or French, the*

specific element may derive from a wide range of linguistic origins;

2. *The following guidelines for the use and translation of geographical names should be followed in all publications, including maps, gazetteers and legal documents. An exception may be made for any special function publication (e.g. an historical map).*
 - A. *In English language publications, the approved form only of any geographical name should be used.*
 - B. *In French language publications, either Option (i) or Option (ii) below should be followed throughout.*

Option (i)

The approved form of any geographical name should be used.

Option (ii)

- (a) *Place names should be used in the approved form only, with no translation of either generic or specific elements;*
- (b) *Where there is a well-established French alternative (sic) name for a feature with an approved name in English (e.g. Rivière des Outaouais for Ottawa River), the French alternative (sic) will be recognized by the OGNB as the appropriate version for use in French language publications using Option (ii);*

- (c) *Where no recognized French alternative name for a feature exists, and where the generic of the approved name is in English, that generic element only should be translated into French (e.g. Mud Lake would become lac Mud).*

Ontario's bilingualization policy on treatment of Canada's two official languages in the province has evolved somewhat since the adoption by OGNB and Translation Bureau of the above policy in 1981. It was not then a province-wide policy. The 1981 statement uses the term 'alternative name', now superseded by 'alternate name.' All things considered, the policy contains the essential elements of the present province-wide policy drafted eight years later.

It should be noted that Option (i) of the 1981 statement respecting treatment of maps and signs has survived intact. Option (ii), subsection (a), is as relevant today as it was eight years ago, once again in context of official maps (topographic, planimetric, etc.) and signs (highway, road, etc.). Option (ii), subsection (b), has been similarly reaffirmed.

A word about use of the terms 'alternative' and 'alternate' in reference to local names in languages other than that of the incumbent official name, which though they claim to be well-established and in current usage, are not the official name. Such names are pronounced alternate in status to the official name, or, alternatively, parallel in linguistic usage. In other words, and in context of the 4th resolution, recommendation D of the First Conference, they are officially acknowledged to have precedence short of being the single official form. The term 'alternate' is used in its North American sense of meaning *second in authority or position, as in alternate member of UN delegation*. The word 'alternative' does not convey this meaning.

Option (ii), subsection (c), was the cause of no little confusion in the intervening years, for no clear applications, at the time, were indicated. The OGNB position against translation of toponyms on principle remains unchanged. Option (ii), subsection (c), countenances generic translation, but, again, does not indicate where, how, or when. This question had no clear answers in 1981. Ontario's new bilingualization policy, however, makes this clear. It restricts generic translation to prose-text applications such as are found in statutes, reports, brochures, educational-instructional media (text books, atlases, bulletins) etc. Generic translation of approved official geographical names is not permitted in such applications as official maps and charts intended for public distribution, highway and other road signs, gazetteers, etc. Such translations would, if implemented, be regarded and treated strictly as toponymic translations.

Geographical names have an existence in the living languages of the areas and regions to which they belong. Translations, per se, do not. If they do not exist in the local or common usages of the linguistic traditions of the areas or regions to which such traditions are an integral part, they cannot be considered as real names. As statutory renditions of approved local forms, translations are designed to meet the Ontario government's commitment to provide French speaking residents of Ontario with services sensitive and responsive to their cultural needs, traditions and values under the new legislation.

As always in toponymy, the effect of such translation is that names are treated as, and reduced to the significance of, words. Rendering such toponyms as Champs Élysées or Medicine Hat into their respective English and French language equivalents serves no practical toponymic purpose. If such translations have no existence in established,

current local or common usage, they normally find no place in the Province's official record - which is, by definition, a register of current name usages established locally and regionally. It is not designed to be a register of arbitrary usages, in translated form, within government. Over time, of course, translations of local or commonly used geographical names from any linguistic tradition become accepted, at the local or common level, as established geographical names. The world is full of examples. Some have become internationally recognized as exonyms. In the North American record, a large number of names for places and features currently established in the English orthographic tradition, originally began as purely French names, or French orthographic renditions of Algonquin, Iroquoian, Cree, Montagnais, Sioux and other indigenous geographical nomenclature. Michigan inherited a large number of French toponyms in 1783, which today appear in translated, yet firmly established local and official usage. Indeed, to the uninitiated, the French forms now appear to be translations! Typical examples are:- Flint, Flint River and Lapeer from the French Rivière La Pierre of the 18th century, and, similarly, the contemporary Dead River from the earlier French Rivière de Mort, the French translation of the Algonquian *gi-nibo-manitou-sibi*, 'river of the spirits of the dead.'

