

The English-language school system in Québec: Who cares?

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Minority Community Vitality through Education, 2018-10-30

What is an English school in Québec?



Photo and caption by Ray Baillie
The Tibbits Hill schoolhouse, Tibbits Hill Rd. (near Knowlton).



What is an English school in Québec?

- often an essential hub of the community
- offers a bilingual education
- focus on the child
- prepares students for the larger world beyond the school yard
- belongs to a system of nine school boards
- provides for equality of educational opportunity through distance education
- maintains traditions and culture, yet accepts, supports and values diversity
- open to change
- an inclusive school
- a successful school
- gives a sense of belonging to students and parents
- fosters parents' involvement

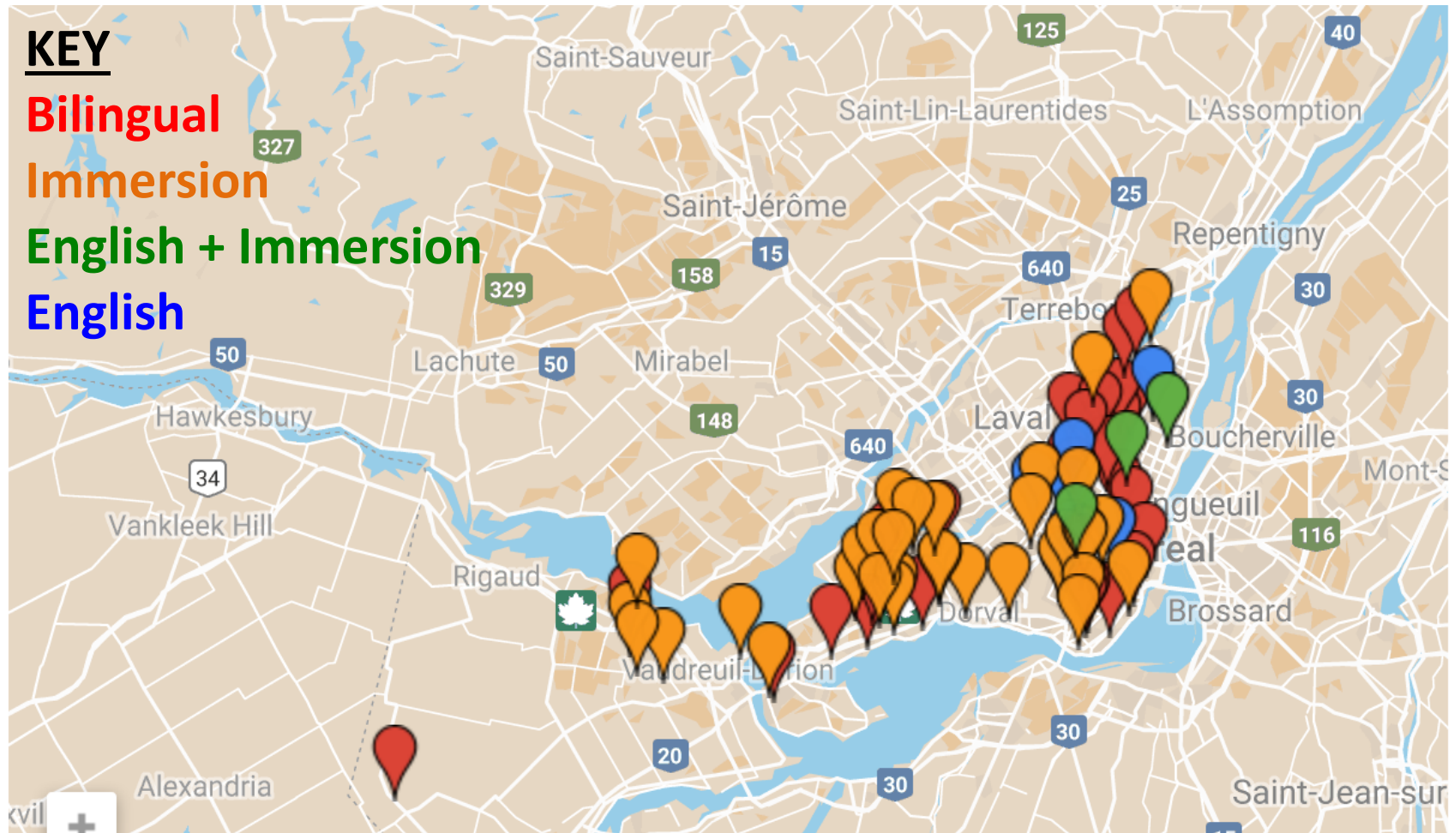
BUT

- an endangered school – demographic decline

What is an English school?

- Every English school in Québec is a microcosm of the community it serves....
- Québec's English schools can be almost as different from each other as they are from their French-language counterparts. English schools are a product of their surroundings and of who attends them.
- They are not monolithic. The linguistic and cultural affinities they share do not form a mould into which they all fit. They are shaped by their clients and the communities in which their clients live, the newspapers they read, the radio stations they listen to, the associations they belong to, the churches they attend, and the cultural and demographic mix of their neighbourhoods. *(ABEE 1999)*

Language programs in the EMSB and LBPSB



2013 leaving examination success rate

School Board	French	History & Citizenship
English Montreal	92.4	74.8
Lester-B. Pearson	93.4	77.1
Marguerite Bourgeois	87.7	80.3
C.S de Montréal	83.8	70.1

How are Québec's English schools stacking up? Amy Luft, CTV. September 16, 2014

2017 leaving examination success rate

School Board	French (language of instruction)	History & Citizenship
English Montreal	90.1	94.6
Lester-B. Pearson	100.0	89.1
Marguerite Bourgeois	87.7	85.5
C.S de Montréal	85.7	76.1



