

# International Certification Study: Canada Revisited

By Jiri Stejskal

The arbitrary nature of this series brings us from Scandinavia, topic of the last issue, back to Canada, which we first visited in January. This time we will again take a closer look at one of the provinces, namely British Columbia, but we will also examine the umbrella organization for the associations of translators and interpreters in the Canadian provinces and territories. I am indebted for detailed information to Hana Kucerova and Fenella Sung, president and vice-president of the Society of Translators & Interpreters of British Columbia respectively, and to Bruce Knowlden, president of the Canadian Translators and Interpreters Council. I also made extensive use of the two organizations' websites.

CTIC (pronounced "see tick"), which is an acronym for both the Canadian Translators and Interpreters Council and the Conseil des traducteurs et interprètes du Canada, was founded in 1970. It is the legal successor of the Society of Translators and Interpreters of Canada (STIC), which had been incorporated in 1956. It is a federation of 12 provincial and territorial bodies, two of which, the Association of Translators and Interpreters of Ontario (ATIO) and the Ordre des traducteurs, terminologues et interprètes agréés du Québec (OTTIAQ, formerly the Société des Traducteurs du Québec), are its founding members. Since 1972 they have been joined by:

- the Corporation of Translators, Terminologists, and Interpreters of New Brunswick (CTINB);
- the Association of Translators and Interpreters of Alberta (ATIA);
- the Association of Translators and Interpreters of Manitoba (ATIM);
- the Association of Translators and Interpreters of Saskatchewan (ATIS);

- the Society of Translators and Interpreters of British Columbia (STIBC);
- the Interpreters/Translators Society of the Northwest Territories (ITSNWT);
- the Association of Translators and Interpreters of Nova Scotia (ATINS);
- the Society of Interpreters and Translators of Yukon (SITY);
- the Nunavut Interpreters/Translators Association (NITA); and
- the Newfoundland and Labrador Association of Translators and Interpreters (NLATI).

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The objectives of the CTIC are to coordinate the activities of member bodies and encourage them to work together to ensure uniform standards for the practice of the profession, and to maintain ties with national and international associations in the language field. Its mission is to set, maintain, and promote national standards in translation, interpretation, and terminology in order to ensure quality communication across linguistic and cultural communities. Although regulation of the professions is within provincial and territorial jurisdiction in Canada, the CTIC recently adopted a policy whereby individual members of the provincial and territorial associations are also members by affiliation of the national body. They are now authorized to use the following titles: certified translator (Canada), certified

terminologist (Canada), and certified interpreter (Canada). The CTIC represents almost 3,000 certified translation professionals.

The CTIC promotes the training of qualified language professionals through its member bodies, which work together with provincial and territorial educational institutions offering programs in translation, terminology, interpretation, and related areas. The Board of Certification, reporting to the CTIC Council, sets the standards for certification procedures and exercises overall control. All member bodies are represented on this board. The CTIC recently adopted new certification standards. Certification is based on an educational qualification (a bachelor's degree in translation or the equivalent) and a mentorship program or two years of professional experience. Passing the standardized CTIC examination is equivalent to one year of experience. Professionals who can demonstrate five years of attested professional experience may also apply for certification. All forms of certification include an ethics component. The CTIC does not accept applications for certification. These are normally directed to the member body serving the applicant's province or territory of residence. While all the member associations of the CTIC have agreed to the new standards in principle, they are going through a period of transition as the new standards are implemented.

Translation examinations have been held since 1975. They are intended for professionals who wish to have their competence recognized by their peers. They seek not to identify mere aptitude or potential, but rather to attest to a candidate's professional skills. The examination is held annually on the same day in a

number of cities across Canada. Registration is usually in the early fall. National correction centers for official language examinations accelerate and ensure uniformity in the marking process.

The conference interpreters examination was developed some years ago in Quebec, and is now administered for the other provinces and territories as well. It is open to professional interpreters who have worked 200 days under conditions of regular practice or who have equivalent qualifications. The professional examination for certifying court interpreters was first developed by the STIBC in cooperation with the OTTIAQ. This examination was adopted by the CTIC in 1993. It involves several components: 1) language proficiency, legal terminology, and procedures; 2) an oral exam conducted in a language laboratory to test sight translation; and 3) simultaneous and consecutive interpreting.

The terminology examination had been in existence in Quebec for some years when, in 1991, the CTIC established the first standard terminology examination process. It is intended to certify on the basis of a sound theoretical and practical grounding in terminology. The candidate is required to prove his or her ability to undertake relatively difficult terminological tasks and conduct terminological research in a specialized field.

The titles of certified translator, certified interpreter, certified conference interpreter, certified court interpreter, and certified terminologist are now protected by law in New Brunswick, Ontario, and Quebec, where the ATIO, CTINB, and OTTIAQ have gained legal professional recognition by their provincial governments. This has brought to fruition years of work by the leaders

of those bodies. Some form of de facto recognition is also accorded by the public authorities to the members of most other member bodies, which are seeking official recognition of their titles within their respective jurisdictions. Detailed information on the certification procedure can be found in the January issue of the *Chronicle* in the article on the OTTIAQ.

