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NOTRE CONCOURS DE TRADUCTION :

(IIe série, No 2)

N D L R. De multiples raisons, dont la grippe asiatique, ont retardé la parution du JOURNAL II, 3, de sorte que la date limite fixée généreusement au 1er décembre, s'est trouvée en fait beaucoup trop rapprochée de la date de réception du numéro. Nous nous en excusons.

De ce fait, nous n'avons reçu qu'une copie, d'ailleurs anonyme, mais excellente. Si son auteur veut bien se faire connaître, il recevra le prix attribué à la meilleure traduction. Dans le cas présent, l'excellence de la traduction a été jugée par opposition aux copies du précédent concours. L'auteur du compte-rendu est Mr. Blake Hanna, professeur à la Section de Linguistique et à l'Institut de Traduction.

Voici d'abord la traduction proposée par notre lecteur inconnu :

GREAT DEVELOPMENTS IN THE YUKON

A subsidiary firm of the Frobisher Company has just made a close study of one of the most daring hydraulic and mining development projects of postwar Canada. The plans deal with the harnessing of the gigantic hydro-electric power of the Yukon tributaries in order to supply energy for the smelting and refining of copper, lead and zinc ores found along the Pacific coast. Three dams with a total capacity of 5 million horsepower are to be built at Teslin, Kluane and at the Chilkoot Pass, near the Alaska Road. The reduction plant will be installed along the coast, or at the mouth of the Takou River or in the deep recesses of the Lynn Fjord. The estimated cost of the completed installation ranges between 500 million and 2 billion dollars. Such figures point to the huge scale of the plans under survey.

¶ Comments :

The title chosen as a translation of "Grands travaux au Yukon"⁽¹⁾ is all the more fortunate a choice, since the word "development" seems to be applicable in English to anything that is not actually shrinking or withering away. The single translation proposed is singularly free of grammatical mistakes. It is rewarding to notice that no movement in defense of the English language in Canada seems called for at the present time. A criticism of this translation would therefore deal more with the question of stylistics than with that of grammar.

I might point out, however, that "la route de l'Alaska" is commonly referred to in English as the "Alaska Highway", rather than as the "Alaska Road". Likewise, an all-important comma in the French text has been disregarded, leading to a misinterpretation of the sentence, "L'usine... sera établie sur la côte, ou à l'embouchure du fleuve..., ou encore..." Replacing the comma reveals that only two alternatives are given in the French text, rather than three. The first "or" then becomes "either", and we have the following sentence : "The reduction plant will be installed along the coast, either at the mouth of the Takou River or in the deep recesses..."

¹ Cf. JdesT, II, 3 (1957) : 119.

Now for the question of the stylistics of the text. The word "fjord" takes me thousands of miles away, to Norway. A number of these words exist in English, each one associated with a certain locality. In addition to "fjord", which I associate with Norway, there is "firth", which seems to go with Scotland; "estuary", which conjures up a picture of England; and finally, "inlet", the American term. For a Canadian text, it might be better to use Lynn Inlet, were it not for the unfortunate assonance. I propose starting anew after the word "or" with something along the line of "...else farther up the inlet of the Lynn". The comparative is justified by the use of "mouth" in the previous clause.

Finally, the next to the last sentence presents a rather curious inverted transposition. A French noun is frequently transposed into an English verb. Here we have a French verb transposed into an English noun, something that does not often happen. It leads us into a seeming contradiction between "estimated" and "ranges". I wonder if it would not have been better to have foregone the temptation to transpose, and to translate in a straightforward (and businesslike) manner by: It is estimated that the completed installation will cost between 500 million and 2 billion dollars. The passive voice, and impersonal form, are characteristically English. "Travaux", a plural concept in French, almost invariably corresponds to a singular concept in the English-speaking mind.⁽²⁾

B. T. H



¶ Que faire des post-positions ? (Concours Ite série, No 3)

Voici une liste de phrases, relevées au hasard de lectures par M. Vincent Guilloton, professeur à Smith College, Northampton, et au cours d'été de français de Middlebury College, Vermont, — qui montrent à quel point les écrivains de langue anglaise font un large usage des post-positions. Comme le souligne justement un critique du *New York Times*, "the Greeks have words for a number of things but, as A. P. Herbert of *Punch* and Parliament has remarked, they have a neat trick of hitching on the front of words little gadgets that prodigiously enlarge the effective range of their language. Again, as Mr. Herbert says, we have a way of doing the same thing. But our trick is to trail little words of all work after our big ones. For example, a game hunter in Africa *shoots lions*, a bad man in a Western movie *shoots up a town*."

M. Guilloton nous propose donc de traduire ces phrases en français, en méditant auparavant, comme le veut André Gide, "les spécifiques vertus et qualités de chaque langue, ses résistances, ses réticences et ses refus." Il est probable que le nombre de ces phrases, qu'un simple coup d'oeil au journal du matin pourrait augmenter considérablement, fera reculer les plus téméraires. Nous suggérons que chacun s'essaie à telle ou telle phrase qui frappe son imagination et éveille des échos favorables; un essai de corrigé sera publié dans le numéro 1 du prochain volume, qui paraîtra en avril 1958. Date limite pour l'envoi des manuscrits: 15 mars 1958.

1. The herd stampeded past him.
2. The sheep had already pattered out of sight.
3. We horned the big truck aside.
4. She shrugged away the thought.
5. Undertaking such as those described cannot be shrugged off as isolated phenomena.
6. She danced her way into the hearts of the spectators.

² A propos du texte discuté par M. Vinay au numéro précédent, page 96, ligne 2, en réponse à la question "Would you care for something from the bar ? / Prendriez-vous une consommation ? ; it contains disposable diapers . . .", on pourrait proposer la réponse bilingue suivante : "No thanks, I hold my liquor rather well / Mais cette remarque ne s'applique sûrement pas aux gens qui boivent cul-sec".