The issue is not that certain names are translations, but rather that certain names, usually translations, are not authentic names because they have no currency in either local or common usage. They are, therefore, not denied a place in the provincial toponymic data base because they are translations per se, but rather for the simple fact that they are not geographical names.

The turning point in Ontario in the development and evolution of a province-wide bilingualization policy came in November, 1986, with passage of the French Language Services Act, to be implement-

ed by November, 1989. Significantly, Ontario does not have an official language - or languages - not even English. The English language, however, is officially recognized and acknowledged as the language of work for 9,340,000 million Ontarians. In the toponomastic field, this is a central fact. At the same time, however, Ontario officially acknowledges, under the FLS Act, the place of the French language in the cultural, legal and educational life of its ½ million Franco-Ontarians. Francophones have the constitutional right to the use of their language in the provincial courts, schools and provincial Government offices (the latter by Nov. 1989). What is provided is a wide range of services in French - including maps and signs.

In December, 1986, the OGNB formalized official acknowledgement of an initial list of established French language geographical names in current use in the Province's francophone community for approximately twenty lakes and rivers bearing official names in the English tradition. Many of the names date from the earliest years of French exploration and settlement and have tended to survive in common usage. Examples are: Lac Supérieur, Rivière à la Pluie and Rivière des Outaouais. They enjoy a status alternate only to the official forms, and are thus recorded as 'approved alternates' in the French linguistic tradition for the same features officially known as Lake Superior, Rainy River and Ottawa River. Such names are referred to as 'parallel toponymic forms' in Quebec, established examples of which being such names as Washat and Seven Islands for official Sept-Îles; Cape Jones for Pointe Louis XIV, and Great Whale River for Kuujuarapik and Poste-de-la-Baleine. Their place in the hierarchy of officially recognized names, relative to other forms, in terms of equality or precedence, consistent with 1967 UN Resolution 4, Recommendation D, is not individually indicated as in Ontario and Alberta.

In Ontario, local usage, established and current, is not the prime consideration in recommending elevation of local French names to

approved alternate status. If a local French language name, such as Orléans (as opposed to Orleans) were the established and current name in majority usage, then it would be - in Ontario - the approved official name. Approved alternate names, on the contrary, normally enjoy majority common usage within the language community concerned, but minority usage at the local level, as in the case of Orleans in Ontario. The common denominator of approved alternate and approved official geographical name usage is currency, and, in the opinion of the approving authority (Board and Minister in Ontario), firmly established roots in the language communities concerned. These are basic. Orléans and Orleans meet these criteria in Ontario.

In September, 1986, the Commission de toponymie du Québec released an impressive document on the analysis and treatment of parallel toponymic forms in Quebec. It appeared as a working paper under the title *CONSIDÉRATIONS SUR LES FORMES TOPONYMIQUES PARALLÈLES*. The Quebec paper did not follow, nor lead events in Ontario, but rather evolved contemporaneously with its sister province, for both jurisdictions worked on the same issues and problems with the same two languages for many years. As in Ontario, Quebec defined and promulgated a concept which accorded official acknowledgment to toponymic forms (*La notion d'approbation limitée à une forme toponymique parallèle*) in parallel usage. Ontario officialized a policy which conferred approved alternate status to names having minority usage vis à vis those with majority usage which are the official forms for the same feature or place. Unlike exonyms, alternate or parallel names are, in Canada, with the exception of officially unilingual Quebec, examples of internal usage. English and French have, in Ontario, official status in the courts and in education, but neither is an official language per se in the Province.

