

UNITED NATIONS

Group of Experts on
Geographical Names

WORKING PAPER

Fifteenth Session
Geneva, 11-19 November 1991

66 72

Agenda item 16

**TOWARDS A NEW POLICY ON THE TREATMENT OF ENGLISH- AND
FRENCH-LANGUAGE TOPONYMY IN ONTARIO**

Prepared by M.B. Smart, Ontario Geographic Names Board

Submitted by Helen Kerfoot, CPCGN Secretariat, Canada

AGENDA ITEM 16

REPORT BY CANADA

Progress Report of the province of Ontario on implementation of its 1986/89 French language services legislation, and the impact on provincial mapping, charting and road/highway signage, and such prose-text applications of official names as are subject to statutory translation under the new Act.

INTRODUCTION

Since presentation of Ontario's Working Paper to the 14th Session of UNGEGN on the treatment of minority geographical names in 1989, the province has, under the aegis of the Ontario Geographic Names Board (OGNB), moved into new and challenging policy and methodological areas. New solutions are being applied to some old name treatment problems.

The challenge of toponymic translation continues, and is currently being addressed by the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources. As discussed in earlier papers, the field of toponymic translations, etc. lies jurisdictionally outside the terms of reference of the Ontario Geographic Names Board, names and translations being perceived as mutually exclusive. As Ontario's major producer of large scale planimetric and topographic maps (1:10,000, 1:20,000, etc.) the Ministry requires new guidelines. Should such maps continue to show only official names? Where would the official renditions or translations be used? In seeking direction and an overall policy for the rendition of official names in forms acceptable to Ontario's 1/2 m. francophones in prose-text applications as decreed by Ontario's 1988 Interministerial Task Force on Bilingualism in Toponymy, the Ministry commissioned a special project in 1991 addressed to providing new directions in the field of toponymic translation of official nomenclature.

Two main issues have emerged. The first relates to the impact of technological change, the needs of digital mapping, Ministry GIS initiatives, etc. The second arises from the concomitant requirement for clearer, less ambiguous guidelines for government translators who are currently confronted with the task of rendering official toponymic usage (names, orthographies, officially and unofficially named entity extents, etc.) *bilingual*. Such translations apply only to prose-text applications such as statutes,

petitions, reports, orders, contracts, brochures, regulations and other provincial government publications.

The effect of the new linguistic legislation has been ordination of government wide bilingualization. Bilingual treatment of official (read government) documentation containing geographical names established in the English linguistic tradition involves much more than translation per se, whether the words concerned function as generics, specifics, or even as the actual names per se. A number of important consequences flow from official adoption by the province of legislated priorities within a de facto multilingual/multicultural jurisdiction wherein the incumbent toponymic authority is on record as fully subscribing to the principle of univocity (one official name at one time per feature or place) in the treatment of geographical nomenclature.

There is perhaps no single aspect of Ontario Geographic Names Board policy which has so caught the attention of other toponymic authorities and jurisdictions as its implementation and interpretation of the univocity principle. Standardization of multilingual areas wherein features and populated places carry two or more well established local names, sometimes in as many linguistic traditions (e.g. English, French, Ojibway, Cree, etc.), calls for objective, unambiguous guidelines if a names authority is to be satisfied that in each name recommendation or decision the name in current, well established majority usage is approved for official usage irrespective of linguistic or cultural origin considerations.

Perhaps no other policy application in Canadian toponymy has generated such a response in the management of name information in multilingual areas. Mapping agencies in both the private and public sectors who are attempting to cope with two or more language traditions within a common jurisdiction.

An important attribute of officially acknowledged names, whether *approved official* forms or *approved alternate* forms is that their application to the feature or place in question, i.e. the geographical extent(s) of the entity named is, in digital mapping, an attribute cartographically delimitable by means of coordinate values. Long before concerns over GIS initiatives, toponymic applications were effectively addressed graphically. In the late 19th century, Sir Henry Morton Stanley discovered, in exploring the source of the Congo, that rivers known to the Mambwe as the Chambezi, the Luapula, the Lualaba, and the Congo were all the same river. What was then resolved cartographically with judicious placement of names must now be resolved by the introduction of closed polygons and virtual segments. Rivers possess names some of which are official & whose extent applications are cartographically delimited and approved by the appropriate names authority. The resurfacing of second and tertiary names for the same river, but with different extent applications, brings with it other problems besides the names per se which, though acknowledged unofficial, do enjoy well established usage. Respecting the official forms, bilingualization, as envisioned by the authors of Ontario's new language legislation, may well include adoption of lexical equivalents, not excluding exonymic forms, in the French tradition in order to render the appropriate prose-text applications acceptable to the francophone community.

French language lexical equivalents represent, to an extent in North America which is the subject of research currently underway in Ontario, established French linguistic usage in parallel situations not to be confused with translations per se. Many exonyms fall into this category of toponymic usage, sharing with officialized names in current local and/or common usage that *toponomastic denominator* common to all authentic toponyms - *currency*.

