

THE TWENTY-FOURTH ANNUAL REPORT

Message from the President

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I am pleased to present the annual report for the year 2004-2005.

At our last annual meeting in May 2004 we had a presentation of the demographic portrait of the English-speaking Catholic Community in Quebec which indicated that there were 385,843 English-speaking Catholics in Quebec with 57.7% in the Montreal region and 14.9% in the Montérégie region (South Shore). This information proved very helpful in planning our work and in particular served as a base in developing a Strategic Plan for the next three years. This Strategic Plan was discussed at a special meeting on February 5, 2005. In this respect the Council has been active in consultations with both the Federal and Provincial governments on language rights, immigration, and the participation of anglophones in the public service.

The Council was also active in supporting English-Catholic Institutions. We intervened to support amendments to Quebec Bill 25 respecting health and social services as requested by St. Mary's Hospital and the Father Dowd Home in Montreal, and the Jeffrey Hale Hospital and St. Brigid's Home in Quebec City. These interventions were successful in granting these institutions their linguistic and cultural specificity. We also supported St. Gabriel's School in Pointe St. Charles in its successful campaign to keep open their local school.

During the past year the Council cooperated with the coalition to restore free medication for seniors receiving the Guaranteed Income Supplement and advocated before the federal and provincial governments to provide more affordable housing for low-income households. The Council also made representations to the Federal Government respecting the provision of clean water supplies to developing countries.

A major effort was made by the Council to develop positions on the teaching of religion in the schools and on the issue of "same-sex" marriage. A recent letter was sent to the Quebec Minister of Education asking that parents have the right to choose either Catholic or Protestant religious education for their children from Grade I to Secondary II.

With respect to "same-sex" marriage, the Council took the position that the Government should allow a free-vote for all M.P.s including cabinet ministers, and that time should be allowed for a full debate and public consultation. A more complete brief is in the process of being completed.

The 17th English Speaking Catholic Community Rally took place at the Sheraton Centre Hotel on November 1, 2004, and was a great success with over 80 groups participating.

The Council would like to express its gratitude to the Pillars Trust fund, the Department of Canadian Heritage, the Montreal St. Patrick's Foundation and Father Dowd Foundation for

their very generous support. We would also like to thank the Catholic Times for their coverage and support of all our efforts.

Finally, I would like to thank our Executive Director, Martin Murphy, whom we are pleased to see restored to good health, and our Executive Secretary, Suzanne Brown, for their excellent work. The success of the Council is without doubt due to their commitment and astute management. We are indeed blessed to have such outstanding staff.

Sincerely,

Warren Allmand

ESCC COMMITTEES 2004 - 2005

Executive

WARREN ALLMAND
President

BRIAN O'NEILL
Vice-President

COLIN COOLE
Vice-President

ROBERT VAUPSHAS
Treasurer

LYNN LONERGAN DOYLE
Secretary

DAVID DUSSAULT
Past-President

Education

- Monitors policy & legislation;
- Facilitates communication among leaders;
- Develops and articulates unified positions;

Social Issues

- Monitors legislation in the areas of poverty, income security, housing and family policy;
- Prepares position papers consonant with Catholic values.

Communications

- Parishes, Media, AGM, Rally, Annual Report, E-Mail, and Web Page;
- Develops liaison with community leadership and its resources.

Health & Social Services

- Ensures that English-speaking Montrealers have access to services (especially the elderly, the vulnerable & those who have special needs);
- Seeks to promote working relationships with parishes and local healthcare institutions.
- Ensures that Catholic values are promoted and that institutions identified with the English-speaking Catholic community continue to be identified as such.

Rally

- Organizes Rally to affirm the dynamic and positive aspects of our community.

Finance

- Reviews monthly financial statements;
- Prepares budget proposals;
- Monitors investments.

Advisory

- Provides continuity and enhances the strength of the Council;
- Recommends names of candidates for election to the board;
- Offers advice on issues affecting the community.

Chairperson: Patrick Rourke

Membership: Warren Allmand (ex-officio); Gail Campbell-Tucker, Eamon Dillon, Margaret Lefebvre, Don Myles, Neil McKenty, Daniel O'Brien, Claire Robinson, Harold Thuringer, John Walker, Fr. John Walsh, Robert Wilkins.

SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES

Education

- Article 5 of the Education Act stipulates that every student from Grade 1 to Secondary II inclusive has a right to choose, every year, between either Catholic or Protestant moral and religious instruction or moral instruction.

The Provincial Government has announced that the notwithstanding clauses in Articles 726 and 727 in the Education Act to protect the option for parents to choose religious education for their children will be renewed for a period of three years, effective July 1, 2005. These clauses have been invoked in past years in order to avoid judicial challenges on the basis that by offering Catholic and Protestant religion courses, certain rights (freedom of religion) guaranteed under both the Quebec and Canadian Charters of Rights and Freedoms would be violated.

