

# Johnson wants to end SSJB-M sponsorship of Fête Nationale celebrations

**Montreal, June 25, 1998** --- Alliance Quebec President William Johnson called today for Premier Lucien Bouchard to end the sponsorship of the June 24 Fête Nationale festivities by the Société Saint-Jean Baptiste de Montréal, the Mouvement national du Québec, and other extremist groups, such as Impératif français.

"If you are in good faith, Mr. Premier, you will see the incongruity of allowing a group that is opposed to the rights of English-speaking Quebecers in charge of a parade where the English-speaking are invited to take part. The incident yesterday is inexcusable in a family festivity. The SSJBM must take its share of responsibility for mishandling my offer to participate in the parade.

Also inexcusable was the explicitly secessionist message communicated strongly at different times during the evening concert, such as the entire discours patriotique delivered by Julien Poulin - a paean to le grand jour (qui) va se lever and the call of Raul Duguay, Vive le Québec souverain!

The president of CBC, Perrin Beattie, must re-examine why Radio-Canada broadcasts in its entirety a concert that, year after year, constitutes an incitement to secession.

Johnson calls on all opinion leaders to draw the lessons from yesterday's events: the intimidation, the physical attempts to stop Johnson from marching, the increasingly threatening tone of the demonstrators which led the police to remove Johnson physically from the parade.

"My right to free speech was violated by this activity," Mr. Johnson stated. Some of the media, today, blamed Johnson for the intimidation that took place rather than denounce this thuggish behaviors, unacceptable in a free and democratic society. I hope opinion leaders will reflect on the implications and call for more mutual tolerance and respect. The days when people in Quebec were excommunicated for having unpopular opinions are over. But excommunication and ostracism can take more than one form: we saw excommunication at the parade yesterday.

Mr. Johnson's comments were made at a news conference in Montreal today.