

Caseload too much for CSIS, watchdog reports

By [Name], Ottawa

The Canadian Security Intelligence Review Board (CSIS) has reported that its caseload is too large for it to handle effectively, and that it is struggling to keep up with the number of cases it is receiving.

The board's report, released last week, says that the agency's caseload has increased significantly since 1997, and that it is now receiving more cases than it can handle. The board says that this is leading to a decline in the quality of its work, and that it is unable to provide the same level of oversight and review as it once did.

The board also says that it is facing a number of other challenges, including a shortage of staff and a lack of resources. It says that it needs more funding and more staff to be able to handle the current caseload.



Sovereignty support near low, poll finds

By [Name], Ottawa

A recent poll has found that support for Canadian sovereignty is at a low point, with only a minority of respondents favoring the idea of maintaining the current status quo.

The poll, conducted by [Organization], asked respondents whether they supported the current arrangement, wanted to see Canada become a republic, or preferred another option. The results showed that a significant portion of respondents favored the republican option, while support for the current arrangement was at its lowest point in several years.

Mounties shelve covert work to focus on terrorism threat

By [Name], Ottawa

The Canadian Mounted Police (CMP) has decided to shelve its covert operations in order to focus on the growing threat of terrorism.

The decision was announced by the RCMP's top commander, who said that the force is now more concerned with preventing and responding to terrorist attacks than with conducting covert operations. He said that the RCMP will continue to work on its traditional duties, but that its focus will be on the terrorism threat.

Canada 5000 thrown \$75-million lifeline

By [Name], Ottawa

The federal government has announced a \$75-million lifeline for the 5,000 Chinese immigrants who are currently in Canada.

The government says that it will provide financial assistance to help these immigrants get established in their new country. This assistance will include help with housing, education, and job training. The government also says that it will provide legal assistance to help these immigrants understand their rights and responsibilities in Canada.

The sophisticated stowaway

By [Name], Ottawa

A well-dressed traveler found in a container with plane, computer, maps, airport passes

A sophisticated stowaway was discovered in a container at an airport. The stowaway was a man who had hidden himself in a container with a plane, computer, maps, and airport passes.

The man was discovered by airport security when they were inspecting a container. He was found in a container that was supposed to contain a plane. The man was well-dressed and had a sophisticated appearance. He was able to get past airport security by using his computer, maps, and airport passes.

Full television listings for Greater Vancouver are published daily in Globe Review, B2

Full listings page B2

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A tale of two solitudes written anew

Even some ethnic Chinese think Asian influx to Richmond, B.C., should hasten assimilation process

BY JANE ARMSTRONG, RICHMOND, B.C.

Last August, Vancouver developer Thomas Fung sent word to retailers in his sprawling suburban mall that he plans to bulldoze the stucco shopping centre, once regarded as the Asian-Canadian equivalent of the West Edmonton Mall.

Mr. Fung says he's demolishing the Aberdeen Centre because its distinctive Asian character — where English is rarely heard and the food court doesn't even bother to sell North American fare — is passé in 2001.

He's building another mall, three times the size just across the street. The new centre will have mainstream franchises like Radio Shack, Burger King and the Gap, and he's instructed retailers to speak English to customers.

"It's time to become more international," said Mr. Fung, chairman and CEO of the Fairchild Group, who also owns Chinese-Canadian newspapers and radio and television stations in Vancouver, Calgary and Toronto.

Mr. Fung's comments about his mall could easily be applied to Richmond, the city where he erected the Aberdeen Centre in 1990 in anticipation of an influx of immigrants from Hong Kong.

Twenty years ago, the flat, swampy island south of the Fraser River from Vancouver was largely wetlands, farms and a few housing developments. Its biggest claim to fame was that it shared a postal code with the Vancouver International Airport.

But in the past 15 years, Richmond has become a beacon for tens of thousands of immigrants from Asia; first Hong Kong, then Taiwan and now, mainland China.

Today, Richmond is known as Vancouver's little Hong Kong and the Aberdeen Centre is no longer a unique cultural phenomenon. Richmond's main commercial thoroughfare, the No. 3 Rd., is awash in Asian-themed outlets and



Thomas Fung, chairman and CEO of the Fairchild Group, plans to bulldoze a Richmond, B.C., mall because he says its distinctive Asian character is passé in 2001.

restaurants, loudly announced by brightly coloured neon signs, largely in Chinese.