- Please see the tables on page 14, data provided by the Secretariat aux affaires religieuses showing the number of students enrolled in Catholic and Protestant Moral and Religious Instruction and Moral Instruction in elementary and secondary English language schools in Quebec in 2004-2005.
- The ESCC supported the campaign by a Coalition of thirty community and citizen action groups to keep open St. Gabriel's Elementary School in Pointe St-Charles, the only English school in that neighborhood. It was argued that the closure would have a negative impact on parents, the children and community development at the economic, social and cultural levels. ESCC President, Warren Allmand, was very active in support of this objective. In January 2005, the English Montreal School Board voted to keep open St. Gabriel's Elementary School.
- The Department of Theological Studies at Concordia University offers a Certificate in Pastoral Ministries, which includes an option with a concentration in parish and community ministry, expanding skills and professional formation required for ministry to seniors in hospitals, long-term care residences and in their homes. The ESCC encourages enrollment in this particular program.

Health & Social Services

- Bill 25, An Act respecting local health and social services network development agencies, was adopted by the Quebec National Assembly in December 2003. It proposed the creation of agencies to succeed the regional health and social services boards. The ESCC submitted a brief to the public hearings and participated in Town Hall meetings. We supported the resolutions of the CHSLD Father Dowd, St. Margaret's and St. Andrew's, St. Mary's Hospital Centre and its various boards, the Jeffrey Hale Hospital and St. Brigid's Home in Quebec City. The Montreal Gazette published an op-ed article issued by the ESCC entitled "*Health reforms must preserve community links.*" Our efforts, with others, were successful in having the Government exempt these institutions from certain articles in the legislation which otherwise would not have guaranteed governance by English-language community directors.
- Bill 83, An Act to amend the Act respecting health services and social services and other legislative provisions is currently the subject of consultation. This bill proposes among many other measures an adjustment of responsibilities between local authorities, other institutions, health and social services agencies and the Minister of Health and Social Services. It also introduces changes to the composition of the boards of directors of institutions and agencies, to the process for electing or designating board members and to the procedures for filling a vacancy. The ESCC invited the institutions listed above to identify concerns and propose recommendations. These in turn were communicated to the Committee on Social Affairs, to two Cabinet Ministers, to several MNAs and to the Provincial Access Committee on Health and Social Services in the English Language.
- The ESCC is collaborating with Project Genesis which is leading a Coalition urging the Government of Quebec to respect its commitment to grant free prescription medication to welfare recipients and seniors receiving the Guaranteed Income Supplement. The Minister of Health and Social Services, Philippe Couillard, has tabled a provincial Medication Policy outlining the government's priorities and goals for the coming years. Public consultations will be held before the government adopts the legislative and administrative measures required to put the plan into effect.
- In the Spring of 2003, the Federal Government announced in its Action Plan a total investment of \$119 million in Health for both official language minority communities in Canada, over the next five years: \$14 million for Networking; \$75 million for Training and Retention; \$30 million for Primary Health Care.

Under the Contribution Program to Improve Access to Health Services for Official Language Minority Communities, the Quebec Community Groups Network received \$4.7 million to implement a Networking and Partnership Initiative. Among other objectives, this initiative will result in building provincial, regional, local and sector health and social service networks in Quebec. These networks should help establish durable links between English-speaking communities and the health and social

services system with a view to improving accessibility of these communities to a wider range of services offered in English. \$11.5 million for Quebec under the Primary healthcare measure referred to above, has recently been approved. This new program has two main objectives:

1. Improve the English-speaking population's access in English to:
 - Primary health care services;
 - General and medical services, longterm care, youth and rehabilitation programs and,
 - Foster links between English-speaking communities and health and social service institutions in the province.

Communities have been invited to submit projects that have as an objective developing better access to a full range of healthcare services in English; for example, Catholic Community Services (CCS) received a grant in 2004-2005 and again for 2005-2006.

2. The Community Health and Social Services Network (CHSSN), of which the English Speaking Catholic Council is a member, is promoting community participation. Incidentally, John Walker, Past-President of the ESCC, is a Director of the CHSSN Board.

Social Issues

- The ESCC is cooperating with Development and Peace, an organization that promotes social solidarity, primarily supporting socio-economic projects and specifically intended to strengthen the role of the public sector in delivering and regulating clean, affordable water services. The Council supported the campaign by the Canadian Catholic Organization and Peace, requesting the Canadian Government to demand the World Bank to work to strengthen the role of the public sector in delivering and regulating water services, to support meaningful participation of citizens groups and affected communities in setting water policies and to ensure access to clean affordable water for the world's poor.

