

## □ INTERVIEW □

*Recently Jean Drapeau became the new Canadian Ambassador to UNESCO in Paris. The controversy raised by the appointment among the foreign service community did not prevent him from starting a new career. Just before his departure, he was kind enough to agree to the following interview.*

**Sylvie Gauvin:** *How do you see your new position as Ambassador?*

**Jean Drapeau:** To express the views of the government and apply its directives, and to give the Department of External Affairs information that will help it to prepare enlightened instructions. In my view the role of Ambassador consists, not of taking initiatives, but of carrying out instructions.

**S. G.:** *But the Ambassador does have a determining role; he also influences the directives given by the government. He must enlighten...*

**J. D.:** On the personal level, the Ambassador strives to convince those with whom he is dealing of the validity of his government's viewpoints. The Ambassador has no viewpoints to express other than those of the government. He will be a better Ambassador if he uses his personal resources in discussion and negotiation. So his personal input consists of helping to shape the directives, and expressing his government's views as effectively as possible.

**S. G.:** *In what ways do you feel that your experience as Mayor of Montreal for 29 years has prepared you for your new role?*

**J. D.:** It is commonly acknowledged that I guided Montreal into a more international role. This brought me into contact with people from more than half

the world's countries, directly and indirectly. When I look at the list of UNESCO Secretariat members, I see the names of people with whom I have already dealt in my mayoral duties. Over the past 50 years, Montreal has been seeking to live up to its full potential. In doing so Montreal has looked to a number of countries, and has always had an excellent response.

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My experience and my style in the Mayor's office will help to promote dialogue, I believe.

**S. G.:** *Might this be seen as a continuation of your mayoral career on an international level?*

**J. D.:** On an exclusively international level. But in the very specific and very

vast areas of education, science, culture and communications, I have, not a million bosses, as I did in the Mayor's job, but a government to answer to. Actually 10 governments, because when it lies within their jurisdiction, the provinces can express their views to the federal government.

In addition, because he is a diplomat the Ambassador must win the confidence and the attention of the other UNESCO members on the points with which the government directs him to deal, whether the concern is with the actual administration of the Secretariat or with the programs themselves.

**S. G.:** *What are your thoughts on the role that UNESCO should play?*

**J. D.:** First I have to get settled in. Then I will see for myself whether the newspaper accounts tell the whole story. There is no doubt that UNESCO is asked to play a very important role, as it has done for 40 years. This is why it has 160 members, some of which contribute more than others with more limited resources. But it is precisely the lesser contributors that derive the most benefit, from the desire of the heavy contributors to promote education science and culture.

**S. G.:** *But surely you have your own idea on the role that you intend to play in UNESCO?*

**J. D.:** To be as useful as possible to UNESCO and to the Canadian government.

**S. G.:** *What might Canada's role be in UNESCO?*

**J. D.:** To continue as it has been. Canada exercises considerable influence and generally inspires confidence in the international organizations. I have personally observed this on a number of