

press releases

Real dialogue takes two voices, Alliance Quebec tells Premier Lucien Bouchard.

Montreal, Feb. 25, 1997 -- Attacks by Premier Lucien Bouchard and some of his ministers on the province's largest minority-rights group are unfounded and unproductive, Alliance Quebec President Michael Hamelin said Tuesday.

"Mr. Bouchard does not appear to understand the concept of dialogue," Hamelin said. "It generally involves two people exchanging views. He tells us what he thinks but he doesn't seem interested when we respond with our views. He condemns us as "radical" and extremist instead of dealing with the issues we raise.

"That is no way to conduct a civilized discourse, let alone build a consensus," Hamelin said.

Mr. Bouchard said Tuesday in *Le Devoir* that he plans to re-introduce the law bringing back the commission de protection de la langue française. The premier suggested this was a gesture of openness to the English-speaking community. Alliance Quebec sees it as another example of the mistrust his government and party have for the ability of all residents of Quebec to make intelligent decisions on language. Many francophones agree with the organization.

In the same article the premier suggested the lack of consensus on his government's recent change in its constitutional stance might delay implementation of linguistic school boards. Hamelin urged him not to confuse the two issues.

"Mr. Bouchard and myself are both parents," Hamelin said. "Surely he must agree with me that the best interests of the children should take priority over any constitutional argument in education.

"The Quebec government changed its constitutional approach on education a month ago," Hamelin said. "Alliance Quebec has been in favor of linguistic school boards for more than a decade. Education Minister Pauline Marois said they can come into effect without changing the Constitution. Mr. Bouchard should let her get on with the job."

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