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SIGNS CASE VICTORY

The Quebec Superior Court has ruled that bilingual commercial signs are once again legal in the province of Quebec.

On Dec. 28, Mr. Justice Pierre Boudreault ruled in favour of five Montreal area merchants in their Alliance Quebec-sponsored court challenge to the unilingual signs provisions of Bill 101.

Mr. Justice Boudreault agreed with Alliance Quebec lawyers, Allan Hilton and Harvey Yarosky, who had argued that the provisions of the law prohibiting the use of bilingual signs contravene the guarantees of freedom of expression found in the Quebec Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

The Judge ruled that the government could require the use of French on all commercial signs, but could not prohibit the use of any other languages at the same time. Mr. Justice Boudreault also noted that because the Quebec government has systematically opted out of the federal Charter of Rights, the courts are inclined to give the Quebec Charter as broad an interpretation as possible in order to ensure that Quebecers enjoy the same rights as other Canadians.

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Following the court decision, Alliance Quebec released the results of a SORE-COM poll, showing 74% of French-speaking and 89% of English-speaking Quebecers believe businesses should have the right to post bilingual signs, confirming that public opinion supports the decision.

Alliance Quebec has promised the five merchants all necessary support and assistance in the Quebec government's appeal of the signs ruling.

LINGUISTIC ACCESS TO SOCIAL SERVICES

For the first time, the Minister of Social Affairs has publicly acknowledged the principle that English-speaking Quebecers have the right to receive social services in their own language.

Following a Jan. 16 meeting with Alliance Quebec, Social Affairs Minister Guy Chevrette made a statement supporting the right to service in one's own language, but was less clear in terms of recognizing the right of the English-speaking community to control and manage its own institutions.

Alliance Quebec had requested the meeting with the Minister to make known the English-speaking community's concern about the possible effects of the planned reorganizations on access to social services. Alliance Quebec feels a solid basis for future negotiation was established as a result of this first meeting with the Minister. However, much remains to be done, particularly concerning recognition of the network of English-language social service institutions and also in ensuring that the Minister's statement is translated into action.

That process has already begun with negotiations between Alliance Quebec Chapters and Associations and the various Regional Councils (CRSSS's) to ensure that the principle of linguistic access to social services becomes a reality in all areas of the province.

CONVENTION '85 PREVIEW

It may be only February, but planning is already well underway for the 1985 Alliance Quebec Convention.

The Convention Committee is pleased to announce the selection of John Abbott College on the MacDonald campus in Ste-Anne-de-Bellevue as the site for Convention '85, which will take place from May 31 to June 2, 1985.

The members of the Convention Committee, including Hugh Mitchell, Marylee Kelley, Craig Berger, Sue Taylor, Peter Turner and Miriam Green, along with staff organizers, will begin a tour of Chapters and Associations in the middle of February to solicit input and ideas in order to make this the best Convention yet.

The Monthly Report will bring you up-to-date as Convention time approaches, keeping you informed of the work of the Convention Committee.

ACTIVITIES IN CHAPTERS AND ASSOCIATIONS

St. Laurent Chapter held a local health services seminar Jan. 28 at St. Andrew's-Norwood United Church. This seminar was organized by the chapter as a public service to all residents of St. Laurent, Cartierville and New Bordeaux. Guest panelists included Jean-Pierre Massicotte, Director General of the Centre hospitalier de St-Laurent and Dr. Claude Farah-Lajoie of Sacré-Coeur Hospital. Over 100 members of the chapter and the general public were in attendance. Board member Al Gamble acted as moderator and Health and Social Services Committee Vice-chairperson Ruth Costin gave an overview of the committee's activities over the past year. Chapter Chairperson Helen McLellan thanked the guest panelists whose presentations provoked many interesting questions.

The Chapter will sponsor a seminar Sat., Feb. 9, from 9 a.m. to 12 noon at St. Andrew's-Norwood United Church, 1600 de l'Eglise (corner Cardinal) in St. Laurent. The topic is the Régimes pédagogiques, the new programs of study and organization approved by the Ministry of Education. The purpose of the seminar is to provide accurate and up-to-date information on what the Régimes will mean to local schools. Sylvia Chesterman, Director of Institutional Services for the English Sector of the MCSC, will be the main speaker. School committee members, administrative staff and teachers of the area's 14 English-language elementary and secondary schools have been invited to participate. Newly appointed Education Committee Chairperson Denise Arrey and Committee member Jean Brookes are co-ordinating the seminar.

