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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By Marlene Jennings
QCGN President



Less than six months ago, on Jan. 1, The Montreal Gazette published an op-ed by me predicting as 2020 drew to a close that English-speaking Quebecers were witnessing the relative language peace we had enjoyed for many years was going to fade.

Sadly, these predictions were fully and rapidly realized. As 2021 began, federal Official Languages Minister Mélanie Joly promised to table a white paper as the basis for protecting and promoting French not only outside of Quebec, but also within. In Quebec City, Language Minister Simon Jolin-Barrette was ramping up to

present legislation that would enforce and reinforce the Charter of the French Language. I said the Quebec Community Groups Network was determined to serve as a crucial and constructive voice throughout language debates that were bound to prove emotional and sometimes acrimonious.

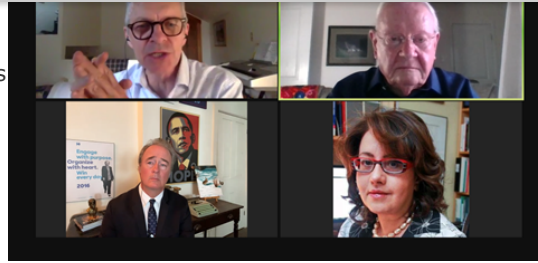
Following the developments of the past few weeks, some have accused us of overreacting. Some have accused us of not being forceful enough. I have to say that it is usually a good sign when you land smack dab in the middle between what our community refers to as the angry-phones and the lamb lobby.

QCGN has also fulfilled another promise – to serve as a centre of evidence-based expertise and collective action. We have done our homework. With the able assistance of our legal counsel and our policy team, we have taken deep dives into **Bill 96: An Act respecting French, the official and common language of Québec**, and Bill C-32, **An Act to amend the Official Languages Act and to make related and consequential amendments to other Acts**.

We have conducted exhaustive examinations of both bills, studying them article by article. We have found much to worry about. Many propositions in these two bills would impose lasting negative impacts on our community, our province, and our country. A great deal of work must be done to explain these concerns to our communities and our legislators, and to demand and achieve change.

Our recent Our Place in Quebec and Canada conference examined the many ways these bills, particularly Bill 96, would curtail the rights of English-speaking Quebecers. The conference began with a panel on human rights in Quebec with former MP and MNA Clifford Lincoln, human rights lawyer Pearl Eliadis, and political commentator Warren Kinsella (pictured). Day Two included a panel on the sectoral impacts of Bill 96 with

f QCGN's Board of Directors; Russell Copeman, Director General of the Quebec English School Boards Association; François Vincent of the Canadian Federation of Independent Business (Quebec); and Côte St-Luc Mayor Mitchell Brownstein.



Charter-free Zone

Broth panels concluded that Bill 96 effectively creates a Charter-free zone with respect to a wide range of interactions between individuals and the state in Quebec. This includes the areas of commerce, employment, education, access to public services including health and social services, and the operation of the legal system. Where rights that would otherwise be protected are infringed, under the notwithstanding clause the courts would be unable to review and remedy the conduct under either the Canadian or Quebec Charters.

Minister Joly, a guest speaker at our event, said the federal government "fundamentally disagrees" with the Quebec government's attempt to claim it has exclusive jurisdiction over language, "and that is why we wanted to table this important piece of legislation to assert our jurisdiction, to ensure that all services at the federal level will continue to be in both official languages from coast to coast."

The day after Minister Joly introduced Bill C-32, her government – and the vast majority of parliamentarians from all parties – voted overwhelmingly to support a Bloc Québécois motion acknowledging Quebec's desire to unilaterally amend the Canadian Constitution to state that "Quebecers form a nation" and that French be the only official and common language of "the Quebec nation." This type of terminology in the Constitution would change the way courts interpret our rights and could fundamentally alter our linguistic minority community's relationship with the Government of Canada.

