



Commission scolaire English-Montréal

English Montreal School Board

**An Independent Report  
of the  
History Experts Committee  
on the provincial  
History of Québec and Canada Program  
and  
Approved English Textbooks**

October 2018

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## Executive Summary

In September 2017, the Ministry of Education implemented a revised Secondary III and IV compulsory History of Québec and Canada program. This program raised a number of issues that became of concern to the English Montreal School Board (EMSB). Given these concerns, the EMSB commissioned an independent History Experts Committee to review the content of this program as well as the Ministry-approved English-language textbooks.

The following is a summary of the findings of this Committee:

### The Program: The History of Québec and Canada

- The program focuses narrowly on the experience of and events pertaining to the French *Canadiens/Québécois*, from contact until the present day. It pays too little attention to other Canadian content.
- Nationalism further narrows the focus, as it is not addressed as part of a larger phenomenon having its roots in Europe in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century.
- Although the program encourages a “constructivist” approach to history, it inculcates students with a particular view and identity. Therefore, students are not taught to see the complexities of history and exercise their critical thinking skills.
- The program is driven by a particular view of the past and its connection to a specific vision of the present and future. Such an approach does not support the liberalism which the program upholds as a hallmark of 21st century Québec.
- For all the coverage of the Indigenous peoples, of the Inuit, of women, there are no insights into their versions of Québec. Those who identify with Irish, Jewish, Italian, Haitian, Greek, Portuguese or with other ethnic, cultural or racial minorities, also seem to have no perspectives on Quebec history and identity.

- The shortcomings in the textbooks are in large part the result of the limitations that are evident in the program.
- The student textbooks have been developed to restore a chronological, “national” narrative to the curriculum, and the narrative through which history is viewed is Québec, not Canada.
- The decision to devote an entire year of study to the period before 1840 leaves little room for discussion of the role played by the Anglophone communities in Quebec’s history.
- The narrative of the textbooks suffers frequently from too much content as well as a lack of context. And, much of this narrative is open to interpretation.
- There are many examples of presentism; that is, studying the past by applying contemporary principles, attitudes, experiences, etc. This undermines the study of history.
- As in the program, there is but one ideological bent in the textbooks rather than a more objective approach or an attempt to explain history from various ideological perspectives. This limits the students’ interpretation and understanding of historical developments.
- With the emphasis on Quebec, there is a significant number of important Canadian topics that have been omitted from the textbooks. These omissions contribute to the lack of context and limit students’ understanding of the History of Quebec and Canada.
- The Indigenous throughout are presented as ‘other’ and antagonists, rather than original inhabitants whose place was colonized by outsiders, and whose own history became inextricably linked to the history of Quebec and Canada.
- There is no development of Black history, which dates back to the French regime, and the issues of Black and Aboriginal slavery are conspicuous by their absence.
- Women are relegated to a few sidebars or disconnected paragraphs in both textbooks.
- There is no indication that immigration transformed Montreal into a complex multi-cultural city. There is virtually no discussion of the Irish cultures of Montreal or Quebec. The arrival of thousands of Jewish immigrants and the creation of new Jewish community institutions is an important story, totally neglected in the text. Other ethnic and religious immigrants are also barely mentioned.

## Introduction and Background

In 2013, the Québec Ministry of Education proposed to revise the Secondary III and IV History program. After a review of the perceived deficiencies of the 2006 program, the Ministry proposed a new approach with “a more continuous, robust narrative” be introduced using the “nation” as “the framework within which these various threads are woven.” The framework for this proposed program was published in a consultation document entitled, *For the Reinforcement of the Teaching of Québec History in Elementary and Secondary School*, dated November 2013 and a short consultation period followed.

From October 2013 to April 2014 Jacques Beauchemin, an Associate Deputy Minister of Immigration and the then Interim President of the *Office de la langue française* along with Nadia Fahmy-Eid, a retired professor of history from the *Université du Québec à Montréal* engaged in a consultation process with twenty-three “participants” and accepted “briefs” from seventy-five individuals or associations, in both English and French.

A Final Report to the Minister of Education, entitled *The Meaning of History: Towards the Rethinking of the History and Citizenship program in Secondary III and IV*, published in May 2014, proposed the development of a new history program. This report advanced the ideas expressed in the *Consultation Document* and provided the outline for the new program which was based on a two year chronological framework. While the “national issue” remained the main focus of the report there was reference to the need to “highlight the contribution, diversity and development of the various ethnic and cultural groups” and include “a more balanced view of the First Nations”. All of this was to take place “within the national framework which was structured around Québec’s distinct history”.

The program was drafted and the Ministry collected feedback from various provincial committees, including a scientific committee comprised of historians that validated the content and an advisory committee comprised of pedagogues that focused on the pedagogical approach but also provided feedback on the content. From September 2015 to June 2017 the new history program was piloted in approximately thirty secondary schools, including three in the English sector, and more feedback was collected from these schools.

The program became compulsory and was fully implemented in all Quebec secondary schools in September 2017. Although some pedagogical improvements were made to the new program, individuals and associations from the English community still have many of the same concerns that were raised during the consultation process.

Given these concerns, the English Montreal School Board (EMSB) formed an independent History Experts Committee in June 2018 to review the official program as well as the English-language

textbooks that have been approved by the Ministry of Education. The mandate of this committee was to identify historical statements that are factually incorrect, identify historical inferences that are open to interpretation and identify significant historical events which have been omitted from the program and the textbooks, as well as the contributions made to this province by the Anglophone, Allophone and Indigenous communities. This composite report is submitted in fulfillment of the mandate of the History Experts Committee and will also address other aspects of the program deemed to be problematic.

### Composition of the History Experts' Committee

The following members of the History Experts Committee submitted an independent review of the program and textbooks:

- Terry Copp, PhD, is a Professor Emeritus of History at Wilfrid Laurier University and the Director of the Laurier Centre for Military and Strategic Disarmament Studies.
- Jennifer Lonergan, PhD, is a Canadian historian and the Executive Director of the Montreal-based organization Artistri Sud.
- John Zucchi, PhD, is a Professor of History at McGill University and past Senior Editor with McGill-Queen's University Press.

This report is a summary of these three experts' reviews, and it has been approved by these experts.

Jon Bradley, PhD, retired Associate Professor of Education at McGill University, advised the committee and assisted in the preparation of this report.

Tino Bordonaro, MA, the Secondary Social Sciences Consultant at the EMSB, chaired the committee and prepared this report, based exclusively on the experts' feedback.

Additional support was provided by Alessandra Furfaro, Director of Educational and Technology Services at the EMSB.

The EMSB values the opinion of our learners therefore a Secondary 5 student, having just experienced the two-year program, was invited to participate in this committee. On this student's volition, a letter was submitted to the committee outlining this student's concerns with the program. This letter has been appended to this report.