Creating Space for Young Quebecers

STRATEGIC ORIENTATIONS FOR
YOUTH IN QUEBEC



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Lack of confidence

« Moi-même, je suis parfois terrifié à l'idée de parler français. J'ai peur d'être jugé sur mon accent ».

(a Dawson student interviewed by Journal de Montréal)

Culture and heritage

“Interpretations of Quebec history may vary, depending on the students’ perspective and their own cultural identity. The social studies curriculum must introduce young people from both communities, French- and English-speaking, to the different ways in which certain historical facts common to the two communities are interpreted by their respective communities.”

Paul Inchauspé

In 1999 (ABEE) [Culture and English Schools in Play](#)

Culture and heritage

ABEE (1999) cited:

“Culture and Education: A Committed Partnership,” an agreement signed April 9, 1997, by the Minister of Education, Pauline Marois, and the Minister of Culture and Communications, Louise Beaudoin.

ABEE suggested that it “explore ways of preserving and promoting the cultural heritage of English-speaking Quebecers.”

There was established a committee on culture and education, chaired by M. François Legault

Indigenous issues

- ...the remoteness and inaccessibility of the communities, poverty, the ... high cost of food ... and infrastructure problems, are outside the scope of educational solutions, although they combine to have a profound effect on educational outcomes.
- Indigenous people have suffered a loss of identity through the loss of the culture embedded in their languages.
- Education is the key to empowering Indigenous people to stay in their communities, or to return to them after college and university as professionals and entrepreneurs, but it must also give them the option of moving away and contributing to the wider community, if that is their choice.
- Elders play a key role in transmitting knowledge and in preserving community traditions and heritage

(ABEE 2017)

Perception of bias

[Une jeune femme] dit avoir appliqué sur une centaine d'emplois à Montréal. En cinq mois, elle s'est fait convoquer pour une seule entrevue.