In May, 1987, the Canadian Permanent Committee on Geographical Names convened a special seminar, in Ottawa, to address the issue of alternate (or parallel) names in Canadian toponymy, in preparation for the Fifth United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names held from August 18th to the 31st that same year in Montreal.

Ontario attended the seminar and introduced its definition for 'alternate geographical name' adopted by the OGNB the previous December. Though superseded by an amendment tabled in February this year, the original wording, given below, provides a useful reference. The important factor taken into account was enactment of the new French language services legislation.

DEFINITION OF ALTERNATE NAME (1986)

An 'alternate name' means a name for a geographic feature or place other than the official name of that feature or place which is well established and in current local or common usage. Such a name is adopted by the Ontario Geographic Names Board for use in Ontario Government brochures, atlases, reports, texts, signs, plaques, etc., but not approved for use in documentation affecting legal rights, including statutes, plans of survey, official maps, charts, gazetteers, etc., which are reserved for official name use only.

In response to the new Act and its impact on new official maps, charts, gazetteers and other publications of the Ministry of Natural Resources Surveys, Mapping & Remote Sensing Branch, MNR struck a Bilingual Mapping Policy Development Committee under the chairmanship of the OGNB executive secretary. The first meeting was called in Dec. 1987, and in August, 1988, the Committee submitted, and had ratified by the SMRS Management Policy Committee, its recommendations addressing treatment of names in bilingualized publications. Existing mapping policy did not address and left unanswered *how other ministries were to deal with bilingualism in toponymy.* This led to establishment, in August, of the Interministerial Task Force on Bilingualism in Toponymy, representing the ministries of Attorney General (Legislative Counsel); Government Services (Translation); Municipal Affairs; Natural Resources (Surveys, Mapping & Remote Sensing, Parks, Fisheries, Aviation & Fire Management, etc.); Transportation (highways, roads, etc.); Education; Office of Francophone Affairs, and the OGNB. The Task Force delivered its guiding principles and recommendations in November,

1988, receiving the unanimous approval of the Ministry's Policy Committee for province-wide use and application.

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE INTERMINISTERIAL TASK FORCE ON BILINGUALISM IN TOPONYMY (Summary)

In addition to guiding principles formulated with regard to three principal areas of application, viz.: official maps, particularly those produced for public distribution by SMRS Branch; prose-texts (especially in the context of statutes, regulations, reports, etc.) and road signs under provincial jurisdiction, the Task Force adopted three recommendations which addressed the following areas:

Prose-Text Applications

1. That a Working Group be established to identify specific problems and propose solutions that may respectively arise or be proposed in the work of prescribing statutory translations for Ontario's approximately 57,000 official geographical names;
2. That given the fact that such translations are only permitted where no local French names, i.e. alternate French forms, are confirmed in local use by the yet to be completed Alternate French language name usage survey of francophone communities, every effort should be made to complete the Survey before Sept 1, 1989, to permit timely compilation of the requisite translations;
3. That in order that the requisite statutory effect and recognition be accorded the official adoption of French language alternate nomenclature by the MNR Minister, the Task Force, by and with the approval of the Ministry Policy Committee, endorses the immediate revision and up-date of the Ontario Geographic Names Board Act to permit the approval, recording and dissemination of such names in time to meet the implementation deadline of the French Language Services Act in Nov. 1989.

SUMMARY OF TASK FORCE GUIDING PRINCIPLES (1988)

A. Official Maps

1. Names shown on official maps (topographic & planimetric editions, hydrographic charts, provincial road maps, etc.) shall only be those approved by the MNR Minister on the recommendation of the OGNB;
2. Where an officially approved alternate name is recorded for a geographical feature or inhabited place bearing an official name in a language other than the minority alternate name, both approved official and approved alternate toponyms shall be shown, cartographic scale and space permitting.
3. Other maps, charts, etc. not recognized as official, and forming part of a French language publication (e.g. brochures, reports, etc.) shall be governed by the guidelines drawn up and approved for prose-text applications (see below).