## The Program: The History of Quebec and Canada

1. The History of Québec and Canada program is a curious document. There is certainly a great deal of coverage in the Program, including historical facts, events, details and key social, political and economic developments. This can be a strength for the student if well contextualized but alienating if not.
2. In general, the Quebec and Canada history program as presented in the documents provided to the committee focuses narrowly on the experience of and events pertaining to the ethnic/linguistic/cultural group of French Québécois from contact until the present day. There is a missed opportunity in the program to illustrate the manner in which historians such as Francois-Xavier Garneau, Augustin Thierry, and Lionel Groulx shaped the way of presenting the history of Canada (and Quebec), for it is into this long-standing trend of French and later French Québécois historiography that the current curriculum fits.
3. This problem with the Program (and therefore also with the textbooks) is that it is ostensibly a “history of Québec and Canada,” but it is ultimately a “history of Québec”. Canada comes up only inasmuch as it has any impact on Québec. This has a double disadvantage. The title of the Program is misleading. Secondly, the approach leaves significant historical questions that also impact Québec, on the sidelines. For example, early explorers of the continent are touched on briefly and there are cursory mentions of Hudson’s Bay Company and the North West Company, but the reader is left with the impression that in the area currently known as Canada, French settlers alone were living and evolving until *La Conquête*. Little about the rest of Canada makes its way into the narrative, and this omission also weakens the narrative with a lack of perspective and context. Furthermore, the basic decision to divide the two year program at 1840 and the concentration on “The Modernization of Quebec and the Quiet Revolution” in the last third of the Secondary IV program further emphasizes the focus on Quebec.
4. Nationalism, too, is another striking example of a historical phenomenon which can only be accurately understood as part of a larger phenomenon having its roots in Europe in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century. It did not have its origins in the new world, as is very nearly implied by the lack of meaningful context, and its existence and drive toward a modern-day nation state is not inevitable, as also implied.
5. From a pedagogical perspective, there are serious problems with the Program. The aim of the program is “the construction of a world view, the construction of identity,” etc. This is left ambiguous: to the student’s view, or referring to the view of a program that wishes to

From here on the paragraphs in this report have been numbered to facilitate referencing.

inculcate students with a particular view and identity? The details of the program would seem to suggest the latter.

6. Students are not taught to see the complexities of history in this Program. Every phenomenon seems to have an immediate cause, or two, or three. Rarely is there a broad contextual discussion to situate the historical or social phenomena. To give one example: the program and textbook inform that missionaries showed up in New France in the seventeenth century. The Church is an important cultural power and the administrators of the colony have to deal with the Church. However, the Protestant and Catholic Reformations have no mention in the textbook or in the program. Was this not a vital context for what was happening religiously and culturally in New France? This is also a major problem in the textbooks in that beyond mercantilism and colonial rule, there is little reference to the international context in which Canada – and Québec – found themselves throughout their respective histories.
7. The Program alludes to history as a “scientific discipline,” to the importance of “historical thinking,” “critical analysis,” and the “historical method.” Rightfully, the Program document refers to the vital importance of the classroom as a place where different approaches and different versions of history can be discussed. This assumes that teachers delivering the program have actually specialized in the discipline of history. That most teachers of history in English language schools have not done an undergraduate degree in history poses a serious problem.
8. The History program will not deepen the students’ curiosity regarding historical questions or problems. True, the students are taught about basic structures and key transformations in Quebec’s past. But the students learn very little about what it means to “do” history. They don’t learn about the significance of primary sources, how they are recognized, assessed, and interpreted. As there is usually only one interpretation of the past in the program, students are not taught to understand the variety of perspectives on historical phenomena. Without that, students are unable to begin to assess and critique various historical perspectives. In university, they can begin to read articles and monographs and pick out those perspectives, but in high school adolescents should at least understand that there is more than one way to understand the past. This is what makes history interesting for them.
9. Students will not be interested in history if they are not truly taught to think about history and the historian’s craft in a more meaningful way. Indeed, we have seen a waning of interest in history among students entering university in the last decade. Since the reader in this case is a secondary student who will be in the process of developing analytical and other cognitive skills required to interpret historical events, it is all the more pertinent to be transparent.



10. The learning of history requires interpreting facts and drawing conclusions about their meaning and significance. It is not possible to include all facts in a historical narrative—some must be deemed irrelevant or, at least, less meaningful or significant. Therefore, it is inevitable that some historical events will be omitted, and some historical inferences open to interpretation.
11. The practice of ‘doing’ history requires the historian (and students of history) to subject themselves to the rigorous interpretation of historical events and ask themselves:
- What is the purpose of framing the facts in this way?
  - How transparent am I being about presenting a particular interpretation?
  - How rigorously have I examined or laid bare my biases?
  - To what extent is the reader likely or equipped to arrive at a different understanding of the meaning of the facts—or to recognize my interpretation for what it is, namely, one of many possible interpretations of the facts?
- This is not encouraged in this program because it presents a more deterministic approach to history
12. In other words, the program does not effectively support the development of critical thinking, which is essential in order to understand history. Rather, it presents a particular interpretation which is taken for granted to be correct, with no questions being actively raised within the topics as to its objectivity. Indeed, rather than presenting history as a discipline which strives for objectivity, and using the history of Quebec and Canada as a vehicle for training students in the competencies needed to ‘do’ history; such as, weighing evidence, avoiding bias, considering cause and effect, using reason, avoiding presentism, etc., the program presents a subjective narrative which tends to be anachronistic and prescriptive, in that it seeks to fit historical ‘facts’ into a nationalist narrative which has as its objective a nationalist narrative in function of a Québécois nation-state ideology. Thus students are meant to be incentivised to focus the exercise of their civic duty in the service of that objective.
13. Given that a secondary purpose of the program is to guide participation in civic affairs, the lack of development of critical thinking skills is particularly lamentable. In effect, a particular view of Quebec history is presented, and students are not encouraged to use the tools of history to grapple with the nature or character of that narrative. In effect, the unquestioned narrative forms the basis for eventual social participation. As the history curriculum provides students with a version of Quebec history which sees the ‘Québécois nation’ on a direct road to ethnic-statehood, arguably since the moment of French contact, and that an objective of the history curriculum is to serve as an impetus for civic participation, it follows that students can be expected to perform their civic duty on the basis of this narrative. The logical outcome is that students will emerge as citizens who will contribute to the particular end of nation-

statehood of Quebec. Thus, the 'evangelical' effort to instill 'a kind of civic morality' is directed at a particular outcome, rather than at a more general effort to foster the tendency to be active participants in civic life.

14. The program is driven by a particular view of the past and its connection to a particular vision of the present and future. The program follows a pedantic approach to history; a teleological one. Students are to be convinced that the key events, social phenomena, the choice of chronological periods have led to a particular understanding of where Quebec society has arrived and what its identity is meant to be. The problem with such an approach is that it does not support the liberalism which the program upholds as a hallmark of 21<sup>st</sup> century Québec. There is a single version of history, a single identity, and a single narrative. There is no mention of the fact that Québec is a diverse society and that as such there are other views regarding Quebec's identity and thus what is important in its history.
15. For all the coverage of the Indigenous people, of the Inuit, of women, there are no insights into their versions of Québec. Those who identify with Jewish or Italian or Haitian ethnicity, or with any ethnic, cultural or racial minorities, also seem to have no perspectives on Quebec history and identity. Students will inevitably become bored with such an approach because it is simplistic and does not look at the complexities that make history interesting. Furthermore, students who are unable to identify with the ideology behind the narrative will feel disconnected from the illustrated narrative.

## The Textbooks: Reflections.qc.ca

16. The shortcomings in the textbooks are in large part the result of the limitations that are evident in the program. A comparison of the topics covered in both books, the only authorized English textbooks suggest that the four authors of *Reflections* have followed the outline in the Program with minor additions none of which relate to the history or experience of the Anglophone or Allophone communities in Québec.

### ***Text book clarification:***

There are two mandatory student textbooks, both entitled Reflection.qc.ca: one for secondary III and the other for secondary IV. These books are a direct translation from an original French language text and are indicated in this Report as (#1 – *Reflections.qc.ca: Origins to 1840*) and (#2 – *Reflections.qc.ca: 1840 to Our Times*).

