

AQ Urges all Democrats to Fight to Restore Freedom of Expression and Respect for Diversity in Quebec

Montreal, Wednesday May 17, 2000 - Louise Beaudoin has proven once more that her Anglophobic fanaticism has no bounds. As reported today in *Le Devoir*, Ms Beaudoin reveals her intention to use municipal mergers as a means of removing the bilingual status of municipalities on the Island of Montreal.

She is reported as saying that Montreal island must become a “strong symbol” that Quebec is French - in other words, that its English dimension must be hidden and denied. A means of achieving this, she said, is to have mergers of municipalities on the island, where at present 14 municipalities have bilingual status. With mergers that would absorb the bilingual municipalities into a majority French-speaking municipality, the bilingual municipalities would lose the status that now gives them limited rights to put up bilingual signs, including the name of the municipality, to send out bilingual mailings to the residents, and to hire people for some positions though they are not fluent in French.

Without the bilingual status, only those who specifically request it can have notices sent to them in English. All signs must be in French only, and all municipal employees must be fluent in French.

Beaudoin gave as justification the supposed need to absorb immigrants into the French-speaking community.

“We are going to need more and more immigrants, and we don’t succeed now in integrating 30,000 immigrants. One of the reasons is that 75% of them are on the island of Montreal where there are fewer and fewer francophones. I am trying to find the ways to bring it about.”

She plans two changes to the Charter of the French Language, according to the report. The first would confer bilingual status on a municipality in future only if more than 50 per cent of the residents speak English - and not just another language than French. The second amendment would give the Office de la langue française more powers to restrict job postings that demand competence in a language other than French.

The intention of the Government is clear: gradual, progressive dismantling of all English-language and bilingual institutions. Citizens must unite to fight off this threat. The municipalities must mobilize their residents against the government’s threat of forced mergers which will wipe out the history, the character and the protection of our

bilingual municipalities. The language-of-work law must be taken to court. The steamroller must be stopped. The anglophobic bulldozer must be resisted.

Ultimately, we must win in the courts against the authoritarian and repressive vision that is being imposed on all of Quebec. We urge all democrats to join Alliance Quebec and to raise funds for the appeals to the court which, ultimately, will be the only potent and effective means to restore freedom of expression and respect for diversity in Quebec.