

The Vitality of the English-Speaking Communities of Quebec: From Community Decline to Revival

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Preface

Richard Y. Bourhis

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« La démocratie ce n'est pas la dictature de la majorité, c'est le respect des minorités »

Albert Camus

The goal of this book is to provide a current portrait of the group vitality of the English-speaking Communities of Quebec. The enduring stereotype about the Anglophones of Quebec is that it is a pampered minority whose economic clout is such that federal or provincial support for the maintenance and development of its institutions is hardly necessary. This view of the privileged status of Quebec Anglos is widely held not only by the Francophone majority of Quebec but also by many leaders of Francophone communities across Canada. On the few occasions that Anglophones in the rest of Canada (ROC) spare a thought to the Anglophones of Quebec, either this idealised view of the community prevails, or they are portrayed as residents of a linguistic gulag whose rights are trampled on a regular and ongoing basis.

We cannot blame Francophone minorities outside Quebec for envying the institutional support and demographic vitality of the Anglophone minority of Quebec. Why should Francophone minorities outside Quebec feel they have to share precious federal resources with Quebec Anglophones who are doing so much better than themselves on the institutional support front? The first obvious response is that government support for official language minorities is not a zero-sum game and that evidence based needs should be sufficient to justify the maintenance and development of both Francophone and Anglophone communities in Canada and Quebec. The second complementary response is that the institutional support achieved by the Anglophones of Quebec during the last two centuries can be used as a benchmark goal for the further development of Francophone minorities across Canada. The combined efforts to maintain and develop the vitality of the Francophone communities outside Quebec and of the Anglophone minority within Quebec, contribute to the linguistic and cultural diversity of Canadian and Québécois societies.

But what is the current vitality of the English-speaking communities of Quebec? Taken together, the chapters in this book tell a sobering story about the decline of this historical national minority in Quebec. On the status, demographic and institutional support fronts, Quebec Anglophones are declining, especially in the regions of the province but also in the greater Montreal region. Though much of the chapters are devoted to documenting the ups and down of this decline, some effort is made in each chapter to propose options and strategies to improve and revive the vitality of the English-speaking communities of Quebec. We hope this book, along with past and future ones, will be used by Quebec Anglophones as a tool to develop their community vitality in the present and for the sake of future generations. It is also hoped that this book will inspire Quebec decision makers to pay more attention to the vitality needs of Quebec Anglophones, a minority community who contributed so much to the social, cultural and economic development of Quebec society.

Finally, a word of thanks is owed to all those who made this book possible. The editor and chapter contributors wish to thank in particular the following: the Canadian Institute for Research on Linguistic Minorities (CIRLM), the Quebec Community Group's Network (QCGN), the Department of Canadian Heritage, and the dedicated staff of the Centre d'études ethniques des universités montréalaises (CEETUM) at the Université de Montréal.

MULTIPLE VIEWS ON THE ENGLISH-SPEAKING COMMUNITIES OF QUEBEC

Introduction

This chapter offers a trio of views concerning the present and future prospects for the English-speaking communities of Quebec (ESCQ). We begin with a contribution from *Dr Victor C. Goldbloom* who was Canada's Commissioner of Official Languages from 1991 to 1999. His frank analysis of the current struggles of the Anglophone communities of Quebec nevertheless ends on a resolute message addressed to all the citizens of Quebec: "*We have helped shape the past and the present, and with courage and determination, we will help shape tomorrow as well*". This is followed by a critical analysis of relations between the Francophone majority and the Anglophone minorities of Quebec, viewed from the French perspective provided by *André Pratte*, Chief editorialist of the influential French daily newspaper 'La Presse'. This text is based on the talk presented by André Pratte at the first QCGN conference on the Anglophone Communities of Quebec that was held in February 2005 at the Université du Québec à Montréal. In his plenary talk entitled 'Bridging the two solitudes', André Pratte noted that Quebec Francophones and Anglophones still have difficulty understanding each other despite years of trying, and this, despite the fact that the two communities share so much in common.

