

THE THIRTY-SECOND ANNUAL REPORT

Message from the President

On behalf of the Board of Directors, it is my pleasure to present the thirty-second annual report of the English Speaking Catholic Council.

With this report, the first year of my tenure as president comes to a close. As the pages of this report will no doubt attest, this has been an eventful year for the Council. Apart from its usual preoccupations, this year also marked the transition of executive directors from Dr. Martin Murphy to Mrs. Anna Farrow.

Dr. Murphy's contribution to the ESCC and indeed to the English Catholic community in general, has certainly been remarkable. His tireless efforts on behalf of the Council to ensure the welfare of seniors, to defend the dignity of the human person in our evolving society and to ensure the rights of minority and underprivileged groups, have been an inspiration. His work and his legacy will not be forgotten. At the same time, God calls each of us to serve in a particular place and time and Mrs. Farrow has answered that call with great enthusiasm. After only a few months as the new executive director, she has already left her mark on the ESCC and its role in this community. It has been my privilege to work with these two exemplary people over the course of the year.

We are in the midst of interesting times in Quebec and the place of English Catholics is anything but certain. As we face our changing society, there is obvious cause for concern, but there is also great cause for hope. The English Catholic community in Montreal is somewhat unique in the world. The sheer number of its lay organizations and its existing and emerging leadership, bode well for our future. It is a privilege to serve this community as part of the English Speaking Catholic Council.

Sincerely,

Paul Donovan, President
The English Speaking Catholic Council
Montreal, June 5, 2013

Message from Martin P. Murphy

(Executive Director 1995-2012)

Dear friends,

I have been asked to prepare a summary of some of the highlights of major activities in which I have been directly involved as the English Speaking Catholic Council's Executive Director since my appointment in 1995, and I am pleased to do so.

My involvement with the ESCC spans twenty-five years, first elected to its Board of Directors in the late 1980's. In 1995, I was appointed Executive Director and seventeen years later, I decided it was time to retire (again), effective December 31, 2012.

As a faith community, we have much to celebrate and for which to be thankful. Let us remember the vision and initiative of our founders, notably Patrick Rourke and the inspiration of the late Bishop Leonard Crowley, which led to the formation of the ESCC in 1981. Since that time, the Council has served the English-speaking Catholic community through the commitment of dedicated volunteers who have provided their expertise and time in the service of others.

This past year has been one of transition for the Council. We are blessed with a core of committed people who, like my successor, Anna Farrow, will no doubt continue to contribute to the enrichment and vitality of our community.

The ESCC has been relentless in the pursuit of opportunities to have our voice heard. In this respect, during my tenure as Executive Director of the ESCC, twenty major briefs were presented by the Council to Federal and Provincial Governments at public consultation hearings on proposed legislation:

- Brief to the Quebec Estates General on Education re. linguistic school boards with confessional guarantees and access to English schools (1995)
- Brief to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Human Resources Development in response to measures proposed re. Employment Insurance (1996)
- Brief to the Montreal Regional Health Board on health and social services for the English-speaking population (1996)
- Brief to the Consultative Commission of the Synod of the Church of Montreal (1996)
- Brief to the National Assembly Commission Hearings on proposed measures to reform the Quebec Pension Plan in view of changing demographics (1996)
- Brief to the National Assembly Commission Hearings on proposed legislation establishing linguistic school boards (1997)