In other news, the Chapter welcomes new board member Kathleen Coleman, and bids a fond farewell to former Communications Committee Chairperson Stephen Cross, who has moved to Toronto.

St. Maurice Valley Chapter's Health and Social Services Committee has published a glossary of terms for English-speaking residents which has been distributed in local health and social service institutions, as well as community schools and churches.

The Chapter's Communications Committee has printed a series of information cards which lists local English community groups for out-of-towners. These cards have been distributed at the local Chamber of Commerce and at other public information points. The Committee will publish the first issue of the St. Maurice Valley newsletter in February. The newsletter will provide information on Alliance Quebec and will give a focus for community activities.

The South-West Chapter will hold a public meeting Sun., Feb. 10 at 2:30 p.m. at St. Thomas More Parish Hall (corner Bannantyne and Moffat). Michael Goldbloom, Vice-President of Alliance Quebec, will speak on the recent decision by Superior Court overruling the unilingual signs provisions of Bill 101 and will relate this to the Chapter's own signs campaign.

East Island Chapter's Employment and Business Committee held career nights at Rosemount H.S. and Lester B. Pearson H.S. on Jan. 24 and 31 respectively. Tom Mulcair, Legal Affairs Director at Alliance Quebec, spoke on being a lawyer in Quebec. Future sessions are scheduled in the areas of advertising, civil service and parapublic sector employment and scientific research.

In other news, the Committee is lobbying Hydro Québec to provide an English version of its public service brochure, 'En Cas de Panne', which outlines what to do in the case of a power shortage; and is requesting that the City of St. Leonard provide an English version of its billboard alerting citizens to the dangers of drinking while driving, which is entitled, 'Alcool au Volant...A St-Léonard...On intervient parce qu'on vous aime...Vivant!'

In other chapter news, Clarence Bayne, Executive Director of the Black Theatre Workshop, is the special guest speaker at the Chapter's next board meeting.

Townshippers' Association held another Job Opportunities workshop in Richmond on Jan. 19. Kevan Durrell, Programme Co-ordinator, led a session on 'Effective Job Search Techniques', covering résumé writing and interview strategies. An additional presentation was made to 70 members of the graduating class of Richmond Reg. H.S. on Jan. 30. A grant application has been made through the federal government's International Youth Year Programme to hold similar workshops throughout the Townships.

The Health and Social Services Committee has launched two 30-page directories for senior citizens in the Waterloo and Sherbrooke-Lennoxville areas. In the latter area, a first run of 1,000 copies has already been exhausted.

The Association continues to lobby the provincial government to issue an English version of Le Guide des Aînés, a guide to services for senior citizens.

Finally, the Association presented the findings of its study on demography to the Commission de la culture in Quebec City on Feb. 5.

C.V.E.S.P.A. will host the official opening of its new office in the Huntingdon Federal Bldg. on Feb. 11. Bob Layton, MP for Lachine, who is Minister of State for Mines and is the federal MP who holds the portfolio for English Quebec affairs, will be guest speaker. Local MPs, MNAs and other dignitaries will also attend.

The board held a budget and planning conference Jan. 4, 5, & 6 at the seminary in St-Anicet. An initiative which arose out of the conference is an inventory of employers (i.e. manufacturers) in southwest Quebec which will be generated with CVESPA's new micro-computer. This inventory will be launched at a seminar for the unemployed which is in the planning stages.

The Association will hold a local information meeting Feb. 19 at the United Church Hall in Hemmingford, 482 Frontier St. This meeting will feature a special presentation on CLSCs and an NFB film on how Americans perceive Canadians. Another meeting will be held Feb. 21 at the Huntingdon CLSC building, 163 Châteauguay St. The purpose of this meeting is to help parents plan for a bilingual summer day camp.

Laval/North Shore Chapter held a board meeting Jan. 28. Graeme Decarie, of Concordia University's Centre for the Study of Anglophone Quebec, gave an exposé on local history. Present as well was Liberal MNA Lise Bacon who informed chapter members that funds would be made available for translation of the provincial government booklet on CLSCs, "Bottin des ressources de Laval".

The Chapter wishes to congratulate Chapter and AQ Provincial Board member Janice Napp-Marchand on the birth, Jan. 11, of her son, Bryan Kenneth, who weighed in at 7 lbs, 8 oz.

