

My Canada includes Quebec

BIOGRAPHY: JIM TAYLOR

Thirty-eight year old Jim Taylor is no stranger to being part of a cultural minority. He grew up in the rural town of Abbotsford, B.C., then populated largely by Dutch and German farm families, and a small Anglo minority.

Taylor left Abbotsford to attend the University of British Columbia, and achieved a Bachelor Arts in Sociology while working full time as a truck driver to pay his school expenses.

After completing his studies, he went to work in his family's bakery business. Shortly after, following his father's death in 1977, the business was sold and Taylor moved to Toronto.

In 1979, he joined a multi-national food corporation, culminating his promotion to Manager of Marketing.

By 1985, his entrepreneurial spirit took over, and Taylor and a partner founded a small trucking company. Today, the firm employs a staff of 17. What started out as a one truck operation has grown into a fleet of 12 vehicles specializing in hauling petrochemicals.

While driving one of these trucks last summer, Taylor was listening to a news broadcast about Canada's unity crisis and was emotionally overcome. For Taylor, Quebec's separation was no longer only an economic or political issue, but also an emotional one.

Taylor decided to take action and rented 15 billboards across the country to carry his message nation-wide. The popular response to his initiative convinced him to expand the project. He hopes to start a national tour in Charlottetown, P.E.I. in November, travel through the Maritime provinces and Ontario, across the prairies to the west coast, and finally bring all the signed billboards to Quebec in the spring. His experience has convinced him that there is a great deal of goodwill across the country which Canadians would like to articulate to each other.

Taylor continues to live in Toronto with this wife, Vanessa, and their two year old daughter, Stephanie.

Jim Taylor stated in "The Ottawa Citizen":

The reticence of English Canada to openly display patriotic fervor or national pride has a high cost. Canada's recent history has been tarred with a number of unfortunate incidents which have collectively undermined the pride and confidence of Canadians.

We in English Canada have forgotten that the people of Quebec refused to endorse the separatist aspirations of a very charismatic and competent premier to whom they had granted a majority government. We in English Canada, by wallowing in a state of nationalistic stupor and insecurity, have focused on and reacted to those media-wise interests who make the separation of Quebec their apparent goal. Once again, we have been suckered.

It is time to turn the page on the unfortunate incidents of our recent history. We need to realize what a great nation we are and start exhibiting some confidence and goodwill. We as a country have some very difficult issues to resolve. They cannot be resolved unless we can display the confidence and goodwill required.

We cannot be indifferent to the concerns of Quebec. We in English Canada do not have the right to tell one of the founding partners of our confederation that "it's our way of the highway." Few Canadians would be foolish enough to think that all that separates the Doukhobors and Mennonites of B.C., the Hutterites

The consequence is that we have become increasingly attentive and susceptible to those factions in our society which have a vested interest in portraying our country, its various governments, and ourselves in a negative way. We have been suckered.

Because of our inherent unwillingness to demonstrate our love of nation we have fewer reserves of national goodwill and pride to draw on than our neighbors to the south. This shortcoming needs to be addressed and corrected.

I am only a 38-year-old truck driver. Yet, the financial equity which I have been able to accrue thus far would in many countries make me a fabulously wealthy man. The level of inexpensive and publicly funded education accessible and used by me would, in many countries, place me in the inner circles of the intelligentsia. The readily accessible and competent health-care system, transportation facilities, legal infrastructure and industrial base are equalled by very few other nations. We have a great country - that has not changed.

The posting of a few words displaying a personal commitment to national unity on 15 billboards has yielded some amazing insights. Preliminary estimates indicate that the Quebec media gave these billboards some 23,000 words of coverage.

Even now, a week after the posting of the first billboard, I, a unilingual anglophone, am still getting six to seven requested a day for interviews from the Quebec media. Is this the reaction one would expect from a province that wants to separate from Canada? I think not.

of the prairies, the Amish Mennonites of Ontario, and our native people, from mainstream Canadian society is their propensity for another language. When a group is or can be economically viable entity they should have the right to ensure their culture identity. This we must do for Quebec.