For his part, Christopher Skeete, Parliamentary Assistant to the Premier for Relations with English-speaking Quebecers, claimed that Bill 96 does "not infringe on the rights of Anglophones to obtain access to health services in English." In reality, the bill raises profound concerns. These include, among other encroachments on our existing rights: a redefinition of who is eligible for services in English; creation of procedural barriers in the courts; and a massive upheaval in the system for access to bilingual health care.

Quebec Premier François Legault and Minister Jolin-Barrette had both assured our community that the government's objective was not to take away or diminish the rights of English-speaking Quebecers, divide the two language groups, or act to the detriment of the institutions of our community. Unfortunately, it is crystal clear Bill 96 would have the opposite effect. And the deeper we dig, the more worried we become.

Instead, proposed changes to the Charter of the French Language (Bill 101) override the fundamental human rights of all Quebecers and threaten to erode the vitality of our English-speaking minority community. As discussed in our panels, the bill pre-emptively invokes the notwithstanding clause and shelters the Charter of the French Language from all the rights and freedoms Quebecers enjoy under both the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the Quebec Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms.

Linguistic Duality Crumbling

These bills are about our values and the Quebec and Canada in which we want to live. Linguistic duality has long served as a strong and sustaining pillar of Canada. Now, that pillar is crumbling under the weight of Bill 96 and Bill C-32. We, as a community, must do everything we can to reinforce that pillar.

The governments of Canada and Quebec are responsible for protecting and promoting both the French language and our linguistic minority community. Sustaining our linguistic duality is part of Canada's core mission, a vital attribute of our national character. It relies heavily on the presence and vitality of official language minority communities in Quebec and

Quebec and all of Canada serve as an example to the world, demonstrating how two linguistic communities can live together in mutual respect, cooperation, and prosperity. These values must be upheld by both our federal and provincial governments. The QCGN unequivocally supports the equality of English and French – Canada’s official languages – and we will advocate resolutely to defend our community’s interests as both of our governments devise new language regimes.

Today I reiterate the identical conclusion. As proud Quebecers with deep attachments to this province, English-speaking Quebecers understand that Francophones are concerned about the future of their language within a sea of English across North America. We believe that French can and must be protected. But this can and must be achieved without diminishing the vitality and viability of Quebec’s English-speaking communities, which are increasingly fragile.

We remain determined to serve as a crucial and constructive voice throughout the language debates now under way.

Letter-writing campaign

For now, the QCGN’s primary focus is on Bill 96. It represents a true and immediate danger. The bill to enforce and reinforce Bill 101 is a wide-ranging and complex piece of legislation that would significantly overhaul Quebec’s legal order. It amends the Charter of the French Language, 24 other provincial statutes, and one regulation – not to mention the Constitution Act of 1867.

This would have a direct and grave impact on the rights of English-speaking Quebecers and on our community’s vitality. Bill 96’s provisions to amend the Canadian Constitution by writing in Quebec nationhood and a declaration that French is Quebec’s only official language would result in major legal and political consequences across Canada.

Constitutionally entrenching recognition of a sub-provincial, rights-holding nation within Quebec represents a significant change to Canada’s constitutional architecture. At a minimum, this proposed amendment requires further discussion so that the implications are made clear to Quebecers and all Canadians.

QCGN rejects the notion that our governments can set aside our fundamental freedoms in the name of the collective good. Governments do not decide what rights and freedoms individual Canadians may be permitted to possess. Governments are accountable to us – not the other way around.

As part of our campaign to ensure the voice of English-speaking Quebecers is fully heard on Bill 96, we invite you to click on <https://no2notwithstanding.com/> There you will be able to generate a letter to Premier François Legault, Language Minister Simon Jolin-Barrette, and your local MNA to express your concerns about the bill and in particular its use of the notwithstanding clause to override the rights and freedoms of Quebecers.

To be better informed, we also invite you to visit the [Language Rights page](#) on the QCGN website as well as the [#OuiOurQuebec](#) website for more information.

Too Few English-speaking Voices

As we were putting together the Network News on Tuesday, we learned that the National Assembly’s special consultations and public hearings on Bill 96, will be held from for nine days between September 29 and October 7. The Committee on Culture and Education is scheduled to hear from 50 groups and individuals – but only three groups from representing Quebec’s English-speaking community, including the QCGN.

