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AGREEMENT WON FOR BILINGUAL SIGNS

Alliance Quebec has won agreement from Petro Canada, the federal petroleum company, for use of bilingual signs on a number of service stations in Quebec.

The agreement adds 77 new bilingual service stations to the existing 50 for a new total of 127 bilingual Petro Canada stations in the province.

The service stations affected are those owned by the Crown Corporation in areas where there is a significant English-speaking population.

Alliance Quebec has been involved for some time in efforts to persuade federal agencies and Crown corporations to live up to the obligations of the Official Languages Act.

The Work Group on Bilingual Signs and Information, under chairman Craig Berger, has been greatly aided by the Quebec Representative of the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages, John Parisella, in its successful campaign to prod Petro Canada into re-examining its policy on signs. The new bilingual signs are expected to be installed this spring.

The Provincial Work Group continues to work with the local committees in following up this agreement with Petro Canada.

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SIGNS PROSECUTIONS CONTINUE

Alliance Quebec has sent a letter to Justice Minister Pierre-Marc Johnson, protesting the government's recent court actions against merchants displaying bilingual signs, in spite of a promise Jan. 9 by then acting-Premier Bernard Landry that such prosecutions would be suspended while the government appeals the Boudreault decision.

(On Dec. 28, Quebec Superior Court Justice Pierre Boudreault ruled against the unilingual signs provisions of the language charter in a court challenge brought by Alliance Quebec and five Montreal-area merchants.)

Alliance Quebec has called on Mr. Johnson either to respect Mr. Landry's promise, or to say publicly that he does not intend to do so. Since Mr. Landry made his statement, several businesses have contacted AQ to seek help in dealing with summonses accusing them of posting bilingual signs.

As well, insurance broker William Boon was fined \$25 on Jan. 16 when he failed to appear in court to answer a charge of displaying a bilingual sign at his St. Lambert office. Alliance Quebec has appealed his conviction and will represent any other merchant receiving a summons for bilingual signs.

ALLIANCE QUEBEC MAKES PRESENTATION TO
STANDING COMMITTEE ON CULTURE

In a statement to the National Assembly's Standing Committee on Culture Feb. 6, Catherine Duff-Caron, AQ Executive Committee member and Chairperson of the Work Group on Demographic Trends, said that *"while our studies do not suggest that English-speaking Quebec will disappear in the near future, still our community and its institutions face a kind of slow cultural and social disintegration."*

The Alliance Quebec brief to the Committee's hearings on the demographic future of Quebec included the first major study of the future of English-speaking Quebec. The study outlines a number of challenges to English-speaking Quebec's future including a very low birthrate, massive migration to other provinces, and restrictive government policies that make the development of English-language community based institutions difficult.

The Alliance Quebec delegation summed up its message to the committee in the question: *"Do Quebecers really want an English-speaking community in this province?"* The Alliance Quebec brief shows that without concerted action, the English-speaking community faces dire demographic consequences.

Among other presentations to the Committee, Alliance Quebec noted with interest the studies of UQAM demographer Calvin Veltman whose studies of language use in the Portuguese community effectively undercut the arguments of those who have called for increasingly restricted access to English-language schools.

ACTIVITIES IN CHAPTERS/ASSOCIATIONS

East Island Chapter's Employment, Business & Signs Committee is conducting a letter writing campaign aimed at lobbying various government bodies to inform citizens in both French and English. This includes translation of Le Guide des Aînés, the recently published guide to services for senior citizens; translation of the Hydro-Québec pamphlet entitled, 'En Cas de Panne', outlining what to do in case of a power failure; and provision of bilingual safety signs in the Louis-Hippolyte Lafontaine Tunnel. In other committee news, career days continue. Committee and chapter board member Olivia Kona spoke Feb. 13 & 28 respectively to students of Lester B. Pearson and Rosemount High Schools on the subject of advertising and distributed a manual she produced entitled, 'Careers in Advertising'. Jocelyne Soulodre, AQ Communications Programme Director, spoke Feb. 21 at Rosemount H.S. on jobs in the media. Chapter and provincial board member Sonia Aronow will speak in March at Lester B. Pearson H.S. on jobs in the public and para-public sectors.