But many residents say Richmond has become a bit too comfortable for Asian immigrants. They say Asian-Canadians aren't integrating as fast as they could into Canadian culture. Some fear

that two distinct cultures are emerging — a kind of West Coast two solitudes — dividing B.C. society into Asian and non-Asian.

Nowhere else in Canada has the demographic landscape shifted so dramatically and swiftly.

In the 1996 census, 8 per cent of the Richmond population listed an

Asian language as their mother tongue. Today, city officials estimate 40 per cent of Richmond's 160,000 residents are of Asian background. In 1988, 1 per cent of students in Richmond's public schools spoke English as a second language. Today, ESL students account for half the students in

Richmond's 51 schools. At Spaul'k-waks Public School, in Richmond's newest housing development, 90 per cent of its 312 students are ESL students, principal Janet White said.

Asian immigrants say they live in Richmond because they feel secure here; they can speak their language nearly everywhere and there is an established Chinese community to cushion newcomers.

But there is fear that those very amenities may also function as a cultural shield between recent immigrants and mainstream Canadian society.

Many school children, normally the fastest group to pick up a new culture, aren't doing so because they're dropped into schools and neighbourhoods where most youngsters still speak Chinese.

Phyllis and Patrick Yuen, who came to Canada in 1995, say their teenage children listen to a new culture, aren't doing so because they're rarely called upon to speak English at their restaurant.

"Maybe once a month, someone comes in who speaks English," Mrs. Yuen said, noting the English-speaking person is usually the health inspector.

Tony Carrigan, ESL curriculum co-ordinator for the Richmond school board, recalls telling a set of parents to put their daughters in Girl Guides to help them learn English faster, thinking an activity outside school would do the trick. But in the Richmond Girl Guides troop, the girls were all Asian.

"We encourage kids to maintain their first language because it's good to be bilingual in the global village," Mr. Carrigan said. "But we also need them to acquire competency in English as quickly as possible. This becomes a problem when you end up sort of creating a self-imposed prison and you can't break out of it."

Despite the dramatic population shifts, the people running Richmond — the city politicians, staff, school board members and police officers — are largely non-Asian.

And although leaders take pains to learn the customs and values of their constituents, language barriers have caused problems.

Earlier this year, hundreds of angry Richmond residents turned out en masse at city hall to protest against a plan to put group homes in residential neighbourhoods.

Community activist Reggie Ho said the protesters were almost 100-per-cent Asian and they were agitated that recovering alcoholics, drug addicts and the developmentally handicapped would be housed

in their midst. Mr. Ho said the concept was foreign to them.

"In Asia, a lot of people with problems are shut away," said Mr. Ho, who emigrated from Brunei 27 years ago at age 18. "If you're a drug addict, you're in jail or locked up somewhere. People don't deal with social problems the way they do in Canada."

Mr. Ho said the controversy underscored the clash of cultures. Most of the residents didn't properly understand the proposal and didn't even know that several already existed in their neighbourhoods. To ease tensions, Mr. Ho arranged community meetings to provide residents with crash courses on Canadian customs.

Language difficulties with Chinese-speaking residents have also posed a problem for police.

RCMP Constable Ben Maure said he's been called to homes where no one spoke English. These scenarios can be frustrating and potentially dangerous. As a remedy, Constable Maure went to Hong Kong earlier this year for a three-month language course to master the basics of Cantonese.

His new skill came in handy when he was called to a house recently where a child had called 911, then hung up. The operator said she heard yelling in the background. At the house, Constable Maure said an elderly Chinese woman refused to open the door. That didn't surprise him. Many people from Hong Kong distrust police.

Unable to discern if anyone was in danger, he considered kicking in the door. Then he asked the woman, through the window, in Cantonese, if there was a problem. She said no. The child was just playing. Constable Maure said the conversation satisfied him that the 911 call was an accident and he left.

Some residents say Asians alone can't be blamed for their slow assimilation. Phyllis Yuen, who owns the Richmond dessert restaurant, said the area's shopping mall stores are famous throughout Asia for their fine fabrics, furniture, jewellery and clothing. And prices are far lower than at the brand-name Canadian shopping centres. Mrs. Yuen added, "Yet non-Asians are rarely seen trolling Richmond malls for good buys."

"So the point is: 'We Chinese go to Canadian stores and Chinese stores, but the white people don't go to our stores. It should work both ways.'"

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