Côte St. Luc/Hampstead/Snowdon W. Chapter will hold a public meeting March 4 at the Davis Branch of the YM/YWHA, 5700 Kellert, Côte St. Luc. Tom Mulcair, AQ Employment/Business and Legal Affairs Director, and John Parisella, Quebec representative of the Commissioner of Official Languages, will speak on current developments in the language law as they relate to the individual citizen.

The Chapter is pleased to announce the appointment of Elisabeth Colson as Employment/Business Committee Chairperson at a board meeting Jan. 22. The Chapter also extends a welcome to new board member Neil Drabkin. Congratulations go to AQ member Lily Katofsky who was elected Jan. 13 to the advisory committee of the Côte St. Luc/Hampstead CLSC.

TMR/Outremont/Côte-des-Neiges/Snowdon East Chapter has, in the New Year, contacted 32 community organizations as part of its efforts of community outreach. The purpose of these contacts is two-fold: 1) to explain the role of the Chapter to local groups; and 2) to offer speakers to these groups. The Chapter will also conduct a membership drive in the months of February and March.

South Shore Chapter held a public meeting Jan. 30 at Centennial Reg. H.S. on the topic of health and social services. Representatives from CLSC St-Hubert and CSS Richelieu gave an overview of services on the South Shore.

Saguenay Chapter will hold a public meeting Tues., Feb. 19 at the Club de la Direction in Jonquière. Russell Williams, AQ Programme Director for Health and Social Services, will speak on the provincial government social service reorganization plans and how they will affect service delivery to English-speaking area residents.

Upper Laurentians Chapter was recently granted status as a socio-economic group by the Regional Council for Health and Social Services. This means that when an election comes up for a position on the board of directors of any CLSC in the chapter area, the chapter will be able to submit nominations of English-speaking representatives.

C.A.S.A. will sponsor a Theatre New Brunswick Young Company Tour in elementary and secondary schools throughout the Gaspé coast. On March 2, C.A.S.A. will sponsor a local talent show, featuring regional talent, at New Carlisle H.S. and at the New Carlisle Winter Festival. In other news, a regional committee has been formed to work on a Gaspesian Heritage Foundation. More on this committee at a future date.

PROGRAMME ACTIVITIES

EMPLOYMENT, BUSINESS AND LEGAL AFFAIRS PROGRAMME

Signs Case Follow-Up

It was announced on Feb. 4 that the appeal of the successful bilingual signs case will be heard in the Quebec Court of Appeal consecutively with the 'Alan Singer' case (which dealt with unilingual English signs and which lost in Superior Court). This means the same bench, or panel of judges, will hear the cases one after the other. The appeals will likely be heard in September of this year.

The Work Group on Bilingual Signs and Information, chaired by Craig Berger, board member for St. Laurent Chapter, is following up the Boudreault signs decision in a number of ways. Businesses have already been informed of the decision and its implications. The Work Group is also putting the final touches on an information package about public health and safety signs for distribution to Alliance Quebec Chapters and Associations. The Work Group will meet Feb. 13 to step up a letter writing campaign aimed at getting increased government services in English from both federal and provincial government agencies. To date, targets for the campaign have included Petro-Canada, the federal oil company which has been remiss in its use of bilingual signs and information in Quebec.

EDUCATION PROGRAMME

Education Workshop

An Education Programme workshop was held Feb. 2 and the day-long session featured reviews of all the dossiers in the programme area: French Second-Language, Adult Education, Local History, Eligibility for English-language schools, the English-speaking Parents' Network, and the Régimes pédagogiques. The session also included discussion of how Chapters could follow up on local activities.

French Second-Language Task Force

The Task Force, in conjunction with Canadian Parents for French, is organizing a conference on French Second Language issues, tentatively scheduled for early May. The conference will be aimed primarily at parents and community groups.

Rural Education

A workshop for rural Chapter and Association representatives was held Feb. 1. The workshop participants discussed a questionnaire prepared by a Work Group, designed to identify educational issues in rural communities.

Local History

The Local History Work Group is now in the process of seeking funding from private and public sources in order to proceed with a number of activities this spring, including a conference and a journal focussing on the history of the English-speaking community in Quebec.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES PROGRAMME

Region 6-A Task Force

The Task Force continues to gear up for the public campaign on the Island of Montreal to raise public awareness of the need for guarantees of accessibility to social services for all Quebecers and recognition of English-language social service institutions. Radio ads will be aired, beginning in early Feb., in both French and English on Montreal radio stations.