South Shore Chapter will sponsor a public meeting on 'Local Health and Social Services' on Wed., March 20 at 7:30 pm at the CLSC Longueuil-Est, 388 Lamarre, Longueuil (one block behind the Jacques Cartier Shopping Centre on Chemin Chambly). Representatives from CLSC Longueuil-Est and CLSC Longueuil-Ouest will speak about the services they offer. A representative from CSS Richelieu will give an overview of the availability and use of social services. A tour of CLSC facilities will follow the presentations. This meeting will be of particular interest to local residents who are unsure about the services available to them or who have experienced difficulty in obtaining services suited to their needs.

Outaouais Alliance will hold its Annual General Meeting April 27 at South Hall Elementary School in Aylmer. The day will include afternoon issues workshops focussing on community concerns and will end with a dinner/dance in the evening. The Honourable Bob Layton, Minister of State for Mines and federal MP responsible for English-speaking Quebec affairs, will be the guest speaker. Outaouais Board member Peter Unwin, a resident of Aylmer, will officiate as Chairman.

The Association has recently struck an Economic Development Committee, chaired by Treasurer Dick Henderson and composed of 20 West Quebec businessmen. Two meetings have been held so far in preparation for presentation of a brief at the Local Economic Summit to be held in June.

The Career Development Committee will hold a Youth Career Festival April 20 at the Heritage Campus of the Cégep de l'Outaouais. This will take the place of the traditional 'Wrights of Spring Festival'. In other news, Outaouais Alliance plans to offer Camp Francophone again this summer. This year, Buckingham will be added to Chelsea and Shawville as locations.

St. Maurice Chapter's Education Committee will hold an information meeting March 12th on Bill 3 for school committee members of St. Patrick School and Three Rivers High School. Joan Pavelko, Secretary General of the Provincial Association of Catholic Teachers, will be guest speaker.

The Chapter's communications committee is in the process of translating a walking tour of Trois-Rivières. This booklet will provide local English students with an historical background of Trois-Rivières.

In other news, the Chapter has just published the first edition of the chapter newsletter.

Upper Laurentians Chapter Health and Social Services Committee members spoke recently to congregations of the Anglican churches in St-Sauveur and Morin Heights on CLSC services and the role of Alliance Quebec.

The chapter welcomes new board members Heather Mattenberger, from St-Sauveur, and Beverley Pearcey, from Shawbridge.

Côte St. Luc/Hampstead/Snowdon W. Chapter's Employment, Business & Signs Committee held a public meeting March 4 at the David Y of the YM/YWHA. The topic was, 'Do you Know your Rights: How do Federal and Provincial Language Legislation Affect You?'. John Parisella, Quebec Representative of the Commissioner of Official Languages, spoke on the Official Languages Act, and Tom Mulcair, AQ Director of Legal Affairs, spoke on the effects of recent court decisions on Bill 101. The meeting was chaired by Elisabeth Colson, Employment, Business & Signs Committee Chairperson.

TMR/Outremont/Côte-des-Neiges/Snowdon E. Chapter will speak to the general membership of the Barbadian Society on March 17 as part of its efforts at community and ethnic outreach. Peter Hechtman, Chapter Chairperson, will give an overview of the Chapter's activities.

C.V.E.S.P.A. is participating with a local group involved in setting up of a regional Groupe de gestion coopératif et communautaire, a provincial government self-help project for the unemployed. The Association has written to Rodrigue Biron, Quebec minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce requesting that such a project be implemented locally to serve both French- and English-speaking residents. In the works as well is a Cadet Corps Feasibility Study aimed at assessing the possibility of setting up a local cadet corps training programme.

In other news, the Association has approached Pierre-Marc Johnson, Quebec Minister of Justice, requesting that the magazine Justice be published in English as well. The Association has also written to the Office des handicapés du Québec requesting that a copy of their 'Bulletin', an information brochure on services available to the handicapped, be made available in English to area residents.