- Brief to the Special Joint Committee of the House of Commons and the Senate on a Constitutional Amendment proposed by the Government of Quebec re. Establishment of linguistic school boards in Quebec (repeal of four subsections in Section 93 of the Canadian Constitution thus eliminating constitutional guarantees of a denominational nature.) (1997)
- Brief to the Montreal Regional Health Board on the organization of health and social services on the Island of Montreal (1998)
- Brief to the Standing Committee on Education re. Proulx Task Force Report which recommended that legislation be enacted to establish a secular system of education (1999)
- Brief to the Public Forum on the financing and organization of the public health and social services system in Quebec (2000)
- Brief to the Estates General on the situation and future of the French Language in Quebec (2001)
- Brief to the Romanow Royal Commission on the Future of Healthcare in Canada (2002)
- Brief to the Montreal Regional Health and Social Services Board re. Improvement Plan for Health and Well-Being (2003)
- Brief to the Estates General on Democratic Governance in Quebec (2003)
- Brief to the Agence (formerly Regional Health Board) for Health and Social Services Montreal re. direct community involvement in management and control of our institutions (2004)
- Brief re. Ethics and Religious Culture draft program, Ministry of Education (2006) Time and time again, the ESCC has defended the right of parents to have free choice of religious education for their children in accordance with their religious convictions and personal conscience.
- Brief to Quebec Government's public consultation on Seniors' Living Conditions (2007)
- Brief to the Quebec Consultation Commission (Bouchard-Taylor) on Reasonable Accommodation (2007)
- Brief to the Select Committee on Dying with Dignity (2010)
- Brief to the Federal Parliamentary Committee on Palliative Care and Compassionate Care (2010)

As I reflect on the wonderful opportunities my role as Executive Director of the Council afforded me, I am honored to have had the privilege of representing the interests of the English-speaking Catholic lay community over the past many years. This is an occasion for looking back with satisfaction and with pride at the leadership provided by successive Boards of Directors over the years. I believe it is fair to say that today the ESCC is accepted as a credible voice at the Provincial and Federal levels of government and enjoys a solid reputation for constructive dialogue and fair representation of issues and challenges. It remains for me to express my conviction that we are entering into a new beginning and a brighter tomorrow.

Sincerely yours,

Martin P. Murphy
Montreal, June 5, 2013

MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The past year has been a time of transition for the English Speaking Catholic Council. In December 2012, Dr. Martin Murphy retired, after seventeen years of service, from the position of Executive Director of the Council. Between 1995 and 2012, as you will note from his letter included in this report, there was a tremendous output of quality briefs from the ESCC, covering matters relating to the educational, health, economic, linguistic, and ethical life of the English Catholic community in Quebec. In addition, Dr. Murphy's foundational work with the Quebec Community Groups Network has meant the forging of strong alliances between the Council and some forty-one organizations which represent the diverse English communities of the province.

As the new Executive Director of the ESCC, I am the immediate beneficiary of three strengths of the Council:

After more than thirty years of action and interaction within the provincial social milieu, the ESCC commands a wealth of experience which provides a unique perspective upon our current situation. From a quick glance at the newspaper or one's Twitter feed, it would be tempting to conclude that times have never been stranger, that the challenges to the English minority in Quebec are greater now than ever. But we have an Advisory Committee that holds the collective memory of, to name just a few issues: the implementation of the Charter of the French Language, the work of Alliance Quebec, two referendums on separation and the elimination of confessional schools. This collective memory allows for our actions in the present situation to be informed ones, fully cognizant of the historical and cultural weight of the direction of current debates and decisions.

Second, the ESCC has an outstanding Board of Directors. It cannot be stated too strongly that the diverse professional capabilities and enthusiasm of our Directors ensures the dynamism of our organization. I have no doubt that this will continue to be a defining characteristic of the Council.

Lastly, the ESCC is deeply grounded in the Church's conciliar teaching on the role of the laity. Working alongside the hierarchical authority of the Church, and, in the words of Vatican II document *Apostolicam Actuositatem*, "in accordance with the mind of the Church," the Council understands the distinct and irreplaceable importance of an informed, active and committed laity to the life and mission of the Church in the world.

I am deeply appreciative to the President of the Council, Paul Donovan, the other members of the Board, and the Advisory Committee for the confidence they have placed in me, and the support they have offered over the past few months. The work of the Council would not be possible without the generous financial support of the community foundations and organizations which sponsor us. Finally, I would like to acknowledge the efforts of Martin Murphy and Executive Secretary, Suzanne Brown in ensuring that the time of transition between Executive Directors has been a smooth one.