This trio of views closes with an analysis of present and future prospects for the English-speaking communities of Quebec provided by *Graham Fraser*, the current Commissioner of Official Languages. Building on his recent volume entitled "*Sorry, I don't speak French: Confronting the Canadian crisis that won't go away*", Graham Fraser is forced to acknowledge the more contentious language climate in Quebec during the last few years. However he offers constructive avenues for the development of the English-Speaking Communities of the province emphasizing the special efforts needed to help young bilingual Anglophones find their place in Quebec society. (Note from the editor).

THE ROAD AHEAD :THE ENGLISH SPEAKING COMMUNITIES OF QUEBEC

Victor C. Goldbloom

Commissioner of Official Languages, 1991-1999

“We are not the enemy and it is time we stopped being perceived as such”

Quote of the week, The Gazette, Montreal, Sunday, March 2, 2008
Victor Goldbloom speaking at the conference on the
English-speaking communities of Quebec at the Université de Montréal

Three decades have gone by since the Parti Québécois first came to power, causing existential anxiety in Quebec’s English-speaking communities and changing the linguistic equilibrium within our province. A significant number of people, especially younger ones, felt their future threatened, and some chose to seek career opportunities elsewhere. Community demographics declined, and average ages rose. No one’s crystal ball showed an encouraging prospect.

Today, the picture is somewhat more positive. Linguistic tensions have lessened, the PQ’s Bill 101, now the Charter of the French Language, has largely become a part of the landscape, and English-speaking participation in Quebec society is growing.

Life in English is not without problems, however, and the Quebec Community Groups Network devotes itself to diagnosing them and responding to them. The thirty-year-old debate between the confrontational, litigational approach and that of dialogue and negotiation is less intense but has not entirely subsided. The road ahead has its curves and its potholes.

Developed societies have lower birth rates than developing ones. Ours has for decades been well below replacement level, and this is true of all of Quebec’s population, although less so for certain immigrant communities. Incentives have been offered from time to time, but without significant success. Inter-provincial migration is a loss factor

for Quebec, and international immigration, while by no means negligible, is not sufficient to prevent our province from slowly shrinking as a percentage of the Canadian total.

Quebec’s English-speaking communities have been prevented from reinforcing their numbers by the channelling of students from elsewhere to the French-language school system. Efforts to obtain a more equitable balance – a small shift would have helped the Anglophone side considerably while making a very small dent in Francophone enrolments – have had virtually no success. The painful closing of schools has become inevitable.

Notwithstanding all of the above, the English-speaking communities of Quebec are vigorous and productive. The resistance of times past – “They’re not going to shove French down my throat!” – has faded away. The ability to function in French – and the comfort level in doing so – have become quite remarkable. Not that long ago, two-language capability was largely limited to those, for example lawyers, whose daily professional life required it. Today, the fluency level and the comfort level in all the strata of the English-speaking community are impressive.

Despite this individual competence, concern about the survival of English-language institutions persists in the province. The loss of the Sherbrooke Hospital, of Jeffery Hale’s Hospital in Quebec City, of the Reddy Memorial and the

Queen Elizabeth hospitals in Montreal has diminished the historic vitality of the community. However, in Montreal, through great community mobilisation and support, the Queen Elizabeth has achieved a new lease on life as an ambulatory health care centre and an adjunct to the McGill University Health Centre (MUHC). And so, with the remaining hospitals which it created, funded and managed itself, generations of English speaking health professionals continue to look after their patients regardless of language, race, colour or creed.

As the community-based, privately funded institutions of the past have been absorbed into the public sector, our communities have waged an ongoing struggle to ensure that accessibility to services and communications in English would be maintained. Whereas complaints have not been overwhelming in numbers, the struggle continues and constant vigilance is required.

The individual feels at a disadvantage vis-à-vis a state bureaucracy, and in his or her sense of community, counts on collective strategy and collective action. When the political philosophy of Quebec dramatically changed in November of 1976, the English-speaking community, recognizing that it would continue permanently to be an integral part of Quebec society despite the exodus which was going on, created new structures to defend and advance its interests. The Positive Action Committee came into being, and at about the same time a group of young adults under the name of Participation Quebec. A little while later, they came together to form Alliance Quebec.

