

For immediate release

Tradition Allows MNA Coiteux to Speak English in National Assembly

Montreal – April 25, 2017 – After being parachuted into a safe majority English-speaking riding in the last provincial election, Municipal Affairs Minister Martin Coiteux refused to speak the language of his constituents in the National Assembly this afternoon.

“I am going to stick to tradition in this Assembly and I will answer in French,” Coiteux said after being asked a question in English by opposition MNA Amir Khadir.

“This is an affront to his constituents and to the English-speaking community of Quebec,” said QCGN President James Shea. “The tradition in the National Assembly is Section 133 of the 1867 Constitution Act which clearly states that French or English may be used in debates in the National Assembly.”

“It would be worth reminding Mr. Coiteux that some 44,980 of his constituents in the West Island riding of Nelligan, and more than 1 million Quebecers, have a tradition of speaking English,” Shea commented.

Quebec’s constitutional obligation to legislate in French and English derives from section.133 of the Constitution Act, 1867, which requires that the Acts of the Parliament of Canada and of the Legislature of Québec be printed and published in both languages.

According to the National Assembly’s Parliamentary Procedure, since 1964, the Journal des débats, or Hansard, provides a faithful record of all that is said by Members of the National Assembly and anyone else who takes the floor, whether in the House or in committee. Statements made in French or English are transcribed in full in the original language and not translated. When another easily identifiable language is used, that fact is noted but the words are not transcribed.

The Quebec Community Groups Network (www.qcgn.ca) is a not-for-profit organization bringing together 53 English-language community organizations across Quebec. As a centre of evidence-based expertise and collective action it identifies, explores and addresses strategic issues affecting the development and vitality of the English-speaking community of Quebec and encourages dialogue and collaboration among its member organizations, individuals, community groups, institutions and leaders.

For further information:

Rita Legault, Director of Communications and Public Relations | rita.legault@qcgn.ca

Telephone: 514-868-9044, ext. 223, cellular: 514-912-6555