Sincerely yours,

Anna Farrow, Executive Director
The English Speaking Catholic Council
Montreal, June 5, 2013

ESCC COMMITTEES 2012 - 2013

Executive

PAUL DONOVAN
President

RAFIK GREISS
Treasurer

JOHN ZUCCHI
Vice-President

PAUL ALLEN
Secretary

MARY McDAID
Past-President

Education

- Monitors policy & legislation;
- Facilitates communication among leaders;

Health & Social Services

- Participates with other members of the Community Health & Social Services Network in promoting access to healthcare services in English for the English-speaking minority population, especially seniors, the vulnerable and those who have special needs.
- Ensures that Catholic values are promoted.

Social Issues

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

Young Adults

- Encourages young adults to participate actively within organizations;
- Creates opportunities for development of leadership skills;
- Explores resources available for training and employment.

Seniors

- Advocates to improve the quality of life for Seniors.

Communications

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

Community Animation

- Participates in conferences and celebrations to affirm the dynamic and positive aspects of our community.

Finance

- Reviews monthly financial statements;
- Prepares budget proposal;
- 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, Gail Campbell-Tucker, David Dussault, Margaret Lefebvre, Clifford Lincoln, Mary McDaid (ex-officio), Don Myles, Daniel O'Brien, Harold Thuringer, John Walker, Fr. John Walsh, Robert Wilkins.

SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES

The following priorities were identified by the English Speaking Catholic Council (ESCC) for 2012-2013:

1. Advocate to improve the quality of life for Seniors;
2. Advocate to support measures addressing Poverty (Bill 112);
3. Collaborate with networks to promote access to English-language health and social services (The Quebec Community Groups Network, the Greater Montreal Community Development Initiative, and the Community Health and Social Services Network);
4. Support initiatives directed to encourage youth retention and educational/employment opportunities.
5. Promote Communications: Community's need for a independent and autonomous press/media.

SOCIAL ISSUES – SENIORS

The ESCC has been an active participant in a number of new, exciting initiatives, largely in conjunction with the Quebec Community Groups Network:

- The development of an Action Plan for Quebec's English-speaking seniors, "Blazing a Trail for Active and Healthy Aging."
- The creation of a database for seniors which seeks to improve access to information in English on existing community resources, programs and services (www.quebecseniors.info).
- The formation of a new association, Seniors Action Quebec (SAQ), a provincial network on which the ESCC has two representatives. SAQ has received its Letters Patent. The ESCC provided a Letter of Support to SAQ for its grant proposal submitted to the Federal Government's New Horizons for Seniors Program, entitled "Rediscovering and Reconnecting with our Past and Celebrating our Senior's Contributions." SAQ held a National Seniors Day Information Fair on October 1, 2012 which featured conferences on Active Aging. Martin Murphy, then Executive Director, and Anne Fitzpatrick, a Council Director, participated in this event.
- The Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages is funding an analysis of the situation of Quebec's English-speaking seniors and the support programs currently being offered to them by federal institutions. The ESCC was invited by the Commissioner's office to provide a letter of reference for a candidate who applied to undertake this project. The ESCC was pleased to support Dr. Joanne Pocock, who was the successful consultant engaged to take on this project.

SOCIAL ISSUES – POVERTY

The ESCC communicated with five representatives of organizations/institutions in the Greater Montreal area to reach a consensus on priority measures to combat poverty which require federal and provincial financial support.