Considering the complexity and scope of the proposed legislative changes, the proposal to invoke the notwithstanding clause to bypass both the provincial and federal rights changes, and the fact that it involves an amendment to the Canadian Constitution – this is simply not acceptable. If passed, Bill 96 would impact all aspects of our society from education to access to justice, business and health and social services.

It is wrong for the Quebec government to limit the debate to and to restrict the input largely to supporters of the Bill. It is wrong to limit our contribution to three voices. It is critical that voices of Quebecers are heard and that the public hearing process is comprehensive.

Read [QCGN’s statement](#).in [The Montreal Gazette](#). Also consult full details including the

QCGN Recognizes Indigenous People on Whose Territories We Live, Work and Play



We began our recent conference on May 21 by acknowledging National Indigenous Peoples Day – a day recognizing and celebrating the cultures and contributions of the First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Indigenous peoples of Canada.

Self-declared as Indian Day by Jules Sioui and chiefs from across Turtle Island (North America) in 1945, it was proclaimed in 1996 as National Aboriginal Day by the then Governor General of Canada, Roméo LeBlanc. With the support of Assembly of First Nations National Chief Perry Bellegarde, the federal government in 2017 renamed it National Indigenous Peoples Day, using the terminology of the landmark United Nations' Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. This date was chosen for many reasons, including its cultural significance as the summer solstice, a day on which many Indigenous peoples and communities traditionally celebrate their heritage.

In the spirit of the celebrating of our Indigenous ancestors, I announced that the QCGN Board has resolved to move forward on a land acknowledgement policy that would recognize the Indigenous people on whose traditional territories we live, work, and meet today. The QCGN intends to reach out to Indigenous leaders in our community to formulate a respectful and accurate land and territorial acknowledgement and to discuss and develop ways and practices to create good relationships and meaningful connections with local and provincial Indigenous communities. This will mark an important step toward recognition and respect for Indigenous peoples, both in the past and the present, and the contributions they have made to our community, our province, and our nation.

ASYMMETRY WOULD UNDERMINE EQUALITY OF FRENCH AND ENGLISH, SENATE COMMITTEE REPORTS

By Stephen Thompson

QCGN Director of Government Relations, Policy and Research

We have come a long way from the consensus that was reached two seemingly long years ago over how to modernize Canada's Official Languages Act, the QCGN told the **Standing Senate Committee on Official Languages** (OLLO) this spring. The stakes are much higher now!

Last week OLLO updated its **study** on the modernization of the Official Languages Act, after conducting a study on the **Government of Canada's proposed reforms** to the Act. On May 31, QCGN President Marlene Jennings and Board member Sen. Joan Fraser appeared before OLLO for its study of the Government of Canada's proposed reforms contained in the report, **French and English: Towards Substantive Equality of Official Languages in Canada**, presented in February by Official Languages



Minister Mélanie Joly. After years of study and consultations with official language minority communities, the document provides the government's blueprint for modernizing Canada's Official Languages Act. The QCGN submitted this **brief** to the committee.

"We are no longer talking about making mechanical improvements to the Act," Marlene

constitutional order. The federal partner has been out-manoeuvred. The government and opposition parties had set their focus on short-term political gain and were content to cede the constitutional initiative to Quebec.”

QCGN told the committee that language rights in Canada are structural components of our Constitution and that the Government of Canada is proposing to restructure this foundation without a clear legal understanding about how these changes will affect the interpretation of language rights by the courts. Quebec’s constitutional amendment further muddies the water.

Sen. Fraser told her former colleagues that the goal of promoting and protecting the French language and culture is not only laudable but is both vital and essential.

“We cannot allow the government’s proposals on official language reforms to move forward until Canadians understand the full ramifications of these changes on their daily lives and the nation’s future,” she said. “But a policy of asymmetry and territorialization is badly misguided,” she added: “The precedent this sets will ultimately harm all official language minorities, and it could conceivably have destructive effects on the Canadian federation. That is why we are urging you to denounce any form of asymmetry and territorialization of federally recognized language rights.” Read [our testimony](#) and coverage by [ONFR](#).