To my fellow Canadians in Quebec - yes, I was aware of the nuances of the verb *comprendre* and I was painfully aware of how my lack of fluency in the French Language might be interpreted. But that is my handicap, my disability.

I ask that the people of Quebec not judge my intent or myself on the basis of my disability. Were you also aware of the nuances of the English Phrase "my Canada Quebec" that was posted on 10 billboards outside your province? There is no qualifying phrase - no implied threat. The name of your province was spelled as you yourself would spell it - with an accent. My vision of Quebec is of a rich, vibrant and distinct culture which is an integral component of the Canadian identity. My intent my commitment is this. I will not tolerate a government which does not understand and include Quebec.

It is not by accident that together, in just 400 years, we have created a nation whose economy ap-

proximates that of mainland China - a country of comparable land mass, a history and culture some 5,000 years old, and a population 40 times that of Canada. An integral component of the Canadian identity is the just and economically productive resolution of our problems. We have no need of "Great Walls" in Canada."

Cities where Jim Taylor placed his billboards in the summer of 1991:

Saskatoon, Saskatchewan
Regina, Saskatchewan
Winnipeg, Manitoba
Thunder Bay, Ontario
Ottawa, Ontario
Acton, Ontario
Hull, Quebec
Montreal, Quebec - 2 signs
Quebec City - 2 signs
Saint John, New Brunswick
Halifax, Nova Scotia

The response from Canadians who sent in contributions asking Jim to continue, enabled him to place a billboard in Whistler, B.C. for four days in August.

TENTATIVE TOUR PLAN

Latest Revision: November 21, 1991

DATE	ACTIVITY	LOCATION
November:		
Monday 18	P.E.I. advance / media work	
Tuesday 19	Charlottetown Event	Confederation Square
Wednesday 20	P.E.I. follow up and travel	
Thursday 21	Moncton N.B. advance work	
Friday 22	Moncton Event	Place d'Assumption Colloseum
Saturday 23	Moncton	
Sunday 24	Travel & advance work for Edmundston	
Monday 25	Edmundston Event	Forum
Tuesday 26	Travel and follow up	
Wednesday 27	Fredericton Event	U.N.B.
Thursday 28	Travel and follow up	
Friday 29	Saint John Event	Brunswick Sq.
Saturday 30	Saint John Event	Brunswick Sq.
December:		
Sunday 1	Travel	
Monday 2	N.S. Advance Work	
Tuesday 3	Halifax Event	Scotia Square
Wednesday 4	Halifax Event	Scotia Square
Thursday 5	Travel and meeting	
Friday 6	Sydney Event	Civic Centre
Saturday 7	Sydney Event	Civic Centre
Sunday 8	Travel	
Monday 9	Comerbrook Event	T.B.A.
Tuesday 10	Grand Falls Windsor Event	T.B.A.
Wednesday 11	Gander Event	T.B.A.
Thursday 12	Travel	
Friday 13	St. John's Event	Village Mall
Saturday 14	Media Follow Up	
Sunday 15	Travel to Toronto	

Mon Canada Comprend le Quebec - My Canada Includes Quebec

Many Canadians feel a need to express their support for the vision of a united Canada, but cannot find an effective way to do it. Jim Taylor has shown us how we can.

Jim would like to take his billboards to all regions of Canada to give Canadians a chance to endorse the sentiment "My Canada Includes Quebec". The signatures will be taken to Quebec at the end of the tour next spring.

But he needs your help.

A fund has been developed by the newly-formed non-partisan "My Canada Includes Quebec Association". We urge you to send a donation to make the Jim Taylor tour possible. If you include a self-addressed stamped envelope, we will send you a bumper sticker with Jim's slogan on it in English or French.

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