17. It is evident that the program, as represented by the student textbooks, *Reflections.qc.ca* have been developed to restore a chronological, “national” narrative to the curriculum. The national framework through which history is viewed, the nation-space, is Québec, not Canada and the focus throughout is on French-speaking Québécois and their “collective adventure”. As a consequence the role of the Canadian government as well as the activities of non-Francophones in Quebec are frequently ignored or viewed in relation to the development of the Québécois nation.
18. The decision to devote an entire year of study to the period before 1840 leaves little room for discussion of the role played by the Anglophone community in Quebec’s history. The narrative is based on a series of declarative statements about the period 1600 to 1840 that students are to learn for exam purposes.
19. The narrative of the textbooks suffer frequently from too much content as well as a lack of context. The content is detailed and quite staggering for students. It becomes difficult for them to see the forest for the trees. Furthermore, the lack of context makes it difficult for students to distinguish the less important facts from the more significant ones. It seems that events large and small are given almost equal space. For example, the chapters covering 1840-1899 as well as 1850-1867 offer a straight forward series of paragraphs on events with scant reference to the particular circumstances of Québec and its minority. There is no real analysis of the challenges presented by the BNA Act, no reference to Section 133, defining language rights and no discussion of the process that led to the final version of Section 93, the basis of minority educational rights before 1997.

20. As in the program, much of the narrative is not open to interpretation. If the objective of history is to help students to develop historical thinking skills that involve distancing themselves from the past and using a method of critical analysis, the opportunity to develop these skills is not practiced rigorously in the textbooks. Instead, it appears that the authors of the textbooks have decided that students do not need to understand the role historians play in historical enquiry so there is no discussion of the conflicting interpretations which have done so much to energize research into the colonial period.
21. For example, if students were introduced to H.A. Innis and the staple theory of economic growth, the material on the fur trade and the timber and wheat staples could be understood and integrated into a more meaningful narrative. Also, introducing Donald Creighton's *Commercial Empire of the St. Lawrence* would allow the role of the "Montrealers" French and English to be better understood. The omission of the contributions of Louise Dechêne, Fernand Ouellet, Jean-Pierre Wallot, not to mention the classic *Université de Montréal* "school", the bedrock of nationalist historiography, denies students the opportunity to join in a debate over the meaning of the past.
22. The Indigenous throughout are presented as 'other' and antagonists, rather than human beings whose place was colonized by outsiders, and whose own history became inextricably linked to the history of Quebec and Canada. French colonizers are generally portrayed as benevolent allies, gently 'familiarizing' indigenous peoples with their way of life, in the hopes that they would adapt this way of life and be 'willing to convert to Catholicism' freely; whereas, reference to any of the more problematic aspects of French settling of the regions, such as the effects of diseases, weapons, alcohol, tensions with Jesuits, etc. France's imperialist aims and the fact of its sovereignty over indigenous lands and assimilation plans are downplayed. Aboriginal peoples play but a minor role in the text, as supporters and allies of the French. For example, Donnacona is accorded about 100 words in a sidebar (#1, page 47).
23. Further contributing to the impression of the singularity of the French presence on the continent is the treatment of New France beyond modern-day Quebec. There are a number of maps and minor exercises which indicate the geographical extent of New France, (#1, pages 85-89, for example), but again, the treatment of these areas is minimal and disjointed.
24. There are glaring examples of presentism: the introduction to *Conquest and Change of Empire* reads: "Two official languages coexist in Quebec and Canada today: French and English. This coexistence dates back to the days following the Conquest of 1760, when Francophones and Anglophones began to live together in the territory of what was previously New France." (#1, page 138). Or again in Chapter 4, "Today, some Quebecers feel a sense of belonging to the Quebec nation...Already in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, this sense of belonging to a

nation had created a divide within colonial society.” (#1, page 192). This manner of setting the stage for interpreting historical events through the lens of the present undermines students’ understanding of the past.

25. At the same time, the broader context of the battle for hegemony of European powers is lacking, such that the reader would not be faulted for concluding that what is now Quebec was the starting point or the *raison d’être* for directions taken in the political, social and economic arenas, rather than one of the theatres where larger power struggles were playing out. The context provided is strangely anachronistic and disjointed, rendering it difficult to understand. One result is that the Conquest seems rather startling, as the larger European context is lacking. The lack of an integrated narrative including the larger European interests is both a missed opportunity for establishing cause and effect, as well as a misrepresentation of the facts.
26. As in the historical traditions of a bygone era of historiography, the activities of women are relegated to a few sidebars or disconnected paragraphs in both texts, though the secondary IV text does accord them more attention. However, the lack of integration of women into a cohesive narrative is problematic on many levels, and constitutes a significant misrepresentation of the period. The tradition of identifying a few individual women, such as Marie-Anne Barbel or Laura Secord (#1, page 213), who supported men in carrying out their endeavours is no longer considered best practice. Women in Quebec and Canada played relevant social, economic and political roles throughout our history, but they are marginalized in the textbooks. There are nowadays quite a few respectable examples of histories which present a more integrated treatment of women in their narrative and may be instructive in this regard.
27. As in the program, there is but one ideological bent in the textbooks rather than a more objective approach or an attempt to explain history from various ideological perspectives. For example, economic and social developments are presented through a Marxist lens, using Marxist terminology, without any contextualizing or defining of terms. As the ideology is not presented or examined, the views expressed which reflect this world view can easily be taken by the reader to be correct, rather than one way of making sense of social, economic and political events. While the reader infers that the merchant classes are a homogeneous group of rather exploitative “Anglophones”, they became wealthy through the labour of those who made up the working class. The ethnic and linguistic background of the labourers in the factories or on large construction projects is not discussed. It would be important to let students know that this is one way and not the only way to understand economic history and the history of labour. The periodization comes from the neo-Marxist history of the 1970s and early 1980s. Students should understand the logic behind this periodization. This is part of the problem of an absence of historiographical discussions in the textbooks.

28. Within the framework selected by the authors, some attention is paid to the Anglophone role in the post-conquest period. However, it is regrettable that there is no reference to John Nielson, the Quebec City printer, bookseller and moderate political leader. Students and teachers would benefit from reading the entry in the *Dictionary of Canadian Biography (DCB)* on line at [www.biographi.ca](http://www.biographi.ca) on Nielson who did so much to bridge the gap between *Canadien* and Canadian. Other biographies in the *DCB* that provide welcome depth and complexity include Robert (physician) and Wolfred (mayor of Montreal, 1854-1856) Nelson, brothers and patriot leaders, as well as Daniel Tracey (journalist) and Edmund O’Callaghan (physician), the most prominent Irish radicals. The *DCB* entries for virtually all the individuals mentioned in the text are also of interest and can provide depth. This section (#2, chapter 1) ought to also provide an opportunity to consider the settlement of the Eastern Townships and perhaps mention the existence of the Maritime colonies and Newfoundland, but both topics are ignored.
29. There is no reference to Alexander Tilloch Galt, the spokesman for English-speaking Quebec who was instrumental in negotiating Section 93 on the BNA Act. Galt was also the leading advocate for the Grand Trunk Railway and much else. As the Member of Parliament from Sherbrooke, he represented what was then the majority English-speaking population of the city and the Eastern Townships. There is an excellent *DCB* biography that examines his career, something both teachers and students should use to balance the approach of the text.
30. The sections on industrialization (#2, pages 56-65) largely neglect developments in Montreal thus avoiding the reality that as late as 1871 almost half of the population spoke English as their first language. The role of the English-speaking community in creating much of the Victorian economy and built heritage is only understandable if one knows the demography of the city in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. The text also ignores the very large Irish Catholic population in the city and fails to mention the contributions of D’Arcy McGee who advocated for a “new nationality” and was assassinated for his opposition to Fenianism. McGee is a person who would greatly interest students and his *DCB* biography provides an excellent introduction to both McGee and the Montreal Irish.
31. There are, of course, a very large number of other individuals who shaped the Victorian city and province. Sir William Macdonald who established his tobacco empire employing low wage largely French Canadian labour, offers a case study of capitalism at work. Macdonald’s fortune was used in much the same way as that of Andrew Carnegie to fund educational institutions. His estrangement from the Catholic Church and indeed all organized religions, accounts for the concentration of his philanthropy on McGill University which he saw as a secular institution which could become Canada’s M.I.T.