The province of Ontario occupies an area of the earth's surface greater than that covered by France and Spain combined. Yet it only recognizes some 57,000 official geographical names out of the vastly greater number of geographical, hydrographic & urban-topographical features whose numbers are quite massive. Names of streets, roads, highways, parks, cemeteries, golf courses, fields, orchards, etc. do not, in Ontario, fall under the naming authority of the Minister of Natural Resources. However, the officialization of names given to geographical features surveyed and mapped by the province such as lakes, rivers, islands, bays, points, ridges, valleys, etc. do lie within the Minister's jurisdiction. Approval of or rescission or deletion of such names is based on the recommendations of the Ontario Geographic Names Board. The French Language Services Act is a provincial statute the provisions of which do not apply to municipal jurisdictions - or the names and naming of their streets, parks and associated features making up the urban environment.

Such features all have - indeed must have in the interests of effective government and administration - official names. Such designations are governed by the appropriate municipal names and naming authority which is responsible for their treatment, and translation if and when such a decision is taken by the municipal government concerned. What is important to keep in mind in the context of this paper is the fact that, in the province of Ontario, such names are not treated as geographical names.

In the interests of achieving a more acceptable rendition of official geographical names in French for prose-text application purposes, emphasis is currently being placed on use of 'French language equivalents' wherever and whenever feasible instead of resorting to arbitrary translations. It is estimated that 30% of the translations already authorized of the province's official toponymy (which, recent surveys show, are not accepted by the majority of users in either the public or private sector) might be more effectively treated, for the purposes of prose text application, by use of exonymic and other established lexical equivalents. Whether such an approach proves acceptable to those who have objected to replacement of official and recognized forms in brochures, regulations, school texts, etc. remains to be seen. Equally critical is, of course, the response of the Franco-Ontarian, the less literate members of which community have been uncritical of the conventional generic translations of the past such as: Vallée Devil's for Devil's Glen, Lac Clearwater for Clearwater Lake, etc. instead of Vallée du Diable and Lac à l'Eau Claire. The response of the province's francophone community to the Ministry's new translation policy will be closely monitored by other provinces and territories.

Ontario has found itself confronted with formulating policies and laying down procedural guidelines in face of the new language legislation, which,

among other considerations, required it to define new linguistic priorities. Not only priorities as to language, but also a sharpening of focus respecting the relationship of name to language, and language to name. Questions such as 'which of the two is one to accord priority to, in terms of orthography vis-à-vis local usage? That of integrity of the language or that of the name?' In the English language tradition, primacy is traditionally accorded the geographical name as formed and established in current local usage. In the French tradition the integrity of the language, at least in Canada, is accorded first priority in cases where a choice must be made between local or common usage and the integrity of the linguistic tradition of which each name is a part in determining which orthographic form is made official.

Such considerations are important in determining French language equivalents for selected prose-text applications in keeping with Ontario's French Language Services legislation.

In the government's delivery of services (especially within the communications sphere of the French language), it has been important to recognize and work within the above linguistic and toponymic priorities. In matters of providing French language equivalents (some of which are generic translations) responsibility has been delegated to the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources. Such forms are not regarded as authentic names, not being sanctioned by usage, local or common, though in the fulness of time specific names do evolve and emerge from such forms once they are, in point of fact, sanctioned by local and/or common usage.

Toponymic matters involving the recording, processing, recommendation for approval or rescission, and promulgation of decisions on usage sanctioned names, lie within the jurisdiction and mandate of the Ontario Geographic Names Board. Geographical name translation does not.

In other words, the practice and function of official (i.e. governmental) translation of approved geographical names, whether addressed to specific (proper) or generic (common) elements of toponyms or not, is a non OGNB activity and beyond the pale of cartographic toponymy as practiced in Ontario. The Ministry, which provides for the OGNB and its Secretariat in its estimates, has, in the past 2 years addressed the legislative impact of the new language legislation in providing the requisite French language renditions, equivalents and translations for its bilingual documentation, applications and publications. The provision of such services has brought with it the need to differentiate between documents wherein only official names are used and those in which, under the provisions of Task Force Report of 1988, they are not mandatory.

ONTARIO MINISTRY OF NATURAL RESOURCES POLICY ON OFFICIAL MAP BILINGUALIZATION

In 1988 Ontario established guidelines for the bilingualization of maps which, under the terms of reference adopted by the Interministerial Task Force on Bilingualism in Toponymy, it defines as *official*.

The Ministry's guidelines address all maps produced by the Ministry for the general public - not those designed for internal use. The guidelines apply to the following map series: (a) maps of the Ontario Basic Mapping Program (largely at scales of 1:10,000 and 1:20,000), (b) maps of the Territorial Series, and (c) maps of the Provincial Series.