The Minister of Finance, Ralph Goodale, confirmed to the ESCC that the Government fully agrees with our position on the critical importance of these objectives, noting that access to water is a fundamental right and that the World Bank is moving in this direction.

- The ESCC continues to pressure government officials to apply measures adopted in Bill 112, An Act to combat poverty and social exclusion. The bill creates the obligation for the Government to table an action plan setting forth a set of activities designed to improve the economic and social situation of persons and families living

in poverty and social exclusion. The Council will continue to be proactive in its efforts to remind the Government of its commitments to combat poverty aggressively, especially as it affects children and seniors.

- The ESCC has noted with some encouragement that the Federal and Provincial Governments have signed an agreement that will increase funding for social housing. Quebec will invest \$150 million in 2005 to build affordable housing in Quebec's cities. Given the degree of interest in housing issues especially as they affect low and moderate-income households, including seniors, we will continue to pressure the Governments of Canada and Quebec to emphasize social housing initiatives to respond to emerging realities and provide, without discrimination, the resources necessary for the effective protection of this right and restore grounds for trust and hope rooted in social justice.
- Seniors are the fastest growing age group in the country and we believe communities are ill-prepared to cope with this new reality. Inspired by a conviction that seniors can still make a valuable and rich contribution to society, we see it as a civic duty to advocate on their behalf to ensure that they not be marginalized and that policies and programs are in place whereby seniors are treated with dignity, enjoying access to a support system offering financial security and a supportive living environment.
- The Minister of Families, Seniors and the Status of Women, Carole Th  berge, has been holding public consultations this Spring on "Full Participation of Seniors in Social Development". The purpose is to propose to the Government of Quebec measures that could be incorporated into an action plan on the three following topics:
 - aging and the continuation of seniors' active life;
 - potential for seniors' participation in different socioeconomic spheres;
 - conditions that must be implemented to encourage seniors' participation.

The Executive Director, Martin Murphy, attended this event. On behalf of the ESCC, he proposed that the core principles for policies affecting seniors, namely, Dignity, Independence, Participation, Fairness and Security, must be promoted to improve the overall health and well-being of seniors.

- The ESCC Board is preparing its position on the Federal Government's proposed legislation on same-sex marriage, which is currently the subject of consultation. The ESCC will be recommending to the Government of Canada that a full debate in parliament be held and that all members of all parties be allowed a free vote as was done previously for the death penalty and abortion.
- The English Speaking Catholic Council enjoys membership and/or retains regular liaison with many community organizations working to support seniors, chiefly among which are:

- The Quebec Alliance of Retirees and Seniors Associations (medical and nursing care; housekeeping; transport; social life; personal care, food and nutrition, and housing)
- Front D'Action Populaire en réaménagement urbain, FRAPRU, Social Housing;
- National Council of Welfare;
- Conseil des aînés;
- Project Genesis (re. Drug insurance plan);
- CCS, Good Shepherd Community Centre, the Teapot 50 Plus Centre, Almage Senior Community Centre, Benedict Labre House, La Passerelle, Share the Warmth Foundation;
- Canadian Association of Retired Persons (CARP);
- Quebec Association for Adult Learning;
- Department of Theological Studies of Concordia University (Loyola Campus), Pastoral Certificate program.

In addition, information to improve access to opportunities and further enhance the quality of life of all Canadian seniors is abundant:

- Health Canada's Seniors Guide to Federal Programs and Services: (Pension & benefits; taxes; housing; health; human rights; lifelong learning; safety and security; disability assistance; environment; travel volunteer activities; etc.).

This publication is available by telephone at (613) 952-7606, by fax at (613) 957-9938, by e-mail at seniors@hc-sc.gc.ca or via website www.hc-sc.gc.ca/seniors-aines.

Cultural Issues

The Quebec Community Groups Network (QCGN) established in 1995, represents all of the English-language minority organizations from the Outaouais to the Gaspé that receive program funding from the Department of Canadian Heritage for the development and enhancement of the vitality of the English-language minority communities in Quebec. Incidentally, our Executive Director, Martin Murphy, continues to serve as President of the QCGN. The Network has been actively involved in shaping policies and programs chiefly among which are:

- A. QCGN is the signatory of the Primary Contribution Agreement with Health Canada and responsible for the administration of \$4.7 million for networking, to improve accessibility to a range of health and social services offered in English throughout the Province, over the next five years.
- B. In February 2005, QCGN launched a new development initiative on Research Capacity and Quebec's English-speaking communities.