Region 6-C Task Force

The Task Force met on Fri., Jan. 25 with representatives of the Regional Council of Montréal to discuss the "partage", and will meet again in the near future with the Implementation Team from the Regional Council. Members of the Task Force attending the Jan. 25 meeting were: Acting Chairperson Elizabeth Kater, Cynthia Belisle, Marylee Kelley, Dianne Allison and Eric Scott.

H&SS Seminar

The Health and Social Services Programme will hold a seminar on the weekend of March 8 and 9. The seminar will include sessions on the public campaign, board representation for institutions, and demographic studies. The Provincial Committee is open to suggestions for other topics of interest to be included in the seminar.

CLSC News

Congratulations to Lily Katofsky, elected to the advisory committee of CLSC-Côte St. Luc and also to Maria Wichers who has been named Chairperson of the advisory committee of H3W.

COMMENT IN THE FRENCH PRESS

The recent Superior Court Judgement favoring bilingual signs has been celebrated by some as a triumph of individual liberty and minority rights and mourned by others as part of the gradual erosion of Québec's language Charter. Editorialists in the French press, while recognizing the need for some of the Charter's provisions, greeted the judgement on bilingual signs as sensible without threatening Québec's French-speaking community.

Roger Bellefeuille in Le Soleil, Jan. 4, writes that "in spite of its original noble objectives (making French the language of state and law, as well as the normal language of education, communication, commerce and business) Bill 101's meddlesome, inquisitive application has put it out of touch with reality and left it open to strong and justifiable criticism." Mr. Bellefeuille goes on to describe unilingual sign laws as "myopic and unrealistic". In summing up, Mr. Bellefeuille questions just how valid are the fears created in some circles by the court ruling. "One's attachment to a language and its protection goes much further than 'chien chaud - hot dog' or 'stop - arrêt'. It is more a rigorous affirmation of one's social, economic and cultural identity and not a paranoid quarantine of one's minorities."

In Le Devoir, Jan. 4, Lise Bissonnette examines the long history of the signs debate culminating in the Boudreault judgement. This last decision, according to Ms. Bissonnette, supports what many (including Judge Dugas in 1982 and the Human Rights Commission in 1983) have been saying, that *"the government can stipulate the use of a language (like French) for public communication, but does not have the right to outlaw the use of all other languages."* With respect to the progress which has been made over the years, Ms. Bissonnette believes that *"consensus in Quebec today is inclining towards a compromise."*

Two editorials from La Presse dated Jan. 4 and 10, say that bilingual signs will pose no threat to the French fact in Quebec. Marcel Adam writes that despite the assertions of many nationalists, *"Montreal is not a homogeneous society like Toronto"* and that a law forcing unilingual French signs is like *"masking reality."* Mr. Adam suggests that rather than pursue merchants who post bilingual signs, a more practical application of the law in commercial circles might be to improve the quality of French-language instructions in commercial products. Michel Roy's editorial advises that, despite differing opinion, one must recognize the judgement as *"marking the victory of rights and liberties over a useless and vexating article of the French-language Charter towards the anglophone minority in Quebec."* After exploring the various recourses open to the government in dealing with the judgement, Mr. Roy hopes that whatever course they choose, they *"listen to the voice of reason, justice and realism."*

THE SUNDAY EXPRESS

The English-speaking community of Quebec has lost yet another voice with the death of the Montreal-based weekly newspaper, The Sunday Express.

The paper folded due to financial difficulties after publishing for the last time on Jan. 20. The loss of The Sunday Express leaves the community with two daily newspapers, The Gazette and The Sherbrooke Record, serving the print-media market throughout the province.

The loss of The Sunday Express also deprives Alliance Quebec of a regular forum. Since September, Alliance Quebec had been contributing a weekly column to the Express. Appearing on the op-ed page, the column gave AQ the opportunity to get our viewpoint across on all the issues the organization is involved in.

The Communications Programme staff would like to take this opportunity to thank those volunteers who put time and effort into producing the AQ column over the last five months, with very special thanks to Michael Sheldon.

AQ IN BRIEF

Community Liaison Animator Sophia Skiadas left the organization at the end of January. The entire staff of the Alliance wishes her well in her future endeavours. Alliance Quebec also bids farewell to Executive Secretary Diane Moisan. Suzanne Korf is the new Executive Secretary and will also retain some of her responsibilities in the Employment, Business and Legal Affairs Programme.