PROGRAMME ACTIVITIES

HEALTH & SOCIAL SERVICES PROGRAMMENetwork Seminar

The health and social services network will come together in Montreal for a seminar on March 8-9. The seminar will begin with a news conference on Friday evening, March 8, outlining Alliance Quebec's position on social services. The impressive array of community groups, municipalities, schools, etc. province-wide who have passed the resolution on linguistic guarantees for social services, have been invited to attend the news conference.

For the members of the network, the rest of the seminar will feature an update on the public campaign on social services and also planning other strategies for future actions on the public campaign, by region and in plenary.

There will also be an examination of the evolution of English-language social services in Quebec, 1780-1978. The seminar will be held at the Ramada Inn on Guy Street in Montreal.

6-A Task Force on Social Services

An advertising campaign (30-second voice spots) has been aired on English- and French-language radio stations from Feb. 12 to March 1. The ads explain the issue of social service reorganization and ask for community support. To date, many calls from individuals have been received on the Task Force phone line (514-849-4900) asking for more information and offering support. A newspaper ad carrying the same message appeared in Le Devoir and The Gazette on Sat., March 2.

6-C Task Force

The Task Force continues to be in contact with the Regional Council of Montérégie. Transfer plans are not yet completed, but the Task Force will meet with the transfer team in the near future to discuss the plans in detail.

Regional Council News

Most Regional Councils have confirmed with us that elections for user representatives for the boards of CLSCs and Social Service Centres will be held on Sun., May 26.

In Other News

On Thurs., Feb. 21 representatives of all health and social service committees were invited to the first of a series of monthly network meetings. Marylee Kelley chaired the meeting and the agenda included updates on the public campaign; the seminar; and Task Force work in regions 6A and 6C. Also discussed were some individual cases upon which Chapters have been working.

Network meetings have been scheduled for the third week of every month until April to be followed by Chapter committee meetings the fourth week of the month and provincial committee meetings the first week of the month. This arrangement should facilitate the flow of information at all levels of the programme during this most active time of the public campaign for legislative guarantees.

EDUCATION PROGRAMME

French Second Language

The Canadian Parents for French and the English-speaking Parents' Network, along with Alliance Quebec, will hold a community conference on issues relating to French as a second language on May 10-11 in Montreal.

The conference, entitled 'Transition', will bring together parents, teachers, community leaders and the general public to examine the progress being made by English-speaking Quebecers in learning French.

Some of the issues to be discussed at the conference include: the challenge to the community of enrollment in French schools, latest research on programs and methodologies, the success of French immersion and funding and support from government for second-language training.

Susan Becker has been hired as conference co-ordinator.

Bill 3 Follow-up

The implementation of Bill 3 began on Feb. 27 when the Minister of Education issued a regulation establishing the territories of the new linguistic school boards. The Island of Montreal will have two English-language boards and five French-language boards.

The territories of the linguistic boards off the Island of Montreal will be established after consultation with the communities involved. At a meeting between the "Group of Fourteen" and Ministry officials, it was agreed to establish a joint Task Force to ensure proper consultation occurs in each area. The "Group of Fourteen" also insisted that elections for off-island school boards occur prior to October 1985 instead of June 1986 as proposed by the Ministry. A response from the latter is expected in the next few days. Elections for off-island school boards will be held June 17.

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Education...cont'd

AQ has also sent a letter to the Minister requesting that Section 538 of the law (which requires the Minister to authorize any change in a school's linguistic status between Dec. 21, 1984 and July 1, 1986) be applied such that a moratorium be established for any such changes, unless there is an extraordinary urgency or consensus among the groups concerned.

Our Quebec Heritage

The AQ Local History Project has been expanded into a co-operative effort of several organizations which includes holding a conference, starting a collection of published materials on English-speaking Quebec, building a network of interested groups, and initiating an historical journal. Marianna O'Gallagher, Director of History and Cultural Programs at the Voice of English Quebec, and Gail Klinck and Janet MacDougall of the Townshippers' Association will bring their extensive experience to the committee which is currently approaching educational organizations, private foundations and government to secure funding for the project which has been renamed Our Quebec Heritage Project.