32. During the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, McGill was Canada's and Québec's leading university producing most of Canada's engineers and scientists. It is hardly mentioned in the text. A reference to Ernest Rutherford's Nobel Prize research at McGill and the achievements of students such as Harriet Brooks (biography in *DCB*) who obtained a Master's Degree in nuclear physics and worked with Rutherford might interest and challenge students.
33. "The Transformation of Society at the Beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century" (#2, pages 140-153) describes a world inhabited by French-speaking Canadians without reference to the third of the population of Montreal that was not part of that community. The brief section on the Education system (#2, page 148) lists Francophone initiatives but there is no mention of Macdonald College (1907) a far more significant research institution for agriculture. The section Women's Struggles (#2, pages 149-151) mentions the Anglophone Montreal Suffrage Association but otherwise presents the issue as between French Canadians.
34. There is virtually no discussion of the Irish cultures of Montreal or Quebec. Other than a "Take Note!" inset regarding typhus and Grosse Île (#2, page 74), there is no narrative dealing with the second largest ethnic community in the province in the nineteenth century!
35. The discussion of the beginning of industrialization and the conditions faced by the working class provides an opportunity to consider the influx of Irish immigrants, their critical role in infrastructure development and their generally poor living conditions. But in this case, the lives and contribution of these workers and their families is scarcely touched upon, without reference to their national or ethnic or linguistic background. The discussion about the growth of the business classes presents an opportunity to talk about the contributions of other groups of immigrants and their important work both in the business and banking spheres as well as in philanthropy and civic engagement, including the founding of the first universities, but this context is not provided in the text.
36. There should also be mention somewhere that the settlement of the American West opened up opportunities for Canadian settlement as well. The broader international context in which Canada strived to attract immigrants – in competition with Brazil, Argentina, the United States, Australia, and New Zealand – needs to be mentioned.
37. There is no indication that immigration transformed Montreal into a complex multi-cultural city in the Laurier era. The arrival of thousands of Jewish immigrants, fleeing the pogroms of Czarist Russia and the creation of new Jewish community institutions is an important story, totally neglected in the text. There may be some passing references to Jewish figures (Leonard Cohen, #2, page 335) but no reference to the vibrant Jewish cultures of Montreal which had significant influence on the rest of Canada and the United States as well (and beyond). Francophone (Sephardic) Jews are not noted at all.



38. Canada's sad record on keeping out Jews in the 1930s is not mentioned and there is no reference to xenophobia or blatant anti-Semitism among French and English-language Canadians in Québec.
39. The difficulties of Jews to find a home in the public schools systems or to establish their own publicly funded schools, in the 1900-1930 period is not addressed. The 1903 agreement to regard Jews as "Honorary Protestants" for school purposes is surely necessary to explain why the "Protestant" schools become the principal means of assimilating Jews and Orthodox Christians to the English-language community.
40. The development of the English-language section of the Montreal Catholic School Commission also requires discussion. English-language schools for Irish and later Italian Roman Catholics developed because the French Canadian Church "consistently chose cultural isolation... to protect their flock from... Irish Catholic 'compromise'" (William F. Ryan S.J., *The Clergy and Economic Growth in Quebec 1896-1914*) and the possible use of English in the school yard.
41. The story of the growth and development of the Italian-Canadian population of Montreal is entirely neglected in the current textbook as if the nearly 300,000 citizens of Italian origin do not exist. During the Laurier era, the increase in immigration from Italy and the change from "sojourners" or temporary workers to a family-based community occurred. By 1914, the two Italian parishes Mont Carmel and Notre Dame de la Defense were well established. There is no word about the Saint Léonard riots (which has to do with the Italian immigrant's political battles and not their culture). They, like the British and French, had their own sense of nationalism in the Quebec milieu.
42. The discussion of migration in the 1950s period is deficient. The text states that 20,000 to 30,000 immigrants a year entered Canada and a few nationalities are named. No discussion of the significant development of accepting refugees and Displaced Persons (DPs) from Central and Eastern Europe after World War Two; including Hungary after the 1956 revolution. These many and varied immigrants became part of the fabric of Montreal. Immigration to Canada hit a high of 280,000 in 1957, a postwar record for over 40 years. For example, Italian immigration overtook British immigration in 1959, which helps to explain the growing presence of Italian immigrants in Montreal (including new neighbourhoods) as well as other parts of Quebec and Canada.
43. Immigration in the last 30 years has had an important impact on the cultural, political and economic scene of Quebec and Canada, but this topic is scarcely covered. Indeed, the contribution of many different ethnic and cultural groups over the last century to Quebec and Canada are overlooked. There is some discussion of changes to immigration and immigration



policy but no comparison to Canadian immigration policy (#2, pages 240 & 241), the discussion around racial discrimination in immigration of the 1960s, etc.

44. Greek, Portuguese, Haitian and other immigrants are also barely mentioned. These vibrant communities have no coverage. The Haitians have slightly more coverage but there is no discussion of the significance of this community and its vicissitudes from the 1960s to the 1980s. Although the Federal Government's immigration "points" system of 1967 comes up (#2, page 241), the new communities that ensue from the new "colour-blind" criteria – visible minorities, seem to have no place in this text. None of these communities are examined for their place in the economy, work place, enterprise, and union movements.
45. There seems little point in listing all that is left out. The scale of the problem can be illustrated by noting what is in the text that relates to Anglophones and Allophones. The text (#2) allocates one paragraph to "New Arrivals and Cultural Communities" estimating that 400,000 immigrants settled in Québec between 1946 and 1960. There is no further material on the immigrants or their role in the province until Part 3, "Quebec society in the 1960s", (#2, pages 240-241) when students are informed that 25% of the decade's immigrants were from Italy, Greece and Portugal. "Immigrants from the West Indies, India, and Pakistan" made the face of Québec population, especially Montreal "increasingly diverse" (#2, page 241).
46. Immigrants are next mentioned on page 263 of text #2 when the problem of immigrant assimilation to the Anglophone community is raised and the term Allophone introduced. This is followed by statement on "Bill 22" without further reference to the nature of the Allophone experience. Anglo-Quebecers make it into the story in a brief note that 90,000 left the province mainly for Toronto "in the five years after the election of the *Parti Québécois*" (#2, page 268). A two page insert "From Mosul to Montreal" (#2, pages 284-285) tells the fictional story of a successful integration into Québécois life.
47. "The Contribution of Immigration" is discussed under "Societal Choices in Contemporary Québec" (#2, pages 320-322). The text suggests that "The Government has tried to find ways to balance the aspirations of the province's Francophone majority with the rights of cultural minorities". The most recent example of this is said to be the 2016 policy on "immigration, participation and inclusion" entitled "Together We Are Québec". This policy is intended to "establish more effective practices for selecting, francizing and integrating immigrants in order to promote their full participation in [a unilingual] Québec society."
48. The clearest statement on the significance of the Anglophone and Allophone communities in Quebec and their place in the history of the province occurs in the note (#2, page 328) on *Québec Solidaires'* founding convention which recognizes "Indigenous peoples to be peoples in their own right" but regards all other non-Francophones as individuals "who must be

encouraged to participate fully in the world of work as well as in social and political life” conducted in French. The textbook offers no suggestion that minority communities can or should flourish outside Francophone Quebec society.