Last week, QCGN was pleased to note that the Standing Senate Committee on Official Languages highlighted the following key points:

1. Stakeholders all recognized the unique reality and vulnerable status of the French language and the importance of progressing toward the substantive equality of Canada’s official languages. The proposed means for doing so, however, elicited varying reactions. The addition of asymmetrical components in the Official Languages Act could undermine the principle of the equality of status of French and English recognized by the Act and the Canadian Constitution. A careful review of the proposed measures and their impacts is now required, with consideration given to the specific needs and challenges of Quebec’s English-speaking communities.
2. The idea of including the language obligations of federally regulated private businesses in the Act raised questions and provoked varied reactions. Some stakeholders are concerned that the addition of legislative obligations solely targeting the French language and Francophones, or specific provinces, would violate the principle of the equality of status of French and English recognized by the Act and the Canadian Constitution. As the committee was unable to review the findings of the expert panel on the language of work and service of federally regulated private businesses, these proposed measures and their impacts will need to be carefully reviewed after the expert panel has determined them.

The Senate study was focused on the government’s reform document, not Bill C-32. However, C-32 effectively captures the ideas put forward in [English and French: Towards a substantive equality of official languages in Canada](#). Key points raised in the testimony and briefs foreshadow what lies ahead if and when Bill C-32 goes to committee.

COMMISSIONER RAISES CONCERNS ABOUT ASYMMETRY

By Rita Legault

QCGN Director of Communications and Public Relations

In his 2020-2021 Annual Report tabled in the House of Commons on June 1, Canada’s Commissioner of Official Languages Raymond Th  berge noted he was “pleased to see that the Government of Canada’s proposed overhaul is based on the principle of substantive equality, because beyond guaranteeing the equal status of English and French, the new Act must provide the means to actually achieve this equality.”

The QCGN congratulated Commissioner Th  berge for taking a principled stand in defence of the equality of Canada’s two official languages. “We concur with his recommendation that



vitality of both of Canada's official language minority communities," we stated in our [press release](#).

We also noted, as we had before the Senate committee, that the guarantee of legal symmetry in the Official Languages Act is particularly important at this time because Quebecers are faced with a provincial government that is doubling down on language regulations that would further restrict the rights of English-speaking Quebecers.

In his report, the Commissioner also identified a significant flaw in the government's reform proposal – that support to institutions under Quebec's jurisdiction requires provincial cooperation in order to ensure resources actually reach our institutions and that they are used for stated intentions. This observation underscores another important, longstanding issue for English-speaking Quebecers and the organizations that support them – the need to ensure transparency and accountability regarding federal transfers to Quebec, most notably the funds earmarked to support minority and second-language education.

As he presented his annual overview of the current state of official languages, Commissioner Th  berge reported a "glaring lack of bilingual capacity within the federal public service" and noted that the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted systemic problems within federal institutions.

"During times of crisis, the limited capacity of federal institutions to provide services to the public in both official languages becomes apparent. If a federal institution has underestimated the level of language skills required for its employees, despite the tasks and duties of their positions, then during an emergency situation, those employees will likely be unable to respond to the public with the same attention to detail and quality of service in both official languages." The Commissioner also noted in his report that federal public servants do not always feel comfortable using the non-predominant official language at work.

Read the Commissioner's [Annual Report](#) and view his [video message](#). Also see coverage by [Radio Canada](#), [Le Devoir](#), and [La Presse](#).

OUR PLACE IN QUEBEC AND CANADA

On the evening of June 21 and the morning of June 22, the QCGN held a policy conference entitled Our Place in Quebec and Canada. This was the latest in a series of QCGN online events designed to more fully educate English-speaking Quebecers about language rights.