Alliance Quebec did an impressive, constructive job and strove to bring the mainland and island communities together. It could not win every battle against the nationalistic tide, and the time came when a more confrontational and litigious element gained supremacy. The Equality Party had its brief day in the sun, and then the spokespersonship for the communities became less clearly identifiable. Today, the Quebec Community Groups Network (QCGN) carries the torch.

What does the future hold? The birth rate is unlikely to increase, and the existential anxiety of Quebec's French-speaking majority, an isolated minority in the sea of English-speaking North America, is a permanent phenomenon with which we shall continue to contend and to which we must provide fraternal understanding and support. We have learned to do so.

Our ability to survive, to maintain our historic identity while participating fully in Quebec society, will vary from one region to another. But as each successive generation takes the reins of leadership and contributes its eloquence to the common good, we will continue to make our contributions known and our presence felt. We have helped shape the past and the present, and with courage, courtesy and determination, we will help shape tomorrow as well.

BRIDGING THE TWO SOLITUDES¹

André Pratte
Chief Editorialist, La Presse

There needs to be a new dialogue in Quebec between anglophones and francophones. But this new dialogue will not bear fruit unless a new leadership emerges to speak for the English community. Many things have changed in Quebec in the last 40 years, and those changes have deeply affected both our communities and their relationship. Still, for ordinary citizens (as opposed to the elites), that relationship is, in many regions and milieux, one of two solitudes.

Today, many francophones still have few significant contacts with anglophones. What they know of English-speaking Quebec is what their teachers and parents have told them, what they have learned in history courses and on television. Unfortunately, much of that is negative.

I know, poll results from the CROP-Missisquoi survey indicate otherwise. So maybe my perception is totally off the mark. But when I read that on the island of Montreal, 60 per cent of people interviewed said they have close friendships with anglophones, I am very skeptical. All I can say is this is not my experience, and it is not the experience of most people I know. The solitudes might have more contacts with each other; the old animosity might not be there anymore; but solitudes there still are.

Most of that is perfectly normal; people of all cultures tend to stay mostly within their own group. I'm stating these facts not because I find

them worrying as such, but because acknowledging and understanding them is crucial to the success of the dialogue we want to renew. For that dialogue to be successful, we have to start from a realistic assessment of how English-speaking Quebec is perceived by French speaking Quebec. That perception is of a minority, yes. But of a privileged and threatening, not threatened, minority.

Of course, francophones represent over 80 per cent of Quebec's population. Of course, since Bill 101, more and more immigrants have taken French as their second language. But French speakers still feel their language, their culture is threatened. Why? Because English is everywhere! Look at the signs: Future Shop, Krispy Creme, Home Depot. Look at the movies, listen to the songs: Anglo-American culture dominates the world, for better or for worse. And in Quebec, that means it is still difficult to buy a computer with a French-language keyboard, or a French-language computer game.

Of course, Quebec anglophones are not responsible for this situation. But the dominant position of English in the world makes it difficult for francophone Quebecers to believe Quebec anglophones are a threatened minority. Most francophones ask: How can you say you're a threatened minority, when your language is spoken and sung everywhere around you? You have English schools, English universities, soon a major new English hospital, English TV stations and the Internet?

¹ This article appeared in The Gazette, Montreal, Sunday, March 6, 2005. These are edited excerpts from a speech by André Pratte delivered at the first research conference on the English-speaking communities of Quebec held at the Université du Québec à Montréal on Feb. 25, 2005.

Personally, I see the concerns anglophones express for the future of your community in a different light. I see it as a proof of love for Quebec. Sure, you might have all the TV programs you need in your own language. But you want more, need more than programs coming from New York or Toronto. You want programs that reflect who you are. And you are Québécois.

But let's try to understand Quebec francophone thinking. Of course, French is stronger in Quebec today than it ever has been except when this territory was called New France. But Quebec itself is getting demographically weaker and weaker. In 1966, Quebec's population represented 29 per cent of Canada's. Twenty years later, 1986, that was down to 26 per cent. In 1996, it was 24.5 per cent; in 2004, it was 23.6 per cent and still declining.

In 2050, Canada will have 37 million inhabitants. Quebec will have fewer than 8 million. Of that, 6.5 million will be francophones. The population of francophones outside Quebec will continue to dwindle. Today, 40 per cent of Ontarians who have French as their mother tongue speak mostly English at home. In Manitoba: 55 per cent. There is a word for their situation: assimilation.