49. The list of the excluded goes on and on, including many religious groups. It is difficult to understand why the word Presbyterian is excluded from the text (and the Program), especially given the significance of Scots to Quebec’s development. The Orthodox – Romanian, Greek, Russian, Ukrainian or Lebanese (who have been in Quebec since the 1880s) - are also not mentioned. Muslims are barely mentioned in passing, Buddhists and Sikhs are nowhere to be seen. In 2018, is it still possible to dwell on the excluded in history, or the oppressed, and not mention any of these groups, never mind trying to understand, not their “contributions” to Quebec and Canada, but simply their world views, their perspectives on Quebec and Canadian society, history, politics and identities?
50. With the emphasis on Quebec, there is a significant number of important Canadian topics that have been omitted. These omissions contribute to the lack of context and limits students’ understanding of the History of Quebec and Canada. For example, the Act of Union (1840) represents an opportunity to deal with the movement for responsible government abroad and in the Province of Canada. While this and economic considerations are touched on briefly, the emphasis is elsewhere, namely, on ‘assimilation’. Links with the rebellion in Upper Canada are scarce.
51. During the early years of Confederation, the role of Etienne Paschal Taché as premier of Canada, Father of Confederation who was loyal to the Crown, is not discussed. Indeed, Confederation is presented largely through the eyes of those who objected to it. Jean-Baptiste-Eric Dorion is held up as an example of a member of the *Parti rouge* who was opposed to Confederation, but his wish for Canada to be annexed to the United States is ignored.
52. The First World War receives pretty scant treatment. It is allotted a paltry 10 pages (#2, pages 154-163) so there is little room for complexity, but the description of the causes of the First World War and the references to Canada’s role are simple and simplistic. Quebecers who volunteered to serve in large numbers, because they believed the war was a just and legitimate war of resistance against German domination of Europe, are not mentioned. Perhaps a note that seven of the eight Quebec battalions that fought at Vimy Ridge were recruited in English-Quebec would be helpful. Voluntary recruiting was strongly influenced by the gas attack at Second Ypres (spring 1915) and the sinking of the *Lusitania* (May 1915) and this too might be mentioned. Quebec’s Italian-Canadians volunteered to serve their mother country after Italy joined the Allies in 1915. Jewish Canadians, many of whom had fled Czarist Russia, were less enthusiastic about the British alliance with Russia; however,

after the Balfour Declaration on a Jewish homeland in Palestine, the community was united in support of the Allied cause.

53. The story of “Évelyne, the bluebird” during World War I (#2, pages 112-113) does not provide Internet reference or any context which would allow students to learn that 3,141 nurses from all across Canada enlisted and 2,504 served overseas, while 45 lost their lives. Hospitals associated with McGill and both the Québec City and Montreal campuses of Laval University served overseas.
54. The interwar period offers the first suggestion that “blacks” were part of the city of Montreal by noting that among the nightclubs of the roaring twenties was Rockhead’s Paradise (#2, page 165). There is no development of Black history, which dates back to the French regime, and the issues of black and Aboriginal slavery are conspicuous by their absence!
55. The Second World War is also covered in ten pages (#2, pages 178-189) including two pages “In the Grip of the Nazis” (#2, pages 184-185) and two pages on the reforms of the Godbout Government (#2, pages 187-189). The military effort of Canada is dealt with in several captioned pictures with the entire campaign in Normandy and Northwest Europe in two sentences. The Italian campaign is not mentioned nor is the RCAF part of the story. This coverage is embarrassingly weak and includes a series of short paragraphs with no theme bringing things together. It would appear that the Japanese Canadians were never interned. Why did many end up in Quebec after the War? Canada’s closed doors to the Jews of Europe merits one line, and this despite the fact that Québec was one of the significant centres of antisemitism in Canada.
56. The treatment of the emergence of a welfare state (#2, pages 224-239) reads as though the philosophy behind it, writings about it, and the eventual emergence of it occurred first or exclusively in Quebec, led by the Lesage government, as no context is provided. The evolution of this way of thinking about the role of the state elsewhere in Canada and beyond should be addressed. The 1960s are presented as an era of great change in Quebec, but no comparison (or integration) is made with the rest of Canada. This omission is particularly marked, considering the two-page spread on hippies in the US and abroad (#2, pages 248-249).
57. British Columbia barely exists after the late nineteenth century. Neither does the West generally after the First World War. A passing reference to the Depression years in the West might have received at least a line or two. *Le Refus Global* is well covered and rightfully so. Might there not be at least a mention of The Group of Seven? Or, if we wish to stick to Quebec, could there not be a short paragraph on the Beaver Hall Group who, after all, included as many women as men, and Francophones as well as Anglophones? Why ignore such an integrated cultural group? Does this successful episode in cross-cultural collaboration

not fit a particular narrative? What has happened to Japanese Canadians and their relocation and internment during the War? A significant number of these forced transplanted Japanese ended up in Montreal after the War. How about the internment of Italians during the War, many from Montreal?

58. The decision to organize the Secondary IV course with one third of the space devoted to the post-1945 period accounts for the scant attention paid to other periods. This section begins with the statement “Today Québec is recognized throughout the world for its values of openness, toleration and equality and its respect for human rights.” (#2, page 204). The text, after a brief review of the Duplessis era 1944-1959 (#2, pages 211-223) focuses on the development of the Québec state. The end state sought by the Québécois is a modern, progressive unilingual society permitting limited rights to Anglophone and Allophone individuals who are to live and work in French whenever possible. Their story, as separate communities, is essentially ignored in the text and few individuals are deemed worthy of mention. Indigenous communities are recognized and discussed in the text, though the issue of residential schools and their legacy is not emphasized.
59. The politics of language and separation do not seem to come up at all in the discussion of why businesses relocated to Toronto in the 1970s! (#2, pages 266-271). This seems to suggest that the relocation was already taking place on a large scale. Construction took off in the mid to late 70s in downtown towers as head offices fled Montreal.
60. In sum, there is much pertinent content that is lacking or that is not adequately addressed. Additionally, numerous “historical” and “technical” issues abound, as outlined on the following page.

## Short Shots:

Additional examples of content that is lacking or that is not adequately addressed:

- There is very little coverage of the lives of women in religious congregations. The Sisters of Charity (*Soeurs Grises* or Grey Nuns) are not mentioned. The Congregation de Notre Dame (CND) is only mentioned once with no narrative. And yet, the CNDs had a serious role in educating young women, including many Anglophone women in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. The discussion on the role of women should draw in the discussion of nuns/sisters in Quebec and what it meant to enter religious life, especially given the high rate of women who made this choice.
- There is no mention of Acadians in Louisiana, given the significance of this component of the Acadian diaspora.
- Text #1, page 83, and other locations, “Augustines” should be “Augustinians”.
- The Jesuits are listed (in #2) as entering Canada in 1842. This is correct, but it might be confusing to the students as they have read about the Jesuits in the previous (#1) volume. There should be a note to the effect that the last Jesuit under the interdiction to admit new Jesuits into Canada, died in 1800, and the order was re-admitted in 1842.
- Though Scandinavians represent 24% of the immigrants at the Port of Quebec (1868-91), no indication of their activities or contribution is given.
- Confusion between #1, page 196 and #1, page 207 in dealing with settlers with British backgrounds and where they settled.
- In the discussion on Riel’s hanging (#2, page 88), Arthur Silver’s argument that it was at this time that Quebec’s politicians and social and cultural leaders became aware of the French fact outside Quebec and the need to protect it.
- The discussion of the first phase of industrialization (#2, pages 56-57) refers to an assembly line that really does not come into the picture until the age of mass production, starting in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.
- On page 231, Textbook #1, the two top paragraphs suggest that every/all immigrants subscribed to imperialistic aspirations and were desirous of assimilation of all *Canadiens*. Complex topic needs more nuanced exploration.
- The statement on page 67 (#2) suggests that unions come into being in 1872; this is incorrect and unions precede Confederation.
- Textbook #2 states that Canada accepted 36,665 immigrants in 1915 after having accepted 400,000 in 1913. The flows did not decline only because Canada accepted fewer immigrants but also because fewer migrants ventured to Canada or elsewhere during wartime.
- Textbook #2, page 75, box 62: the correct spelling of “Misericord” is “Misericorde” as a misericord in English is not mercy.
- Page 87, textbook #2, “square sections” are really “quarter sections” and were measured not in metric but via the Imperial system of measure.
- The term “internment” needs to be explained with regards to enemy aliens (#2, page 156). It would also help to explain that a Ukrainian immigrant was considered an enemy alien as the Western Ukraine area was within the Hapsburg domain.
- Triple Entente has not been explained (#2, page 155).
- The early CEF volunteers (#2, pages 157-158) were not only “primarily composed of English Canadians”, but of English Canadians born in Britain.
- It is difficult to understand the integration of the veterans into the labour force at the end of the Second World War without reference to the post-war recession and labour unrest (#2, chapter 3).
- Financing military spending in the Second World War is poorly explained. There is reference only to the federal government borrowing from the banks and little about the influence of the Americans and Lend-Lease (#2, pages 181-182).
- There is so little reference to the international context in the volume (#2) that the insets on August and on the White Rose almost seem out of place.
- The Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism is more commonly known in English as the “B and B Commission” not as the Laurendeau-Dunton Commission (#2, page 238).
- The move to the suburbs began in the 1950s and not the 1960s as noted on page 246, #2.

## Recommendations to Address the Problems with the Program and Textbooks

- As clearly articulated by this Report, the two authorized textbooks used by EMSB secondary students are fundamentally flawed and must be withdrawn from all high schools. These texts are at odds with the stated underpinnings of the Program in that students will “construct history”. As illustrated, the texts do not meet the educational aims grounding the Program and, as such, offer narratives that do not meet the approved aims of the Program.
- Furthermore, these books not only contain numerous historical errors, translation transgressions, and misrepresentations, but offer youth a skewed one-sided view of the past that distorts the historical record, ignores contributions by many elements of society, demeans efforts by other segments, and postulates a specific goal of “nationhood” which is at odds with the underlying philosophies of many citizens.
- Additionally, after careful analysis, these volumes cannot be salvaged by rewriting or the issuance of numerous “errata sheets”. The only logical academic and pedagogical conclusion is that all of these books be withdrawn so that a more appropriate set of student books may be written and used by students.
- In the interests of continuity and respect for those secondary student already dealing with the Program and these textbooks, and forthcoming uniform examinations, it is recommended that the books continue to be temporarily used for a short two-year time frame ; that is, until June 2021.
- The EMSB should apply for funds that are available through the Canada-Quebec Minority Language Entente to commission a small group of recognized pedagogical and historical experts to write new student texts for inauguration as of September 2021. As well as correcting the many and varied errors as articulated by this Report, the texts will also respect the intellectual underpinnings of the Program and offer students a more balanced narrative of the past that is both “inclusive” and “constructivist”.

## Appendix I: MEES Link to the History of Québec and Canada Program

The official provincial History of Québec and Canada program is available here:

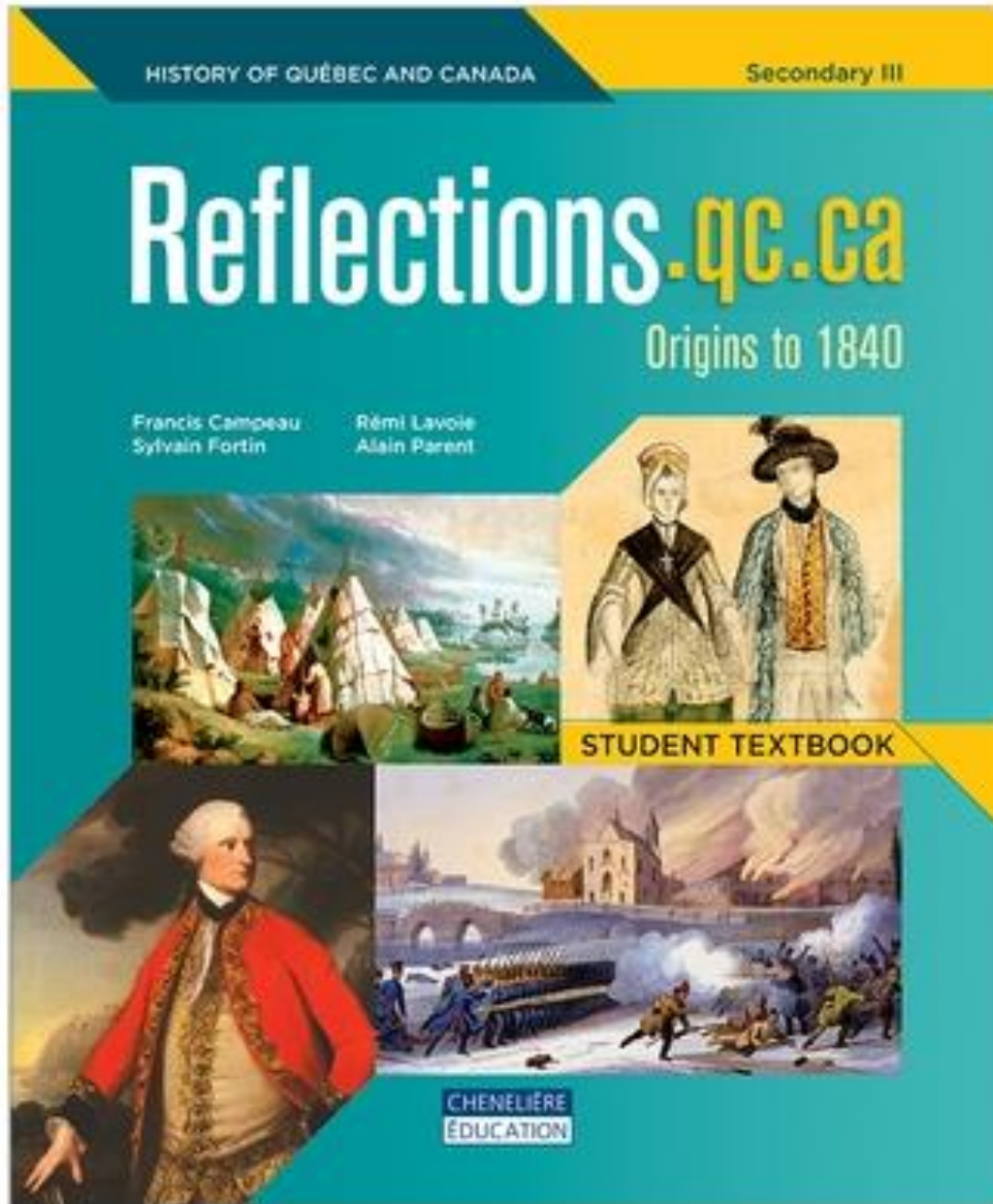
[http://www.education.gouv.qc.ca/fileadmin/site\\_web/documents/education/jeunes/pfeq/PFEQ\\_histoire-quebec-canada\\_2017\\_EN.pdf](http://www.education.gouv.qc.ca/fileadmin/site_web/documents/education/jeunes/pfeq/PFEQ_histoire-quebec-canada_2017_EN.pdf)