In light of the Government of Canada's proposals to amend the Official Languages Act and the tabling of Bill 96, the conference gathered QCGN members, stakeholders, and English-speaking Quebecers to discuss the rights of Canada's official language minority communities as well as human rights and priorities for English-speaking Quebecers. You can view [Part 1](#) (Monday evening) and [Part 2](#) (Tuesday morning) of the conference on QCGN's YouTube channel. For those of you who attended, please let us know what you thought of the conference by completing this short survey: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/F275ZYF>

For more on the conference, read this column by Montreal Gazette commentator Allison Hanes and coverage by [CTV Montreal](#). A news story by [La Presse Canadienne](#) was also published in Le Devoir and by l'Actualit  . Register [here](#) to receive information about future webinars.

Meanwhile you can also view all of our past webinars on the QCGN's [YouTube channel](#). As



regarding the federal Official Languages Act and Quebec's Charter of the French Language. Our goal is to help our community react on a strong, evidence-based basis to upcoming consultations on the legislative developments that will have a deep impact on our community. The blog also contains QCGN policy positions, analysis, news, and information, as well as links to important resources. It will serve as a rallying point to inform members and stakeholders of what is at stake and help ensure they participate in full in this critical debate.

QCGN GATHERS AND PUBLISHES 2022-2023 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES

By Riley Dalys-Fine

Manager of Community Outreach and Engagement

Following our annual survey of organizations serving English-speaking Quebecers, the Quebec Community Groups Network is pleased to present the 2022-2023 Community Development Priorities.

The survey was distributed over a two-week period to more than 200 organizations to collect feedback and insight from stakeholders. After careful analysis of survey responses, the QCGN published the list of priorities on our website and sent it to the Department of Canadian Heritage, which is committed to using these priorities to allocate resources for program and project funding for the next fiscal year.

Strategic Growth Plan

Surveying the community to directly assess its collective needs, challenges, and priorities is not new for the QCGN. Between 2012 and 2019, our Priority-Setting Steering Committee (PSSC) conducted an annual online survey to monitor evolving priorities for building community vitality. Priorities were shared with Canadian Heritage, which used them to identify development opportunities as well as interdepartmental and intradepartmental initiatives. With increased investment through Canada's Action Plan for Official Languages – 2018-2023: Investing in Our Future, the PSSC proposed in 2018 that the community develop a growth plan to bolster its priority-setting process. The QCGN has managed this process since 2019 as part of its mission to act as a centre of evidence-based expertise and collective action and to encourage dialogue and collaboration.

"The Strategic Growth Plan establishes a process for the community to exercise collective control over resources allocated to it," explains Sylvia Martin-Laforge, Director General of the QCGN. "To do this, the process relies on ongoing consultations with community stakeholders to build consensus on the key challenges facing Quebec's English-speaking community and the organizations that serve it." Between January 2020 and May 2021, the QCGN hosted ten consultations and spoke with dozens of community representatives in an ongoing effort to build consensus and mobilize organizations toward collective action.



This year's survey was the first conducted through the Growth Plan, proposing a set of priorities based on output from the previous consultations for community validation. These grassroots priorities are pertinent to decisionmakers in all federal departments and agencies and other levels of government, and we invite them to take these priorities into account when allocating resources to organizations and

institutions serving our community.

While the finalization of these priorities represents an important milestone in the Strategic Growth Plan, it is by no means the end of the process. Our community continues to face multiple challenges which must be addressed through collective action. Over the summer, the QCGN will continue to engage community stakeholders to lay the framework for a multi-

identity and address the strategic issues affecting the development and vitality of the English-speaking community. QCGN would be unable to achieve these goals without active input, so please stay tuned!

PROVINCIAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2018-2019: CONTESTED AND TROUBLING

By Michael Udy

Director of Access to Health and Social Services

This past March, 18 months late, the **2018-2019 Annual Report** of the **Provincial Committee for the Provision of Health Services and Social Services in the English Language**, often referred to as the Provincial Advisory Committee, was posted on the provincial health ministry's website.

Disruption caused by the COVID-19 public health emergency provides one part of the explanation. Concern over some of the content among bureaucrats within the Ministère de la santé et des services sociaux (MSSS) provides the other.

