

# **ENGLISH-SPEAKING QUEBECERS AND THE FEDERAL ELECTION**

## **...We have some questions!**

English-speaking Quebecers have some specific areas of concern as they join other Canadians in preparing to cast their votes on June 2nd.

- On Canadian unity,**
- On the future of Canada's commitment to a bilingual nation,**
- On the federal government's role in protecting the institutions of and services to some 800,000 English-speaking Quebecers.**

## **WE HAVE SOME QUESTIONS!**

Alliance Quebec is looking for clear and detailed answers from candidates for each party seeking office on June 2nd. That is why this document will be sent to all party leaders and to candidates in various ridings across the province. We believe their answers will help English-speaking Quebecers vote responsibly -- and in our communities' best interests on Canada's Election Day.

## **WE HAVE SOME QUESTIONS:**

### **ON CANADIAN UNITY**

English-speaking Quebecers are proud and committed Canadians. We very nearly lost our country on October 30, 1995. We don't want it to happen again.

Our attachment to Quebec and our conviction that federalism is the only lasting solution for Quebecers and all Canadians make us essential allies in the unity debate. We expect our federal leaders to spell out how they plan to work with Canadians to find that solution.

- 1.If elected, what will you do over the next 24 months to keep Canada together?
- 2 How will you ensure that a renewed Canada respects and promotes the rights of Quebec's English-speaking communities?
- 3.What will you do to guarantee that the rules of any future referendum on Quebec separation fully respects the rules of Canada's Constitution?

## **ON THE PROTECTION AND PROMOTION OF A BILINGUAL CANADA**

Canada is a bilingual nation. The Official Languages Act mandates Parliament to ensure the vitality and development of minority-language communities across the country. Specific responsibilities are given to federal departments and agencies to ensure that English-speaking Quebecers have full access to federal services in our language.

This role affords security to our communities, and to French-speaking communities in the other provinces. In an era of downloading, delegation and devolution of federal powers, we are not prepared to lose these important federal protections.

- 1.Will you fully and clearly support concrete measures to maintain bilingual federal services across Canada?
- 2.In the recently-signed agreement on job training (Manpower), English-language guarantees were included only after a difficult struggle by Alliance Quebec and other community organizations?

What will you do to make sure those guarantees are honored?

What will you do to make sure any future deals with Quebec protect our communities' needs?

- 3.What other measures will you propose to strengthen federal support for English-speaking Quebecers?

## **ON OUR CHILDREN'S EDUCATION**

Under the Constitution of Canada, our Parliament has a clear responsibility to protect minority-language education rights. Parliament will likely be asked after this election to vote on the removal of a section of the Constitution, s. 93, which has offered protection of both confessional and language rights in education. At the same time, the current government of Quebec has proposed to restrict the rights of English-speaking Quebecers to participate in the control and management of their own school system.

1.If elected, how will you vote when asked in Parliament to remove s. 93 protections from the Canadian Constitution, as they pertain to Quebec?

2.Do you believe that English-speaking Quebecers deserve the same constitutional protections regarding their right to education in their language as French-speaking Canadians living in other parts of Canada -- YES or NO?

3.If you answered YES, will you work to have these full protections enacted in the Constitution of Canada?

## **ON OUR INSTITUTIONS**

### **Health care**

Federal money helps fund the positions of co-ordinators in every region of Quebec to ensure English-language health and social services are made available. These co-ordinators serve as a vital link between our communities and the regional health boards, the hospitals, seniors' homes, community clinics and social services agencies. They are paid under an agreement between Quebec and Ottawa that will run out in 1999.

If elected, will you use your influence to demand that this funding agreement be renewed -- and with no further cutbacks by the federal government?

### **The CBC**

Canada's presence in our province is most visible through the federal services offered by our federal government. English-speaking Quebecers worry about this presence being reduced through down-sizing ,privatization and decentralization. The CBC is one of the most essential elements of Canada's presence in Quebec.

1. Will you insist that the federal government act now to restore federal funding assurances to the CBC to ensure its continued survival and development?

### **Community development**

Across Canada, English- and French-speaking minority communities are supported by volunteer-based organizations like Alliance Quebec. Our organizations receive federal funding to promote the needs and concerns of our communities. That funding has been drastically reduced over the past decade.

1. Will you insist that federal funding support for the vitality and development of English-speaking communities in Quebec, and French-speaking communities in the rest of the country, be maintained and strengthened?

2. Will you support the full and vigorous implementation of Canada's Official Languages Act.