In 2050, the United States will have 408 million people. And France's population will be falling. So French might be healthy inside Quebec's boat, but the boat itself is sinking. Dealing with the French-language majority in Quebec without taking this situation into account will be very difficult. Let me give you an example. Many anglophones believe one solution to the decrease of the English-school population in Quebec is to amend the Charter of the French Language so some immigrants will be permitted to attend English schools. That will not happen.

Why is it not possible? Because both the English and French populations of Quebec are declining and the only way to maintain the province's population is through immigration. But the North

American environment makes English extraordinarily attractive for any immigrant arriving in Quebec. Even with Bill 101 in force for nearly 30 years, the 2001 census showed that there were still more allophones who adopted English as their language of use at home than there were who adopted French. In trying to attract immigrants to your ranks - if I can put it that way - you have a powerful tool: the domination of the English language on the continent and, indeed, in the whole world. French Canadians do not have the equivalent of that, and never will. They have only one tool: the law.

The power of attraction of English is revealed by the fact that of all allophone kids who have a right to attend English schools in Quebec, 94 per cent do so. In a society where French is the official language and where 83 per cent of people are francophones, wouldn't you expect a larger percentage of allophones to choose French, even though the law gives them the right to send their kids to an English school, to choose a French school?

As you know, the decrease in enrolment in English schools in Quebec has practically stopped in the last few years. In fact, in the last five years, enrolment has slightly increased, by 5,000 for primary and secondary schools. That increase is mostly due to young French speakers attending English schools, probably kids of mixed marriages. French schools, in contrast, have continued to see the number of their pupils decrease, by 31,000.

But there are many other aspects of our communities' prosperity on which we can work together. Language proficiency, in French and English, for example. Better schools. Better health services. A more vibrant economy. One common challenge is the survival of Quebec's regions. Life is getting more and more difficult for English-speaking communities in the Gaspé. But this is not unique to the anglophones: The whole of the Gaspé is in agony. Surely, this is something we can work on together.

I know how sensitive the issue of services in English in the health and social-services sector is. It is not an easy issue, politically. But we could find solutions more readily if more francophones understood what kinds of difficulties Quebec anglophones, senior people in particular, face. That will take an effort on both our parts to learn about each other.

The major common challenge we have is trying to keep young anglophones from migrating to other provinces. Too few francophones today realize how tragic it is, all the intelligence and creativity Quebec as a whole loses each time an anglophone leaves for Ontario or Alberta. When the 2001 census numbers came out, there was barely any mention in the francophone media of the fact again, from 1996 to 2001, our net loss of anglophones was 29,000. That would fill a Bell Centre and a half. What use is it to spend so much effort and money to attract immigrants if, meanwhile, people who were born and raised in Quebec are leaving?

To get francophones to better understand Anglophone needs and goals, we - I say we, because I know many francophones are willing to work with you - need to have them know and understand English Quebec better. But the anglophone community needs spokespeople who will be seen on TV, participate in debates, be heard and found credible by governments and the francophone population.

Twenty years ago, there was Alliance Quebec. But who speaks for anglophones today? Here is an indication of the current leadership problem. There was a time when French journalists always knew who to call when an issue came up in the news concerning English Quebec. They don't know who to call anymore. Either they don't call anymore, or they call someone who speaks loudly but is not representative. The effect is this: English speaking Quebec has gradually slipped off the French media's radar screens.

There is a long road ahead of us toward the renewal of dialogue. But, looking at the tremendous work that has been done by the Quebec Community Groups Network - I suggest you should eventually find a more catchy name - I feel very optimistic we can move forward. If only the political agenda does not bring sovereignty on the front burner.

Unfortunately, that could come in the short term. But if it doesn't, a more constant and fruitful dialogue between English and French Quebecers, the presence of a dynamic English leadership committed to Quebec, will tend to increase French Canadians' level of comfort in Canada and therefore, diminish the appeal of sovereignty.