During the delay, the QCGN lodged two Access to Information requests with the ministry. These were rendered moot when the report was finally posted.

The report takes stock of the access program process over the last 15 years. It highlights limitations in the definition of the content of access programs, which can only cover the services of public institutions. Only those health and social services listed in access programs are guaranteed to be accessible in English.

When a service is not available in English, access programs must explain what other means will be taken within the region or within another region to make the service available. The linguistic requirements for the hiring and assignment of staff needed to deliver services must also be described.

The guarantee of access to services in English by means of access programs is an incomplete guarantee. Some important services were never and may never be covered in access programs because they are not managed by a public institution. The best example is ambulance services. A person may be able to communicate in English with an ambulance technician or the 911 operator, but not because it is guaranteed. This can have major negative health outcomes. A Provincial Advisory Committee **opinion** (in French only) regarding this issue is also on the ministry's website.

The contents of access programs can change over time. During the last two decades, the public network has undergone two major reforms, as well as further service delivery development. Provision of services in some areas – for instance for seniors, for the intellectually handicapped, and for mental health services, as well as medical and surgical follow-ups – have with the passage of time been gradually shifted into the community through clinics, and intermediate and family resources instead of a public institution. Unless these private resources have an agreement with a public institution that requires the service to be available in English, there is no guarantee it will be. For all these reasons, the Provincial Advisory Committee takes the view that the scope of what is legally guaranteed in English has decreased over time, because structural reforms were not accompanied by corresponding Access Program policy and legislative adjustments.

Despite the ministry's stated intention 15 years ago, no evaluation of access programs has been conducted. Evaluation would in fact be difficult, because no data is collected documenting requests for or deliveries of services in English.

The Committee is not concerned about these issues just as a matter of rights. These particular rights allow English-speaking Quebecers access to something even more important: the ability to benefit from the same positive health outcomes as the rest of the



existing [Guide pour l'élaboration du programme d'accès aux services de santé et aux services sociaux en langue anglaise](#) (French only) that the public institutions consult in the development of their access programs. The Committee also provides preliminary advice on how to revise the guide to make it more helpful.

In addition, the report summarizes important steps taken by the Committee. These include its collaboration with the QCGN and Community Health and Social Service Network (CHSSN) to identify the list of organizations in each region that can nominate candidates to be considered by the integrated health centres (CISSSs and CIUSSSs) for seats on Regional Access Committees. This applies everywhere but for Montreal, where the organizations are selected by the two integrated health centres that have bilingual designations.

The Provincial Advisory Committee recommended comprehensive training for Regional Access Committee members to help them assume their responsibilities. The report notes that this training was not delivered, hampering the regional committees in their work. The Committee is now reviewing the access programs that were prepared under the existing Guide. It is scheduled to deliver its opinion on the access programs to the Minister in the coming months.

Over the past few months, the QCGN has been preparing communications tools to explain what rights English-speaking Quebecers have in relation to the public health and social services network. This will cover the right to services themselves, and the right to participate in governance aspects of the network. A series of interviews with people involved in and knowledgeable about the system will be twinned with a series of more technical information sheets focused on the same subjects. Both tools will be accessible to anyone and downloadable for use by organizations and individuals wanting to understand and explain these particular rights. The project has been funded by Quebec's Ministry of Health and Social Services.

DO YOU WANT TO RECEIVE QUEBEC GOVERNMENT DOCUMENTS IN ENGLISH?

By Michael Udy
Director of Access to Health and Social Services

The Quebec Community Groups Network encourages members of the English-speaking community to register on the Régie de l'assurance maladie du Québec (RAMQ) list of Quebecers who want communication in English, if this corresponds to their wishes. While the RAMQ, which administers the province's public health insurance plan, does not make a practice of using spoken English in a consistent manner, it will send written documents in English (renewal forms, notices etc.) if the person has asked to be placed on the list for this purpose.

There is a secondary benefit: other parts of the government have used this list in mailing campaigns when it has decided to send English versions of documents. This was done, for instance, when the government sent notices to peoples' home addresses in spring 2021 encouraging them to get vaccinated against COVID-19. Being on the RAMQ list may get you other documents and communications in English, if the government has decided to do so. It is not clear at the moment what determines such decisions.

