

**AQ calls on the Language Minister to examine research on French Immersion in Canada or "second language programs in other countries" and provide French-speaking children in Quebec with the same learning opportunities as their English-speaking counterparts**

**Montreal, August 15, 2000** - Louise Beaudoin's assertion that French-speaking children must master their mother tongue before being introduced to a second or third language is questionable to say the least, said Alliance Quebec President Anthony Housefather.

"How can the Language Minister claim to have reservations about teaching English to French-speaking students as they enter Grade 1 when there are sufficient statistics to prove that French immersion in Canada has been quite successful," said Housefather. "In fact, research has shown that French immersion students perform as well as others in English and in other subjects taught in French." (*The Department of Canadian Heritage, Website, December 15, 1999*)

"Article 4 of the Education Act clearly states that every student, or the student's parents if the student is not of full age, shall have the right to choose the school that best reflects their preferences," said Housefather. "That being said, shouldn't French-speaking parents have access to an English immersion program or rather the same rights and options as English-speaking parents?"

"Even the Convention on the Rights of the Child is clear in this respect," concluded Housefather. "It is, after all, the parents and not the politicians who should determine what is best for their children."

Alliance Quebec calls on the Language Minister to examine research on French Immersion in Canada or "second language programs in other countries" and provide French-speaking children in Quebec with the same learning opportunities as their English-speaking counterparts.