QUEBEC'S ENGLISH-SPEAKING COMMUNITY: ADAPTING TO A NEW SOCIAL CONTEXT

Graham Fraser

Commissioner of Official Languages

Community revitalization is an entirely appropriate theme for this conference. Not because the English-speaking community lacks energy—there is an abundance of signs it remains a strong force in Quebec—but rather to address changes in the community. New energy needs to flow into critical areas. Quebec society went through a rapid transformation over the last 50 years, and the English-speaking community adapted. Now the community must respond to new demographic and social challenges.

Adapting to a new social context

To say that the last 15 months have seen renewed interest in the Quebec language debate is an understatement. Only the Habs' recent winning streak was able to get language off the front page of Montréal's daily newspapers.

I like debates on important issues. I always welcome a constructive exchange of views on language, a fundamental issue, within Quebec and across Canada. It is not something that will simply go away—and sweeping it under the rug is dangerous.

But the way this debate has been framed in Quebec over the last 15 months has not always been constructive. Between calls for stricter language laws and soul-searching about the meaning of “nous,” Quebec politicians seem uncomfortable with the recent succession of language uproars. Even matter-of-fact statements about the usefulness of speaking more than one language generate week-long media storms.

The positive side of this is that there has been a disconnect between that public debate—which has sometimes been raucous and rancorous—and the way Quebecers of different language groups actually interact.

For this debate is happening while the English-speaking community tackles a whole new set of demographic, cultural and economic challenges. It puts you in the position of a pole-vaulting athlete who suddenly realizes the crossbar is two feet higher than an instant earlier. Your challenges are difficult enough without the rules changing while you are in mid-stride.

My humble view is that while the current social climate is discouraging, it opens the door to dialogue and cooperation. It certainly helps that your community is more than ever engaged and active in Quebec society.

During the Bouchard-Taylor Commission hearings, I was struck by the number of members of your community who stood up and addressed the room in either language. These people were speaking as Quebecers, as full participants in the debate on identity, rather than as outsiders. This is how the English-speaking community will overcome its challenges: by framing them as part of the future of Quebec.

You've done it successfully before. The recent history of Quebec's English-speaking community is really a success story of adapting to a new sociolinguistic environment. English-speaking Quebecers have long accepted the general goal of the *Charte de la langue française*. While your community defends its rights when needed, the

emphasis is on adaptation rather than confrontation.

Few French-speaking Quebecers realize that the French immersion movement originated in the English-speaking school system of Quebec in the early '60s. The English-speaking minority took concrete steps, through its education system, to ensure its members could continue to function and contribute to this changing society. In hindsight, the French immersion experiment was not only the start of a very important phenomenon in Canadian education, but also the sign of the English-speaking community's energy and adaptability.

Your linguistic efforts to participate fully in Quebec society continue today. As Université de Montréal Professor Patricia Lamarre observed,¹ Quebec's English-language school boards continue to find innovative ways of teaching French. Through a wide range of different programs, the vast majority of students in English-language schools spends more time learning French than what is demanded by the Ministère de l'Éducation du Québec.

The result is that 69 percent of English-language Quebecers can also converse in French, according to the latest census data. This is much higher than the average bilingualism rate of 50 percent in Europe. In fact, it is comparable to many countries known for their multilingualism, such as Belgium, and of course much higher than France or the United Kingdom.² Among young people, bilingualism exceeds 80 percent in Quebec's English-speaking community.

Your community does not get enough credit for this. Quebecers must realize that the image of a

hostile, unilingual West Island peddled by some columnists and open-line radio hosts is an outdated myth. Today's community is bilingual, well integrated and very diverse. It takes an interest in the vitality of French in Quebec—hence the appointment of Sylvia Martin-Laforge to the Conseil supérieur de la langue française.

This is reflected in Quebec's French-language population, also strongly bilingual and multilingual. I have said repeatedly that Canada's language policies do not mean that all Canadians have to be bilingual. But it is not surprising that individuals are discovering and enjoying the opportunities that come with speaking other languages. For societies such as ours, with so much to share with the world, individual bilingualism is a major asset, not a cultural threat.

Likewise, a strong English-speaking minority is an asset to Quebec. English-speaking Quebecers continue to make an important contribution to Quebec society—in the arts, sciences, economy and public services. This contribution is made visible through the community's great institutions, some of which have made their mark on Quebec and Canadian history.