A member of the CTIC, the STIBC is currently exploring the possibility of reciprocal arrangements with the ATA in terms of the mutual recognition of credentials of its respective members. The exam reciprocity with the ATA was discussed by both the STIBC and CTIC at a meeting held in November 2001. In fact, such reciprocity already exists—in Ontario, New Brunswick, and Quebec, and soon in British Columbia, successfully passing an ATA exam is considered equivalent to the CTIC exam when processing “*on dossier*” certification requests (similar to the ATA’s Peer Review). However, due to the concept of Canadian translator organizations as “professional organizations” (in the provinces above, “certified translator” is a “reserved” or “protected” title), there are additional requirements (references, years in practice, etc.) the candidate for certification *on dossier* must prove. (These additional requirements also apply to certified members of other provincial associations wishing to be certified in Ontario, New Brunswick, and Quebec.) Ms. Kucerova’s proposal of full and direct reciprocity—a listing as CTIC-certified—for a translator who passes the ATA exam was not accepted at this time. Dissenting voices objected that the ATA would not list a CTIC-certified translator as ATA-accredited.

The goals of the STIBC are to promote the interests of translators and

interpreters in British Columbia and to serve the public by providing both a code of ethics that members of the STIBC agree to observe and a system of certification for translators and interpreters. As of December 2001, the STIBC’s membership consists of approximately 300 founding and certified translators and interpreters (accredited in 61 language combinations) and approximately 240 associate members. To become an associate member, a translator must pass the admission exam or be a graduate from a university program in translation, language, or linguistics (e.g., “magister” from Charles University, philosophical faculty,



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majoring in English or French). Associate members must pass the certification exam within five years of becoming members. To become certified members of the STIBC, translators and interpreters must demonstrate that they have met a level of competency in professional skills established by the CTIC. It is the STIBC's current policy that they must pass a CTIC certification examination, unless they are already certified members of another CTIC member association. The certification includes an ethical component; while this was a part of the CTIC examination in the past, the provincial associations now assess their own candidates in relation to the provincial codes of ethics. The STIBC will have a written exam on ethics included in the admission exam beginning April 2002. To be eligible for certification examinations, the STIBC may also require training in translation/interpreting or a related field and experience in a related professional category according to the national eligibility standard. A national board of examiners, which

includes representatives from all member associations of the CTIC, sets the norms and standards for these examinations. Only members of the STIBC or another provincial association may take a certification examination, and members may be certified in more than one professional category: translation, court interpretation, conference interpretation, and terminology, and/or in more than one language combination.

In the fall of 2001, the STIBC introduced a pilot project of "mandatory professional development credits." All members are requested to fill out a questionnaire, with credits assigned to various activities (formal study, workshops, membership in other professional associations, subscriptions to professional magazines, etc.). Members will have to show 30 credits every two years to renew their membership in the STIBC. The system is honor-based and a small percentage of reports will be randomly audited beginning in 2003. The requirements will be fine-tuned after receiving this year's replies.

The STIBC, in conjunction with

the CTIC, is the host and organizer of the XVI FIT World Congress, which will take place in Vancouver in August 2002. The CTIC has been represented on the FIT Council for a number of years, and had the honor of hosting the VIII World Congress in Montreal in 1977. In 1990, FIT elected its first president from a non-European country, a past president of the CTIC. For more information on the STIBC, visit the Society's website at [www.stibc.org](http://www.stibc.org), or contact Hana Kucerova ([hkucerova@telus.net](mailto:hkucerova@telus.net)) or Fenella Sung ([fenella@telus.net](mailto:fenella@telus.net)). Information on the CTIC is available at [www.synapse.net/~ctic/](http://www.synapse.net/~ctic/) or directly from CTIC President Bruce Knowlden ([knowlden@mts.net](mailto:knowlden@mts.net)).

In the next issue, we will take a look at the state-governed certification procedure for translators and interpreters in Austria. As the editor of this series, I encourage readers to submit any relevant information concerning non-U.S. certification or similar programs, as well as comments on the information published in this series, to my e-mail address at [jiri@cetra.com](mailto:jiri@cetra.com).

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## From the Executive Director Continued from p.8

West III wrote in his January column, a three-day Legal Translation and Interpreting Conference is scheduled for next year.

### Final Call: Proposals for ATA Conference Presentations

Share your knowledge and experience with fellow ATA members by making a presentation at ATA's 43rd Annual Conference, November 6-9, 2002, in Atlanta, Georgia. Please complete the Proposal for Conference

Presentation form and return it to ATA Headquarters. The form may be downloaded from the ATA website, [www.atanet.org/conf2002/abstract.htm](http://www.atanet.org/conf2002/abstract.htm). You can also get a copy from ATA's Document On Request fax service (1-888-990-3282, document #80), or by calling ATA Headquarters at 703-683-6100. The presentations are a great way to network with others who share your interests and to indirectly promote yourself and your company's services.

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### Announcing The Onionskin by Chris Durban

This issue includes the first installment of *The Onionskin*, a client education column launched by the *ITI Bulletin* (a publication of the Institute of Translation and Interpreting) in 1996. Please turn to page 46 to check out our newest feature!