It is easy to become registered. Call RAMQ at 1-800-561-9749. Wait until the end of the menu for the prompt: "For information in English press 9." In the next menu listing, which will be in English, we suggest you select number 4 for the Quebec Health Booklet and other services. This selection leads to a real person, whereas the other choices may not. Ask the agent to indicate in your file that you wish to receive all your correspondence in English. You may have to make the request in French, as not all agents speak English. If you encounter any problem with this, please send us a description by email using info@qcgnc.ca.

PREPARING FOR THE NEXT FEDERAL ELECTION

In a minority government situation, election dates are unpredictable. As a result, we need to be ready sooner rather than later in the event an election is triggered. The QCGN is partnering with Elections Canada and the Inspire Democracy Network to help Quebec's English-speaking community prepare for the next federal election.

Quebec's English-speaking population makes up more than 1.1 million people. Our voices should be heard. There are a total of 78 federal ridings across Quebec. In 19 of these, English-speakers constitute at least 20 per cent of the electorate. In an additional 12 ridings, we make up at least 10 per cent of voters. Our voices can make a significant impact on electoral results and that our community should get as involved as possible.

The first step is to confirm you are **registered to vote** and that you have the required **voter identification**. Next, we can explore how things might look different about voting this time around if we are still in the midst of a pandemic. Different voting options are outlined **here**. Thinking about running for office yourself? You will want all the information you can get. You can find it all **here**.

Most importantly however, Elections Canada wants to ensure greater participation from our community in staffing the next election. It wants to hire bilingual English-speaking Quebecers to work at the polls. Because Elections Canada wants to boost participation from under-represented groups, it has partnered with the QCGN to spread the word and encourage recruitment throughout the English-speaking community.

Before the next election, thousands of workers will have to be hired to work at the hundreds of polling stations in Quebec. These jobs are paid, and the pay will vary depending on the position. If you are unsure as to whether you are trained for such a job, there is no need to worry; everybody will get trained, and training time is paid as well.

If you are still unsure about what role you could possibly occupy, consult the Elections Canada **toolkit**. You can apply today to start the process. Any organization that wants to become more involved is encouraged to join the **Inspire Democracy Network**.

The federal government has a duty to provide services in both official languages. To be able to do so, and for our rights to be respected, we need members of our community to get involved. This provides a great opportunity for those young and old to help. So: apply, spread the word, and let's be ready for the next federal election.

BISHOP'S FORUM BACK FOR 2021

By Riley Dalys-Fine

QCGN Manager of Community Outreach and Engagement

AUGUST 13-17
CONNECTING QUEBEC'S ENGLISH-SPEAKING YOUTH
THE BISHOP'S FORUM
BISHOP'S FORUM 2021
LEADERSHIP | NETWORKING | COMMUNITY

This initiative is supported by the Government of Québec's
 Secrétariat aux relations avec les Québécois d'expression anglaise.

If you are between 18 and 26 and you're interested in Quebec society, how our province works and how you can make a difference, don't miss the Bishop's Forum!

After offering the program remotely for Summer 2020, the Forum is back for another year and hopes to offer some in-person activities. Now in its fifth year, the Bishop's Forum provides a space for discussions that are driven by youth interest and passions.

Past participants have described the event as a "great opportunity for networking" as well as a source of "hope about living in Quebec ... and what I want Quebec to become in the coming years."

The Forum begins Friday, Aug. 13 and continues until the afternoon of Tuesday, Aug. 17. Young English-speaking Quebecers aged 18 to 26 are invited to attend for the opportunity to work with their peers to bring about positive change in their community.

mix of in-person and virtual activities. There is no cost to participants. Transportation, room and board are covered.

This year's program will feature speakers, workshops, and activities and address themes including what it means to be a Quebec citizen and how the media engages in and influences political discourse in the province. The final day of the Forum will include a mock Parliamentary Commission to explore ideas and proposals formulated by Forum participants.