Despite an aging population in Quebec, its 350 schools and adult learning centres still educate more than 100,000 children. Your schools are important centres of innovation and vitality for the community, taking full opportunity of Quebec's linguistic and cultural richness.

McGill, Concordia and Bishop's, and many other public institutions, also represent the community's contribution to the development of Quebec society. The Centaur, Blue Metropolis and the

¹ Lamarre, Patricia, "L'enseignement du français dans le réseau scolaire anglophone: à la recherche du bilinguisme," in *Le français au Québec : les nouveaux défis*, Éditions Fides, 2005, p. 553–568.

² European Commission, Special Eurobarometer 237-Wave 63.4. A total of 71 percent of respondents in Belgium say they can "participate in a conversation in a language other than their mother tongue," which is essentially the same question as the Statistics Canada census question. The numbers for France and the United Kingdom are 45 and 30 percent, respectively.

Quebec Writers' Federation are cultural assets for all Quebecers. These are institutions created by the English-speaking community, not given to them, a fact that is too often overlooked in the heat of language debate.

The vitality of such institutions makes them natural breeding grounds for community leaders, although many come from municipal councils. I am glad to see a revitalized QCGN bringing many of these people together. The current challenges are too complex to be dealt with in isolation. A concerted effort from the community's various components is essential.

I would also argue that the contribution of the English-speaking community manifests itself in more discreet ways. For instance, your community has always taken advantage of diversity. Waves of newcomers using English as their first Canadian language have found support and opportunities within the community. This continued diversification contributed to the emergence of Montréal as one of the great multicultural and bilingual cities of the world, with its own unique character. As *Executive Travel Magazine* puts it, Montrealers "not only strive to make a living, but also perfect the art of living well."³

Tomorrow's English-speaking community

I have no doubt the English-speaking community will continue to make its mark in Quebec and Canadian society. Saying this is more than an act of faith. It is recognition that the community has all the essential elements to overcome the challenges it faces. It also comes from a confidence in the resourcefulness of our young people.

Complex identities are commonplace these days, especially in Canada's official language

communities. But as young people define their place in the world, language will always be a central element of individual and collective identity.

As I already noted, your community's youth are bilingual in proportions exceeding 80 percent. This is a sure sign that young generations are not about to embark on a mass migration to Toronto.

They might, however, be thinking about moving to Montréal, a trend which is not unique to English-speaking Quebecers. Urbanization is a worldwide phenomenon. But measures can and should be taken to mitigate the impact on smaller communities throughout the province, which have both a rich history and significant potential. I am glad to see this reflected in the QCGN's submission to Bernard Lord,⁴ who is advising the government on the next phase of the *Action Plan for Official Languages*. The development of better videoconferencing and distance education can certainly help.

Many of you told me that helping young people find opportunities in their own local communities is critical for the future. Youth is identified by your communities as a priority area in all three case studies we are currently undertaking in the Lower North Shore, Eastern Townships and Québec City. We undertook similar studies in French-language communities across the country. They found the results useful as a tool to better focus key community development activities. When we publish the case studies from Quebec's English-speaking communities this summer, I hope you will find the results just as useful.

One element of these community studies is the relationship between community members and their institutions. Vibrant institutions are important factors of community vitality. From our previous experience, we can see that building and maintaining the capacity of institutions is an

³ Glassman, Paul, "Le Montréal magnifique," *Travel Executive Magazine*, <http://www.executivetravelmagazine.com/page/Montreal?t=anon>, November 2005.

⁴ Quebec Community Groups Network, *Promoting French and English in Canadian Society and Furthering the Development of French and English Minority-Language Communities*, December 2007.

important factor to community development. I expect the next phase of the *Action Plan for Official Languages* to help communities do just that—in the same way the first Action Plan made great strides in health care for English-speaking Quebecers, for instance.

The federal government must remain an important partner in community development. It must not act alone, however. Progress often requires cooperation from various levels of government and an examination of similar experiences elsewhere. In this spirit, federal institutions must work with the Quebec government toward joint initiatives with the English-speaking community. The joint efforts in health care can be used as a blueprint for action in other sectors.