The guidelines were formulated in the understanding and appreciation of the fact that English is the working language of approx. 10 million Ontarians. Although Canada is officially bilingual, neither English nor French is an official language of Ontario. In contrast, Quebec is officially unilingually French. Only one other Canadian province has declared itself one way or the other, viz., officially bilingual in the case of New Brunswick where the mix is 70/30 English/Acadian French. However, all jurisdictions, provincial and territorial, endorse the provisions of the 1969 Official Languages Act requiring bilingualization within all federal facilities, utilities, agencies, lands, reserves, harbours, airports, Indian Reserves (First Nations), national parks, etc., within the provinces and territories. Affected are all prose-text applications, publications, instruments in writing, such as reports, brochures, signage, regulations, statutes (e.g. Territorial Division Acts). Ontario's new language legislation specifically addresses the linguistic-cultural needs and aspirations of its Franco-Ontarians.

Consistent with naming policies in place with toponymic authorities across Canada, including unilingual Quebec and bilingual New Brunswick, Ontario subscribes to United Nations endorsed (1st Conf. R.IV) principle of univocity in geographical names treatment. Though not specifically clear in the 1967 definition (R.4 National Standardization, Rec.C) which reads "(vi) Avoidance of more than one name for one feature", is understood to mean that 'one name' reads as 'one official name' or 'one acknowledged name'

Ontario sits as a member of the Canadian Permanent Committee on Geographical Names (CPCGN). The post has traditionally been occupied by the Ontario Surveyor General, who also sits ex officio on the Ontario Geographic Names Board. The policies, principles, procedures and rationale endorsed by the CPCGN are predicated upon the specific requirements identified as prerequisite to achieving effective and cost-effective presentation of information on maps - the formula fully subscribed to by the Ministry (Natural Resources).

MINISTERIAL GUIDELINES (1988-91)

1. The MNR guidelines came into force in 1988 for new mapping, & for maps in print or being printed. They were implemented when other revisions were required, or programmed as part of a routine revision cycle.
2. The policies, principles and procedures established and endorsed by the Ontario Geographic Names Board employed in the treatment of geographical names shall be respected.
3. The compilation, design and production of official maps intended for public distribution by Land & Resource Information Branch (Surveys, Mapping & Remote Sensing Br. in 1988) shall be in accord with the recommendations of the Branch Bilingual Mapping Policy Development Committee with particular reference to treatment of cartographic symbology, toponymy and textual annotation.

4. Consistent with, and by and with the authority of the Branch Management Committee, based on the recommendations of the Branch Bilingual Mapping Policy Development Committee (1988),
 - 4.1 The Branch will not endorse or authorize translations of geographical names officially approved and established in and sanctioned by local usage, which would have the effect of altering the orthographic form of names already recognized and recorded by the Ontario Geographic Names Board, and approved by the MNR Minister, under the Ontario Geographic Names Board Act, R.S.O. 1980, c.335.
 - 4.2 Only the orthographic forms recognized and approved as sanctioned by local usage for geographical names by the Ontario Geographic Names Board shall be used in official maps and gazetteers produced by the Branch by and with the authority of the OGNB.
 - 4.3 Translations provided by Ontario government translators of OGNB recognized and Minister (MNR) approved names used in official prose-text applications (e.g. statutes, regulations, reports, map-surrounds and legends, etc.) shall be treated as translations, not as geographical names.
 - 4.4 Symbology authorized by the Branch (LRI) for official maps intended for public distribution shall be revised and upgraded to permit, where practicable as information, and feasible as cartography, the transposition of existing descriptive terms, labels, annotations, explanatory notes, with the exception of initials and abbreviations established, adopted and treated as acronymic symbols, and similar forms of map-face narrative or annotated figure, to the map-surround (margin) and legend in English-French text.
 - 4.5 Bilingual treatment of Branch produced official maps, involving translation of the generic, or generic and specific components of officially approved names, whose use is governed by naming authorities other than the OGNB, shall be in accordance with the recommendations and decisions of that authority (e.g. Parks, Conservation Authorities, etc.) respecting toponymic treatment of maps produced by the Branch.

- 4.6 All new symbology designed for future official LRI Branch produced maps shall be in accord with Branch Bilingual Mapping Policy Development Committee specifications, and subject to the collective approval of Thematic and Topographic Mapping (Provincial Mapping Office), Drafting (Crown Parcel), and the Ontario Centre for Remote Sensing (Geographical Information Services).
- 4.7 Established and OGNB approved abbreviations of such officially approved names as are deemed by cartographers too long to be depicted on certain LRI (formerly Surveys, Mapping and Remote Sensing) Branch maps where space constraints preclude use of the complete name, shall be so authorized. Example: full official name: *Kwataboahegan River* (Cochrane Dict.). OGNB approved short forms of same official name: either *Kwataboahegan R.*, or simply, *Kwataboahegan*. Unless so endorsed by the OGNB, the French form, *Riv. Kwataboahegan*, is not an authorized abbreviation.
-