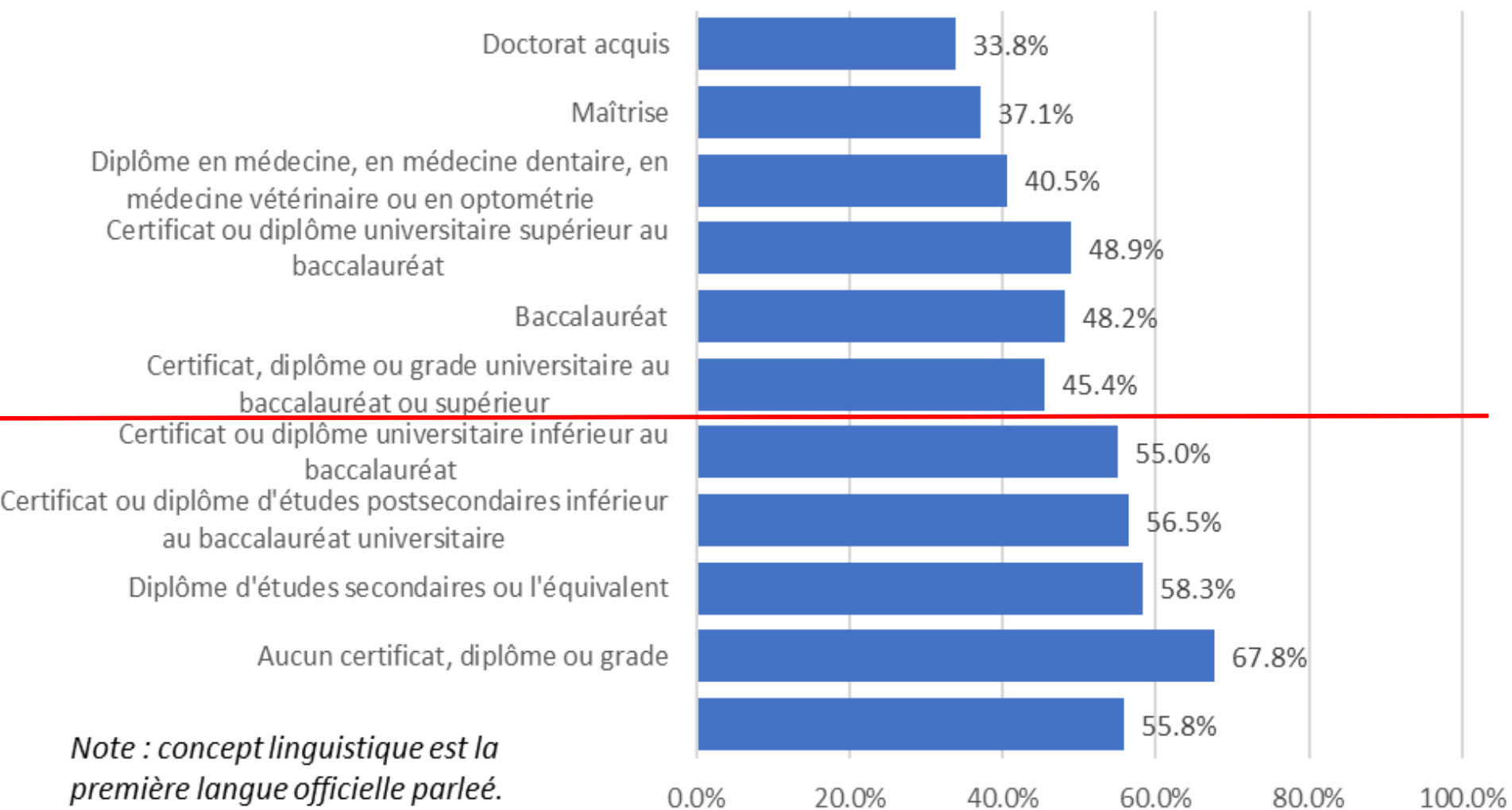
Elle admet que son français est imparfait, mais croit que des employeurs ont ignoré son CV pour des emplois qu'elle aurait pu occuper, simplement parce qu'elle est anglophone.