- C. QCGN reported on the impact of Government Action Plan initiatives at the Second Ministerial Consultations on Official Languages in Ottawa in October 2004.
- D. The QCGN President was invited by Premier Charest in October 2004 to participate at the Forum des Generations on the state of public finances and demographic changes.
- E. The QCGN made a presentation to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Official Languages in December 2004.
- F. The QCGN has representatives serving on three federal government committees examining Access to Justice in both Official Languages.
- G. In February 2005, the QCGN made a presentation at the Forum 2005 on Linguistic Duality in Montreal from a community Perspective to the Federal Council on equitable participation in the Federal Public Service.
- H. In February 2005, the QCGN made a presentation in Ottawa at the Joint Conference on Official Languages Champions.
- I. The QCGN participated at Industry Canada consultations in Ottawa in March 2005 on the Government Action Plan.
- J. The QCGN meets regularly with the Assistant Deputy Minister for the English Community (Education) regarding the renewal of the entente between the Governments of Canada and Quebec and the prospect of creating a network of Learning Centres in communities throughout Quebec.
- K. The renewal of the Framework Agreement between the Government of Canada and the Quebec Community Groups Network is currently being negotiated. The Agreement provides funding to support the development of the official language minority communities in Quebec. The QCGN Executive met with the Minister of Canadian Heritage, Liza Frulla, in early May.
- L. The QCGN has just completed a three-year Community Development Plan as well as a Strategic Plan for the next five years, both of which will be launched at the Annual General Meeting in May 2005 in Quebec City.

Rally

The English Speaking Catholic Council sponsored the Sixteenth English Speaking Catholic Community Rally in the Ballroom of the Sheraton Centre Hotel in downtown Montreal on Monday, November 1, 2004. In memory of the late Bishop Leonard Crowley, former Auxiliary Bishop of Montreal and Director of the Office for English Language Affairs as well as Honorary Chairman of the Council, the theme was one of thanksgiving for the Bishop's inspiration, encouragement and leadership in helping all of us provide better services in the community. We had **eighty** of our community organizations participating, demonstrating the great diversity of our community's resources and the remarkable contribution of hundreds of volunteers. Over 600 people attended the event.

The Bishop Crowley Memorial Award recognizing distinguished serve in the community by an individual group or organization, was presented to Pillars Trust Fund, David O'Neill of Pointe St-Charles, and Clare Dozois of St. John Brebeuf Parish.

Nomination /Succession

The ESCC's Nominations/Succession Committee's mandate exercised by the Advisory Committee is to ensure that the by-laws governing the membership of the Board of Directors are respected. The process includes the search for candidates, representative of the community, for election to the Board at each Annual General Meeting, keeping in mind the expertise and experience that will enable the Council to meet the challenges facing our community. It must also assure the succession of the Council's Executive Officers.

Finance

An annual budget and regular financial reports for the Board of Directors are prepared. It is expected that the ESCC should build a working capital reserve to correspond to one year's operating budget in order for the Council to continue to function without interruption from one fiscal year to the next. The Treasurer is in communication regularly with the Executive staff to review accounting and reporting procedures and to ensure that the financial resources of the ESCC are effectively managed.

The Council's audited financial statements for the period April 1, 2004 to March 31, 2005 are presented in the next section of this report.

We wish to acknowledge with gratitude those organizations which have demonstrated confidence in the effectiveness and promise of the Council by financially supporting its activities, especially the Pillars Trust Fund, other community foundations, and the Department of Canadian Heritage, thus permitting the Council to continue its work directed to the enrichment of a vibrant community.

Advisory Committee

The Advisory Committee, established in 1994, fulfills a supportive role for the English Speaking Catholic Council by providing continuity and enhancing the strength of the Council. It serves as a link for access to senior business and government officials and provides input on issues affecting the community.

To a limited extent, as a non-profit charitable organization, the ESCC may engage in non-partisan activities to influence law, policy and public opinion on matters related to its mandate. In this respect, the Council believes it has a responsibility to take a stand on issues when they infringe on democracy, social justice and related Catholic values.

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For over two decades now, the English Speaking Catholic Council has served the English-speaking Catholic community through the commitment of dedicated volunteers who have devoted their time and resources in the service of others. I am very grateful for the wonderful encouragement I have received from so many people in the community. The ESCC Board of Directors, parish priests, the staff at the Catholic Times, CCS, Pillars' Trust and other Foundations, the Department of Canadian Heritage, the Archdiocese of Montreal, Msgr. Sean Harty, Director, and staff of the Office for English Pastoral Services.

I am especially grateful to the Honourable Warren Allmand for all his support in the past two years and for his dedicated service to community during his tenure as President. Finally, I wish to acknowledge the truly excellent work done by our Executive Secretary, Suzanne Brown.

Many thanks to everyone for their generosity.

Martin P. Murphy
Executive Director
May 18, 2005