The benefits of cooperation also apply to communication with French-speaking communities. In Winnipeg, a French-language multi-service centre was set up in partnership with the federal, provincial and municipal governments to offer a variety of services under one roof. Linguistic minority communities, both French- and English-speaking, are now realizing the importance of such partnerships to their vitality.

We should not stop there. I encourage both communities to build bridges to one another, to work together. You will soon find that each can offer support in a number of ways. As I mentioned earlier, youth have been identified as a priority for English-speaking minority communities. Why not establish stronger ties with universities and other institutions in minority French-language communities to give them greater access to education and cultural resources? By welcoming them to your community, French-speaking youth can also benefit greatly.

Quebec's English-speaking community continues to be at the forefront of the dialogue on linguistic duality. Your youth are the most bilingual in the country. Your culture continues to thrive, with internationally recognized artists and authors. Your educational institutions continue to survive, attracting students from all over Canada and the world.

And yet, you must work to keep the momentum.

You can count on my support every step of the way.

The Authors

GRAHAM FRASER, Commissioner of Official Languages. A well-known and respected journalist and author with close to 40 years of journalistic experience, Mr. Fraser was educated at the University of Toronto, where he earned a Bachelor of Arts and Master of Arts in History. Prior to his appointment as Commissioner of Official Languages, Mr. Fraser has reported in both official languages on issues affecting Canada and Canadians, including cultural and foreign policy; constitutional debates and negotiations; and national, provincial and international politics. Mr. Fraser is the author of *Sorry I Don't Speak French*, which was published in March 2006, and which has helped stimulate renewed public discussion of language policy in Canada. He is also the author of *PQ: René Lévesque and the Parti Québécois in Power*, which dealt with Quebec language policy and which was nominated for a Governor General's Award for Non Fiction in 1984.

VICTOR C. GOLDBLOOM. Born and educated in Montreal, he graduated in 1945 from McGill University and became a paediatrician. He practised and taught his specialty for many years, and was actively involved in the Quebec Association of Pediatricians, the Quebec Medical Association and the Canadian Medical Association. In 1962 he was elected a Governor of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Quebec. In 1966 he was elected to Quebec's National Assembly, where he served through 1979. He was Quebec's first Minister of the Environment, and later Minister of Municipal Affairs and Minister Responsible for the Olympic Installations Board. From 1982 to 1990 he was President of the International Council of Christians and Jews. He is now founding president of Christian-Jewish Relations Canada and of L'Amitié judéo-musulmane du Québec. From 1991 to 1999, he was Canada's fourth Commissioner of Official Languages. He presently chairs the board of the Health and Social Services Agency of Montreal. He is a founding director (1981) of the Jules and Paul-Émile Léger Foundation, was its president from 2000 to 2003, and is now its Honorary President. He is president of Canadian Jewish Congress, Quebec Region, and of Jewish Immigrant Aid Services of Montreal. Victor Goldbloom holds honorary degrees from five Canadian universities: Toronto, McGill, Concordia, Ottawa and Sainte-Anne. He is a *Companion of the Order of Canada* and an Officer of the *Ordre national du Québec*.

ANDRÉ PRATTE. Journalist for over twenty-five years, André Pratte began his career with the *Télémedia* radio network where he worked as Ottawa correspondent and assistant-director of news. Mr. Pratte joined *La Presse* in 1986 where he has worked as a columnist, director of political news, and was named chief editorialist in May of 2001. He is author of the following six books: *Le Syndrome de Pinocchio*, a work on truth in political discourse, *L'enigme Charest*, a biography of Quebec Premier Jean Charest, *Les Oiseaux de malheur*, a study on modern media, *Le Temps des Girouettes*, on the 2003 Quebec provincial electoral campaign, and *Aux pays des merveilles*, an essay on myths and realities in Quebec politics. In 2007, André Pratte edited a book entitled *Reconquérir le Canada – Une nouveau projet pour la nation Québécoise* which includes contributions from 14 prominent political and intellectual figures dealing with federalism and a redefinition of the role of Quebec within Canada. André Pratte is also signatory of the manifesto *Pour un Québec lucide*. Published in 2005, this work was published by a dozen Quebec personalities including former Premier Lucien Bouchard.