Perception of a glass ceiling

Un sondage Léger mené pour le compte du *Journal*fait état de frustrations dans la communauté anglophone. De nombreux jeunes rencontrés dans les dernières semaines ne sentent pas qu'ils ont un avenir au Québec et pensent partir. Un peu comme s'ils disaient « Au revoir, *bye* ».

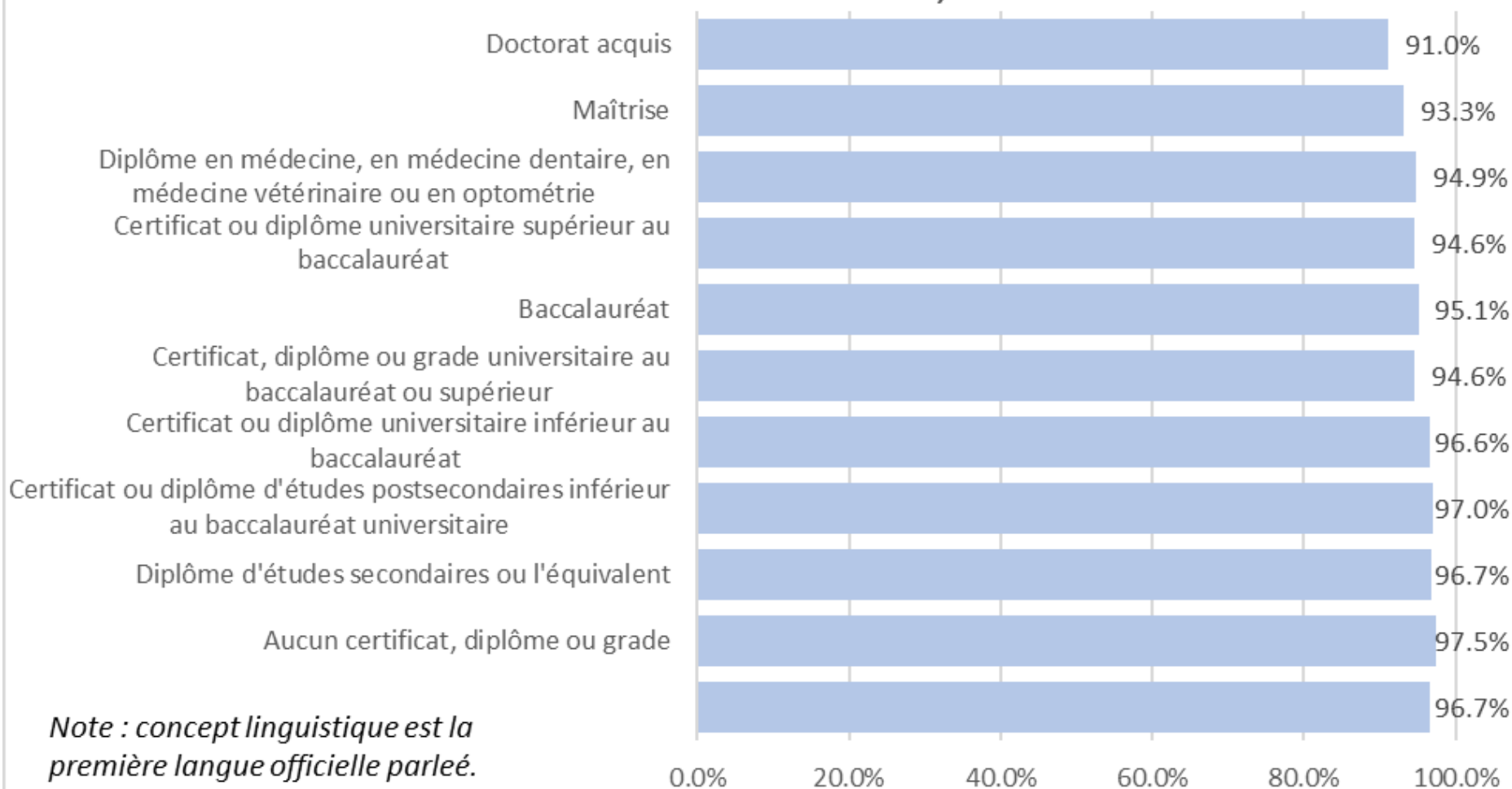
- “Young English-speakers in Quebec acknowledge the charged political history of the province and are ready to fully leave the “two solitudes” behind them through open collaboration and bilingualism.”