Adult Education

The Task Force on Adult Education has completed the first draft of a response to the Government Policy on Continuing Education. This draft will be circulated for consultation within the Regional Education Committee Network. The policy includes a restructuring of the Government through a collective effort of six different ministries to focus on vocational training and economic development. The Task Force, chaired by Paulina Grant of Alliance Quebec, will coordinate community input into a series of consultative meetings to be held by the Government this month and has requested a meeting with Michèle Jean, Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Manpower, in order to improve the involvement of English-speaking Quebecers.

Heritage Campus

The English-speaking community of West Quebec has made a request for an autonomous English-language CEGEP in their area to the Cégep de l'Outaouais and to the Ministry. Heritage Campus is now affiliated with the French-language Cégep. After extensive consultation with the local community, the Heritage Board of Governors has concluded that it must request independence from the larger institution. A similar process occurred in 1981-82 but, at the last minute, Dr. Camille Laurin, then Minister of Education, refused to comply with the recommendation of a commission led by Gary Caldwell to affiliate the Heritage Campus with Champlain Cégep. Outaouais Alliance has provided leadership on the issue and AQ will provide support at the provincial level.

COMMENT IN THE FRENCH PRESS

A recent study released by the Conseil de la langue française has been commended by editorialists in the French press as being realistic and enlightening. The study, called "La situation linguistique actuelle", recognizes the important gains made in linguistic matters since the adoption of Bill 101 while examining some of the areas which still need attention. The editorials were, however, skeptical that a legislative solution would solve Quebec's language problems and hopeful that the government would adopt new methods reflective of today's society with respect to its minorities.

Jean-Louis Roy in a Le Devoir editorial of Feb. 5 writes that, "There is not and never will be a definitive solution to this problem. It will continually have to be re-worked." Mr. Roy hopes that linguistic changes will be made in conjunction with the wishes of all Quebecers. Mr. Roy asks, "Should we return to the methods of 1978 which pitted linguistic groups one against the other and divided the francophone majority itself about the notion of the status of the French language?" In conclusion, Mr. Roy writes that, "between public and general bilingualism and the affirmation of Quebec's distinct character as a society whose majority is French-speaking, there is place for intermediary linguistic formulae which clearly assure the primacy of the French-language."

AQ IN BRIEF

This month, Alliance Quebec bids a teary farewell to two of its most valued staff members. Communications Programme Director Jocelyne Soulodre is off to greener pastures and an exciting new position with the Royal Canadian Mint, as Manager of Communications with the Olympic coin program for the Calgary Winter Olympics in 1988.

Communications/Research Programme Secretary (though such a title cannot do justice to the variety of tasks he performed) Frank Vetere, leaves us to take up the challenge of acting as Assistant to the Academic Dean of Vanier College. The staff and volunteers of Alliance Quebec wish Frank and Jocelyne all the best in their respective new positions.

On a brighter note, AQ is pleased to announce the appointment of Sheila Moore to the position of Communications Programme Director, effective April 1. Ms. Moore comes to Alliance Quebec from her former position as Executive Producer of Current Affairs for CBC Quebec English Radio.

CONVENTION 1985

The Convention Committee and staff have finished their consultative tour of almost all Alliance Quebec Chapters and Associations to discuss various aspects of this year's Convention and to solicit input for a number of proposed thematic workshops.

Convention Committee Chairman Hugh Mitchell says the Fourth Annual General Council will provide a "think tank" in which the community can begin to address its long-term goals.

In other convention news, Deegan Stubbs has been hired to coordinate the organization of Convention '85. His experience includes organizing part of the Youth Rally at Olympic Stadium during the Pope's tour of Canada last fall.

(For those who haven't yet heard, Convention '85 takes place May 31 - June 2 at John Abbott College, MacDonald Campus, in Ste-Anne-de-Bellevue.)