

Canada explains itself at France-Canada Association Congress

"French is becoming more widespread across Canada because of the Federal Government's efforts, but this is also happening because of the vitality of the language itself and the new pride Canadians feel in their linguistic richness which makes their country culturally diverse," Jean-Pierre Goyer, Adviser for Francophone Affairs to the Secretary of State for External Affairs, told the twenty-eighth Congress of the France-Canada Association held in Dijon, France, from April 28 to May 1.

Mr. Goyer, who is also Minister of Supply and Services, paid particular attention during his speech to answering those arguments most frequently advanced by advocates of Quebec independence.

Thus, to the "idea that Quebec is a colony within the Canadian federation", Mr. Goyer replied that this "is to deliberately ignore the efforts made by French Canadians who have gained more and more influence in all spheres of activity". It ignores the fact, he said, that the province of Quebec, like the other Canadian provinces, had considerable autonomy in most of the sectors which directly affect the public at large.

Bilingualism

Going on to refute the argument according to which Quebec's independence would guarantee the future of French language and culture in Quebec, Mr. Goyer made the point that "the Constitution gives it full jurisdiction over education and allows it to pass legislation in many related areas". The Minister added that more and more English Canadians were speaking French, and that because of the bilingualism policy of the Federal Government this trend would continue. "And there is also the fact," he said, "that the provinces have undertaken to expand the teaching of French," and that "in addition to its official languages policy, the Federal Government has established structures to enable artists and cultural groups to express themselves as they wish."

Turning to the third argument, that of the right of Quebec to self-determination and independence, Mr. Goyer recalled that the federal system enabled groups to benefit from the economic and political advantages of the union without denying their distinctive characteristics; it is also a



Jean-Pierre Goyer

source of a "feeling of unity": "an identity and a sense of belonging are born which sooner or later transcend the material basis of the original alliance...this feeling emerges only if the rights of the founding groups are protected, their cultural identity preserved and their autonomy respected. That is true self-determination. In this respect, I consider that Quebec has already exercised self-determination by joining and remaining in Confederation".

Sense of belonging

"Perhaps you have been told," the Minister continued, "that Quebec never developed a sense of belonging to Canada and that consequently its initial self-determination was imaginary and that Confederation should be renegotiated.... First let me tell you that all the polls conducted in Quebec up to now belie this claim. If this sense of belonging did not exist, why would the majority of Quebecers regularly express their support for Canadian federalism? Why would they be content to ask for its renewal rather than its demise? Precisely because the majority of Quebecers do not want to burn their bridges and do not want to leave the family."

Mr. Goyer supported his contention by quoting the results of an opinion poll conducted by the Quebec Institute of Public Opinion in June 1977. People were asked about the option which is most

favourable to the separatists — namely sovereignty-association. Only 28.4 per cent of Quebecers were in favour of the idea, while 58.3 per cent were opposed to it. Moreover, 61.9 per cent of young people from 18 to 24 are opposed to sovereignty-association.

Mr. Goyer concluded by saying that he was aware that Quebecers wanted changes, just as Canadians in Western Canada or in the Atlantic provinces did. But, he pointed out, "it is important that we face the facts: Quebecers want changes, but they want to remain within Confederation. Change does not mean separation".

Fifty-five Canadians from six of the ten provinces made up the delegation that attended the congress. Among them was Senator Thérèse Casgrain.

The president of the Canadian branch of the Association is Professor Bernard Wilhelm of the University of Regina, Saskatchewan.

Japanese song promotes tourism

A record about Canada was in the "top ten" on the Japanese hit parade for more than three months this year. For a couple of weeks it was number one.

Although *Love Letter from Canada* is more a love song than a song about Canada, it has done much to promote Canada in the minds of prospective Japanese tourists. It's about a young man visiting Canada who yearns for his love in Japan and wishes she were with him. To date the single has sold one million copies and the album, under the same title, 100,000.

The composer, Masaaki Hirao, who sings with Yoko Hatanaka on the disc, has produced a number of hit records over the last ten years, twice winning Japan's top annual record award.

Although Hirao has never been to Canada, he says he wrote the song because many Japanese dream of visiting it. In fact, according to a survey by the Japan National Tourist Organization, Canada ranks fourth as the foreign country Japanese would most like to visit, and fourteenth as the most visited foreign destination.

In 1977, Canada received 97,532 Japanese tourists. In 1976, with the additional attraction of the Olympic Games in Montreal, it welcomed 106,783. This places Japan fourth as a source of overseas

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