Taux de retention pour les Anglophones nés au Québec, selon le niveau educationnel, 2011



Source: Floch, 2017

Taux de retention pour les francophones nés au Québec, selon le niveau educationnel, 2011

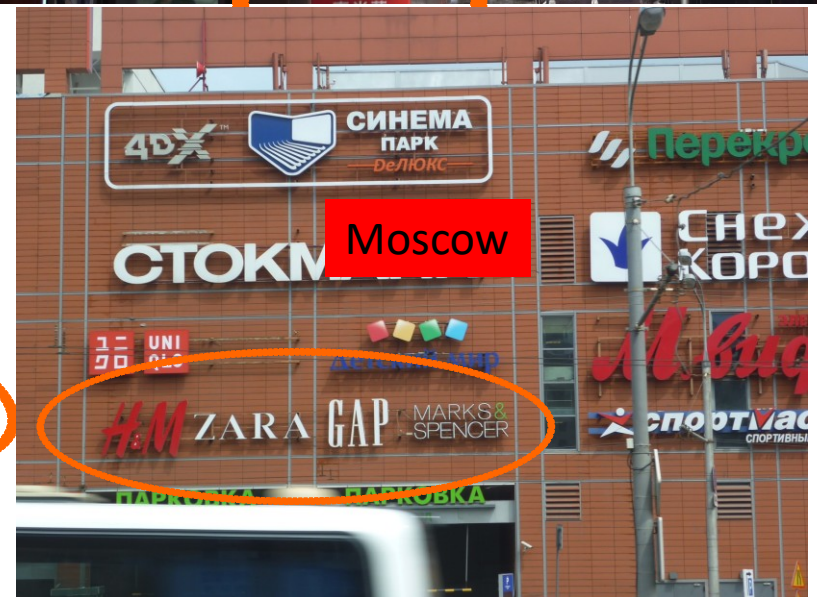


Perception

“That perception [How English-speaking Quebec is perceived by French speaking Quebec] is of... a privileged and threatening, not threatened, minority... French speakers still feel their language, their culture is threatened. Why? Because English is everywhere!”

(André Pratt, The Gazette, Montreal, Sunday, March 6, 2005)

A world-wide issue



Demographic decline

- Declining birthrate affects both the French and the English systems but affects the much smaller English speaking community disproportionately.
- Law 101:
 - Exodus of English speakers to other provinces.
 - Allophones to go to French schools.
- English speaking parents choose to send their children to French schools.

Leadership

- “...But who speaks for anglophones today? Here is an indication of the current leadership problem. There was a time when French journalists always knew who to call when an issue came up in the news concerning English Quebec. They don’t know who to call anymore. Either they don’t call anymore, or they call someone who speaks loudly but is not representative.” (André Pratt)

Frame of reference for the vitality of OLMCs

- Support from the majority and cooperation between the two language groups: Awareness and openness to official languages are not a given. **Cooperation between the two language groups remains essential** to reinforcing the coexistence and development of the two communities.
- **Recognition of and respect for language rights**: They have played a crucial role in community development. In addition, recognition fosters a sense of belonging and **linguistic security among the minority**.
- The relationship of Quebec's Anglophone communities with the majority is unique: the majority French-speaking population in Quebec is a minority within Canada and is concerned about the future of its language. **The goals of each community must be achieved through a scenario where all are satisfied.**

Canadian Heritage (2013)

- “Education is the starting point for revitalizing Québec’s English-speaking communities. This sector of development is the key to transmitting, maintaining the communities’ language, heritage and culture.” (p. 21)

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<<https://sencanada.ca/content/sen/Committee/411/ollo/rep/rep02oct11-e.pdf>>