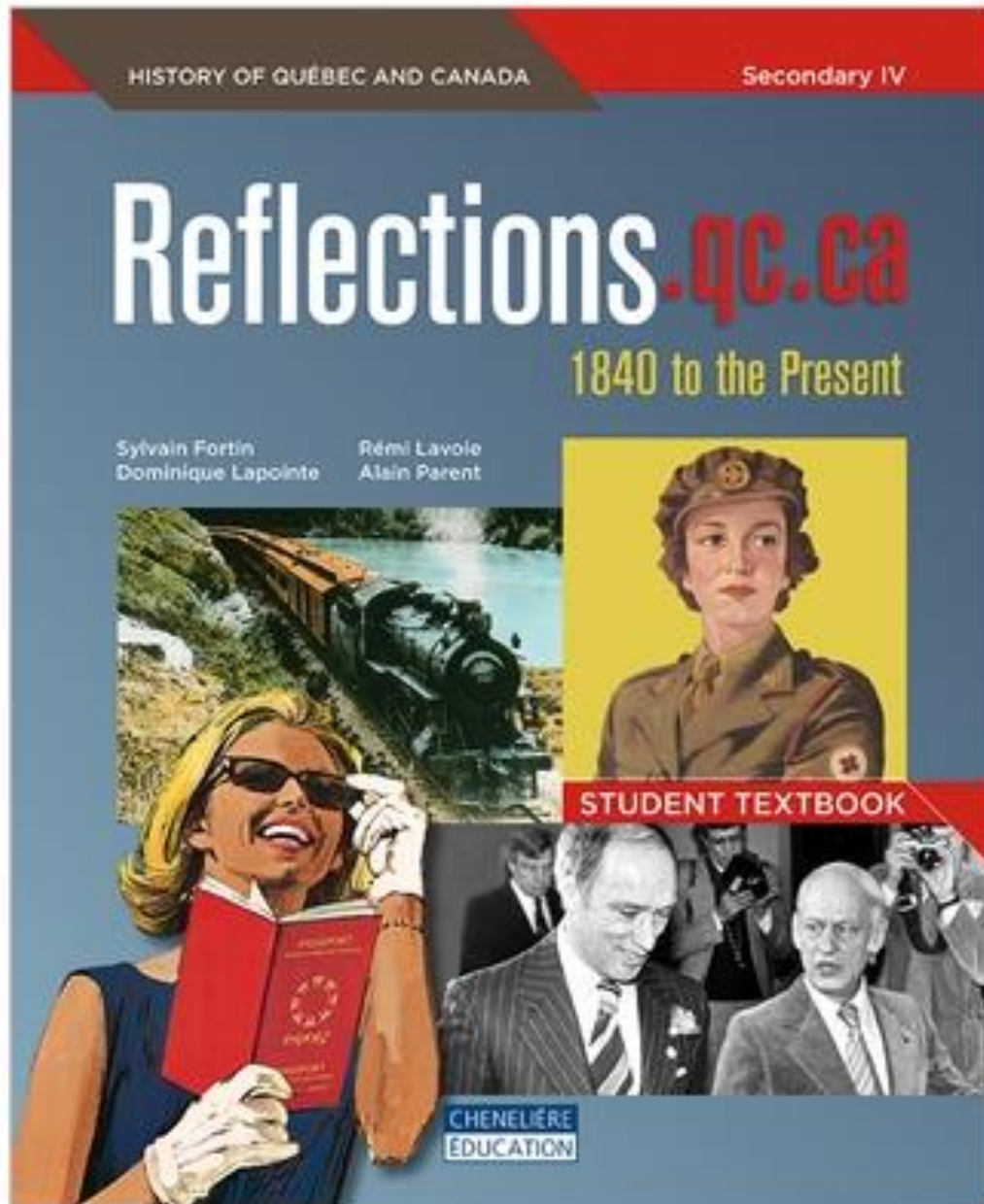
## Appendix II: Bibliographic Reference of Approved English Textbooks

Campeau, F., Fortin, S., Lavoie, R. & Parent, A. (2018). *Reflections.qc.ca, origins to 1840: History of Québec and Canada, secondary III*. Montréal (Québec): Chenelière Éducation.





Fortin, S., Lapointe, D., Lavoie, R., & Parent, A. (2018). *Reflections.qc.ca, 1840 to our times: History of Québec and Canada, secondary IV*. Montréal (Québec), Canada: Chenelière Éducation.



### **Appendix III: EMSB Resolution**

EXTRACT FROM THE MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF THE ENGLISH MONTREAL SCHOOL BOARD HELD IN THE CITY OF MONTREAL ON THE TWENTY-THIRD DAY OF MAY TWO THOUSAND AND EIGHTEEN  
"New Secondary III and IV History Program"

WHEREAS the Council of Commissioners of the English Montreal School Board adopted a unanimous resolution on September 28, 2016 requesting of the Minister of Education, Sebastien Proulx that the new Secondary III-IV History Course include the historical contributions made by the Indigenous peoples, as well as those made by other Anglophone and allophone communities;

WHEREAS the Council of Commissioners of the English Montreal School Board adopted another unanimous resolution on January 25, 2017 requesting of the Minister of Education, Sebastien Proulx, among others, that the implementation of the new Secondary III-IV History Course be delayed for a year, that similar resources be available for students in French and in English, and that 20% of the new program reflect the historical contributions made by the Indigenous peoples, as well as those made by other Anglophone and allophone communities; WHEREAS there is no indication that any of the suggestions made by the English Montreal School Board with respect to including the contributions of Anglophone and allophone communities in the new History program were taken into consideration, except for some minor tweaks, mostly to improve the quality and quantity of the content related to the Indigenous peoples;

WHEREAS the contributions made to this province by members of the Jewish, Italian, Greek, and other Anglophone and allophone communities are made invisible and are a serious omission;

WHEREAS respected Quebec history Professors, Michele Dagenais, Universite de Montreal, and Christian Laville, Universite Laval, pointed out in a Montreal Gazette op-ed piece Oct. 14, 2016 "The history offered in this (History) curriculum focuses very narrowly on the French Canadian nation, its heritage and its aspirations as interpreted by the authors of the curriculum. Other Quebecers are not part of this story";

WHEREAS the English Montreal School Board has a responsibility to both its students and the greater community to ensure that the new Secondary III-IV History Course includes the historical contributions made by other Anglophone and allophone groups as well as those of the Indigenous peoples;

IT IS MOVED BY MR. JOSEPH LALLA AND UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED THAT, as recommended by the Education Committee,

1. The English Montreal School Board immediately strike a "History experts committee". This arm's length committee of three (3) recognized professional historians would independently review the program and student textbooks for secondary III and IV with three overarching goals:
  - (a) Identify historical statements that are factually incorrect,
  - (b) Identify historical inferences that are open to interpretation
  - (c) Identify significant historical events which have been omitted from the program and textbooks, as well as the contributions made to this province by the Anglophone and allophone communities as well as by the Indigenous peoples.
  
2. In addition to the three professional historians there shall also be an additional member to act as committee chair. It is recommended that the committee chair, acting only as a coordinator, be the EMSB social studies consultant.
  - (a) The Director General shall ensure that the committee has the necessary resources to fulfill its mandate.
  
3. A stipend of \$3,000 for each history expert and an additional \$6,000 for operating expenses of the committee for a total budget of \$15,000.
  