B. Prose-text Applications

1. Generic terms forming part of geographical names may be translated in accordance with the guidelines laid down in the CPGN 1987 publication 'Glossary of Generic Terms in Canada's Geographical Names.' Specific elements of such names shall not be translated;
2. Geographical names of inhabited or populated places (generic plus specific) are not to be translated;

3. Where an officially approved alternate name exists for a geographical feature or populated place bearing an approved official name, this name shall be used.

Example: French River, (official name for river),
rivière des Français, (officially approved
French language alternate name for same
river).

Not: 'rivière French' (unapproved translation)

C. Road & Highway Signs in Designated Areas

1. Geographical names of inhabited or populated places officially recognized by the OGNB are not to be translated (i.e. specific & generic elements constituting the full orthographic form of geographical names recognized by the Board).

Example: The official name, North Bay (city on Lake Nipissing), remains the same in both English and French text.

Administrative or corporate titles (definers) for communities such as North Bay, such as: the town, city or regional municipality of .. as well as similar corporate titles, or definers, for parks, reserves, preserves, etc. such as, provincial park, wilderness area, etc., shall be translated.

2. Generic terms in the names of geographical features shall not be translated for use on highway signs, where such features are identified on or along the transportation facility (road).

Where official names for local roads, streets, etc. are in a bilingual format, and so identified and recognized by municipal resolution or by-law, they shall be signed accordingly.

3. Wherever and whenever an officially approved alternate name (for a feature or populated place with an official name) has been adopted by the OGNB, this name will be signed on the highway in addition to the official geographical name, provided space in which to display the alternate name is available, and the safety of the motorist is not thereby compromised.

Example: Georgian Bay
Baie Georgienne
10 km

4. All text other than the official names per se which is associated, or used in conjunction, with
 - . regulatory signs,
 - . warning signs,
 - . temporary signs not associated with construction & maintenance,
 - . emergency services signs,
 - . motorist services signs,
 - . public transportation signs,
 - . boundary signs,
 - . local attraction signs,
 - . navigational guide signs, &
 - . general informational signs,

shall be translated, and used on highway signs in areas designated as bilingual, provided safety is not compromised. Translations utilized shall be accordance with advice provided through Government Translation Services.

In the interests of highway safety, particularly where higher speeds are the norm, as much signage text as possible will be replaced by symbols (e.g. park, picnic and camp grounds signs may be replaced by 'logo' signage with only the 'specific' site name, such as Oxtongue Lake, Lake St. Peter, or Killarney shown for the picnic area, camping area or provincial park concerned.

DEFINITION OF ALTERNATE NAME (1989)

Enactment of the French Language Services legislation in 1986 overtook the definition adopted by the OGNB for 'alternate geographical name' that year. At its 65th quarterly meeting in February this year, the Ontario Geographic Names Board tabled the following revision of that definition: /See UN Definition, Glossary No. 330/Rev.2, 24 July 1987, ST/CS/SER.F, #102, p. 48, United Nations Secretariat/

An 'alternate geographical name', within the context and scope of the present policy field of the Ontario Geographic Names Board, is a name recorded, processed and approved for a geographical feature or populated place already possessing an approved official name in a language or usage other than that of the alternate form.

Background: *In multilingual Ontario, an alternate name might belong to either of Canada's official languages, French or English, or any of the Province's unofficial languages. An alternate name in the French language is one approved by the Board in established current local, or common, usage, and applied to a geographical*

feature such as a lake, river, island, mountain, peninsula, point, beach, etc.; unincorporated populated place such as a village, hamlet, or other community, or locality; having an approved official name in a language or usage other than French.

*Example: Rivière des Outaouais (approved alternate form),
Ottawa River, (approved official form).*

Approved alternate geographical names may be used, cartographic scale permitting, in all official Ontario maps, and on highway and other road signage. In documentation and applications of the Ontario Government, where, consistent with the definitions, principles and recommendations of the Ontario Interministerial Task Force on Bilingualism in Toponymy (1988-89), generic & other statutory translations of official geographical names is permitted, none is to be authorized where an approved alternate name already exists.