

Canada's new official languages plan: will it help in Quebec?

Montreal, Wednesday March 12, 2003 – Alliance Quebec President Brent Tyler questions how Canada's new official language plan will help English-speaking people in Quebec.

“How much of that \$751 million that Ottawa made available for the promotion of official language minorities will be available in Quebec?” Mr. Tyler asked after the federal plan was announced.

The plan, for example, refers to funds to encourage immigrants to integrate into French minority language communities.

“How does the Canadian government plan to help English-speaking immigrants join our community in Quebec?” Mr. Tyler asked.

Both the francophone communities outside Quebec and this province's English-speaking minority are in decline, Mr. Tyler noted.

Francophones outside Quebec are threatened with assimilation while anglophones in Quebec face an increasing exodus and provincial government legislation that limits access to English-language schools and services.

Mr. Tyler praised measures aimed at supporting English-speaking communities in Quebec outside the Montreal area.

“But there's a major gap here,” he said. “Eighty-five per cent of our community lives in the Montreal area.”

“This plan is a beginning,” Mr. Tyler said. “But it calls for accountability from provincial governments for the way they treat their minorities and Quebec certainly won't agree.”

“It also seems to suggest that linguistic duality should prevail everywhere in Canada but Quebec.”