Register [here](#). Updates will also be posted throughout the summer on social media, so be sure to follow the Bishop's Forum on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [Twitter](#). If you have any questions, please feel free to contact shaddon@ubishops.ca.

BRIAN ROCK AND LYNN TRAVERS HONOURED BY RETIRED SCHOOL EDUCATORS' ASSOCIATION

Condensed from the spring 2021 edition of QPARSE News



This year's Outstanding Contribution to Education Award from the **Quebec Provincial Association of Retired School Educators** was presented to Brian Rock, now retired from a career as a teacher and administrator.

With his McGill University education certification in hand, Brian began his career as an English and Social Studies teacher. He taught secondary English for the Protestant School Board of Greater Montreal (PSBGM), and English and History at Baie Comeau High School. He was also a teaching assistant in the Department of Political Science at Carleton University in

Ottawa, and taught advanced English as a Second Language at the CEGEP of Baie Comeau. Brian's leadership skills shone brightly throughout his career. Before retirement, Brian he served as President of the Baie Comeau Teachers Association and Principal of Baie Comeau High School and of New Richmond High School with the Eastern Shores School Board. His expertise and perspective were sought after, and he was asked to be a member of the Advisory Board on English Education. He also served as Executive Director of the Regional Association of Western Quebecers.

On the volunteer front, Brian has been a member of QPARSE; of the Retirees Group of the Administrators Association AAESQ; of the Quebec Federation of Home and School Associations, of which he was president; and as a member of the Board of Directors of the Quebec Community Groups Network. His background and passion for all things political also led him to become a columnist with the Aylmer Bulletin, the Pontiac Journal, and the West Quebec Post.

Brian has held many titles over his long and varied career: coach, teacher, principal, advisor, member, president, representative, and chairman.

"All of these titles show one thing – Brian is a doer and has always been actively involved in many areas of education, from teaching, to leading, to advising, to representing, and when needed to criticizing in order to right wrongs," writes QPARSE's Jan Langelier, in the spring edition of QPARSE News. "Brian cares deeply about education and in particular about the rights of Anglophones in this province. We are all beholden to Brian for this dedication and commitment, and I am honoured to have known him. Brian cares deeply, expends great amounts of energy for the causes he believes in and makes things happen! His leadership skills shine as brightly as ever and QPARSE is proud to bestow the Outstanding Contribution to Education Award for 2021."

Lynn Travers

Membership Award.

"Lynn expressed her passion for education as a well-respected teacher and principal before taking up a position in the Ministry of Education as an Education specialist. Several Assistant Deputy Ministers made good use of Lynn's pedagogical expertise, her knowledge of the education system, and especially her dedication to everything she tackles," says Dr. Kate Le Maistre, chair of ABEE. "Lynn has been the secretary of the Advisory Board for English Education since 2009, and I have seen firsthand her commitment, attention to detail, clear perspective and her willingness to make things happen."

At the Education Ministry, Lynn strove to find ways to increase the capacity of school boards and schools to make a difference to the students they served. "Working with like-minded people has been the best part of my career. Being part of the group that wanted to move education forward has always motivated and encouraged me," says Travers. This dovetailed perfectly with her philosophy that "you have to care about children and be non-judgmental, since that is the foundation of good education."

Travers was most interested in the social equity aspect of education and ensuring that educators are able to provide for the needs of all students. "Children," she notes, "don't all start out with the same opportunities."

Lynn would like to see a greater emphasis on life-long learning, and more opportunities for this to be made available in the public domain. Why not, she asks, have multi-generational schools to increase learning opportunities for all ages? Her guiding principle: if you are there for people, they invariably will be there for you too!

Working with ABEE helped Lynn keep a pulse on education. "It's important to be present in the educational community as we speak for the English community," she says. "In ABEE, our role is to highlight the challenges faced by the English schools and suggest remedies.

However, we also have the opportunity to share with the Minister all the great initiatives taken by the schools and the boards, and their successes."

Read the full stories on Brian Rock and Lynn Travers in the spring 2021 edition of **QPARSE News**.

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