4. The following timeline shall be adhered to:
  - (a) May/June 2018: approve this motion, establish internal budget, set up administrative framework, approach possible history experts, and create a team of three such experts;
  - (b) June: experts are announced, work begins;
  - (c) September 15: all written reports from the experts are submitted and the committee chair prepares an "initial summary report";
  - (d) The "initial summary report" is vetted/revised by experts with the "final report" prepared
  - (e) September Council meeting: the committee chair deposits the "final report" to be officially received by Council.

IT IS FURTHER MOVED THAT the English Montreal School Board forward this resolution to QESBA and to its sister English school boards.

VOTE: 12-0-0. ADOPTED.

· Resolution #18-05-23-9.3"

CERTIFIED that the foregoing' is a true and correct extract from the Minutes of a regular meeting of the ENGLISH MONTREAL SCHOOL BOARD held on May 23, 2018.

Me Nathalie Lauziere, Secretary General  
English Montreal School Board  
June 13, 2018

## Appendix IV: Student's report

From the perspective of a student who has just finished the new secondary 4 history program, I can conclude that there are definite issues mainly regarding content.

### GENERAL CONTENT OVERVIEW:

I felt as if the content of this program is simultaneously lacking and overly dense. A greater weight has been given to uncontextualized economic and political events than to important social and ideological ones. My peers and I additionally have retained very little of what we were taught this year, which ultimately defeats the purpose of teaching history in the first place: to understand the requirements of citizenship and have a greater understanding of ourselves and the global community in the past, present and future tense.

### CONTENT OVERVIEW REGARDING ABORIGINALS:

The inclusion of the aboriginal community in this textbook was patchy and deficient. I understand that a neutral tone is important in a history textbook, but there is such a thing as being overly passive. For example, on page 37 of the sec 4 history textbook, when referring to the creation of "Indian Reserves", it states that "the government's aim was to promote a shift towards an agricultural way of life for the first nations, and by extent, their sedentarization". Like this statement, there were others in which light wording made it seem as if what was happening to the Aboriginal community wasn't overtly negative: "promoting a shift towards sedentarization" and "forcefully imposing sedentarization" definitely leave two different tastes in one's mouth, tastes which should be considered.

Additionally, residential schools were insufficiently covered. In total, there was maybe a page worth of information on an event that still heavily affects the aboriginal community today. Another goal of history is to eliminate ignorance and stereotypes, but that becomes impossible when the information provided isn't enough to actually combat any of those things.

Lastly, in the "Modern Day" chapter, it doesn't feel like enough to simply list off all the treaties that have been signed between the Government and Native Americans and inherently paint a picture that all relations are healed. In my opinion, this leads to misperceptions and misinterpretation.

### CONTENT OVERVIEW REGARDING GENDER:

One thing that stood out to me was the extremely imbalanced ratio of men to women mentioned in both textbooks. I decided to read through both textbooks and record the actual numbers of men and women to see if the numerical imbalance was really that great. Here's what I found:

-SEC 4 WOMEN: 30 (if you include the picture of Elizabeth Taylor and 2 groups of unnamed women)

-SEC 4 MEN: 70 (all of them named)

-SEC 3 WOMEN: 5

-SEC 3 MEN: 57

This is frustrating for multiple reasons. For one thing, as a female student who is very passionate about history, it would be empowering to have a better understanding of women's history, even a deeper analysis of sexism in Canada. Knowing the women who started the fight for equality and who helped build Canada is not only

beneficial for female students but for everyone as it minimalizes ideas of male superiority and promotes a more inclusive rhetoric. Above all else though, I don't feel like I or anyone else should have to present arguments as to why including more women would be beneficial. It's a given.

Here are some ideas:

Marguerite Bourgeoy (1620-1700), founder of the congregation de Notre dame

Charlotte-Francoise Juchereau (1660-1732), prominent business woman

Marie Anne Fornel (1704-1793), prominent business woman

Marguerite d'Youville (1707-1771), took in poor and educated abandoned children

Esther Brandeau (1738-unknown), disguised herself as a cabin boy to come to Canada, was the first Jewish woman in Canada

Frances Brooks (1745-1789), wrote the first novel in North America

Agathe de Repentigny (1657-1748), business woman in New France

Marie Catherine Pelissier Sales Catiere (1755-1831), human rights activist

Therese Casgrain (1896-1981) activist, radio host, first female leader of a political party in Canada, from Montreal

Mary Shadd Cary (1823-1893), black woman who advocated for universal education, black emancipation and women's rights

Additionally, women tend to not be written about as if they were an inherent part of history, but instead sectioned off and talked about only under the context of feminism. That should be changed.

At the beginning of chapter 2 there is a portion about a woman named Evelyne, a "bluebird" in WW1. I wanted to learn more about her but when I googled "Evelyne bluebird" ,I was given several inappropriate sites... I did more research and found that the woman's last name in the textbook is Mc Kay. Please include the last name so as to not confuse students.

#### CONTENT OVERVIEW REGARDING MINORITIES:

This, in my opinion, was one of the greatest shortcomings of the textbook. Not only did it omit very basic things like the diverse communities responsible in the creation of our country and even our province (i.e. Jewish, Italian, etc...), but it also failed to talk about other minorities throughout the entirety of history. For instance, the only time the LGBTQ+ community is mentioned is at the end of the sec 4 textbook when it says that gay marriage was legalized. What was the experience for the LGBTQ+ community before 2005? Only including that fact creates the impression that that was a problem solved, a relation healed, when discrimination is still prominent even in Canada. This goes for other ethnic groups in Canada as well; in omitting them and their struggles you create the impression there are none today.

In order to keep students interested in history you need to make it relevant, and that means including social issues regarding diverse communities throughout our history as a country.

## REACTIONS TO THE CONTENT:

This is where I can offer a unique insight: the student's reaction to this textbook.

1. Firstly, the content was quite divisive. While my peers (majority English) began to resent Quebec history and the French plight, friends I have from other schools (majority French) began to resent the English and felt their Quebec nationalism strengthen. The Us and Them rhetoric that is propelled through this program definitely does more harm than good, given the already divided state the world is in.
2. Many students who generally enjoyed history found that this year's program killed that enjoyment. Through dense, convoluted material, it was a cycle of memorization to regurgitate facts onto a test, making the amount we retained minimal, and therefore the impact of the class minimal.
3. A huge red flag as well is when neither the students know, or the teachers can tell us why what we're learning is of any importance, especially because we remember so little from the year. As a hard-working student, I want to be able to say how the course I'm working so hard for is important, relevant and applicable.
4. As a side note, it's important to note that none of the students read the "spotlight" in the textbook, "a page in history" or "take note!" portions of the textbook, simply because there is too much content everywhere else.
5. Overall, I am unsure as to if this textbook is salvageable. I think the goal needs to be to create something that is enriching, engaging and progressive, whether that's in the form of a new textbook or some other method entirely.

History is important. Let's make that known to the students learning it.

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DRAFT RESOLUTION

History Experts Committee Report

WHEREAS the Council of Commissioners adopted a unanimous resolution on May 23, 2018 to strike a "History Experts Committee". This arms-length committee of three (3) recognized professional historians would independently review the program and student textbooks for the new secondary III and IV History Program;

WHEREAS the Educational and Technology Services Department recruited the History Experts, organized the entire operations of this committee and faithfully completed its mandate in this initiative in a timely and exceptional manner;

WHEREAS the Social Studies Consultant, Tino Bordonaro, coordinated the work of the History Experts Committee;

WHEREAS the report of the History Experts Committee was received by the Education Committee on November 14, 2018;

IT IS MOVED BY MR. JOSEPH LALLA AND RESOLVED THAT the History Experts' Committee Report be accepted for deposit as recommended by the Education Committee.