Appeals were made to appropriate decision makers at both levels of government and a majority of the issues identified were included in the most recent budgets (Federal, March 2013 and Provincial, November 2012). In particular, we would like to highlight that the Federal budget included a promise of an investment of \$119 million for the Homelessness Partnership Strategy and a renewal of the investment in Affordable Housing (\$253 million per year over five years). The Provincial budget included the provision of 3,000 new affordable social housing units to be built as well as to an increase to the minimum wage, effective May 1, 2012, to \$10.15. The ESCC will continue to be persistent in advocating before politicians and bureaucrats, at both the provincial and federal level, for funding in their annual budgets to eradicate poverty in our society.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES

- In the spring of 2012, the provincial government put into effect the Regional Programs for Access to Health and Social Services in the English-language for the English-speaking population of Montreal. It determines the institutions' obligations regarding the health and social services that must be made accessible in English. These Access Plans are the result of consultations, to which the ESCC was invited and participated, between the English-speaking community members and organizations and the Regional Committee for Access Programs in Health and Social Services in English. These Access Plans are in effect between 2012-2015 and, according to law, must be reviewed at that time.
- A strategic new committee has been established to advise Health Canada on the health and social service needs of English-speaking communities in Quebec. The committee is composed of eleven members including one appointee from the Board of Directors of the Community Health and Social Services Network (CHSSN), on which the ESCC has two Board representatives.

COMMUNICATIONS

On June 9, 2012, Bishop Thomas Dowd convened a special assembly on the future of communications in the English-speaking sector of the Archdiocese of Montreal. The cost of the assembly was funded by the Pillars Trust, and the English Speaking Catholic Council acted as secretariat. The ESCC submitted a brief to the assembly which underlined the vital role which the Catholic Times had played since 1976, and the recommendation that the Times continue to be supported as an autonomous entity. At the close of the assembly, a vote was taken by the 50 participants to give a special mandate to the ESCC to develop a communications strategy which is alert to the needs expressed on the day. In response to that mandate, the ESCC struck an

advisory committee comprised of ten delegates of the June 9th assembly and chaired by Paul Donovan, President of the Board of the Council.

The committee quickly perceived that there was a need for data regarding where English speaking Catholics in Montreal turned for news and information, both local and international, about the Church. Vision Critical (Angus Reid) was commissioned to execute a survey which would examine this question. The survey was paid for by Pillars Trust and the questions were developed by the ESCC. The survey polled 506 English-speaking Catholics, and distributed survey participants for a representative sample of age groups, women/men, and frequency of Mass attendance.

Taking into account the information gathered in the survey, a sub-committee drew up a plan for a multi-pronged communications strategy which would have as its base a website which is to be both a source for news and, utilizing already existing social media platforms, an interactive social hub for the community. There is a plan for at least four print editions. An important need, and one which was identified from the outset, is that of archiving the rich resources already present namely, the print issues of the Catholic Times and oral histories of our community leaders.

The ESCC is currently working with its partners in seeking the seed money required for the launch of the website. The Council will continue to act as the facilitator for this exciting and important new venture.

COMMUNITY ANIMATION

One of the vital roles which the Council has historically played in the community, and one which is a cornerstone of our mandate, is as a “catalyst, convener, and facilitator of community life.” It is increasingly felt that, though the English Catholic sector is populated with a wealth of organizations and services, these entities often operate in isolation from each other and do not fully benefit from open communication and collaboration. The ESCC feels that part of the solution to this problem lies in events at which the leaders of these organizations can come together to meet, discuss and share ideas and resources.

On April 4, 2013 the Council hosted just such an event. Funded by Pillars Trust and held at Loyola High School, the occasion saw some 125 attendees welcomed by Fr. Murray, SJ President of Loyola High School, Paul Donovan, Principal of Loyola and President of the Board of the ESCC, Anna Farrow, the new Executive Director of the Council, and Bishop Thomas Dowd, Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese of Montreal and a Director of the Council. The event was a great success and the participants made clear, by means of a survey distributed via email after the gathering, they wished to see many more such occasions in the future.

SOCIAL ISSUES-GENERAL

In September 2010, the ESCC presented a brief to the Select Committee on Dying with Dignity at the National Assembly public hearings in Montreal. The report of the Select Committee was published in French in March 2012. The ESCC was persistent in its efforts to obtain a copy in English and in September 2012 an English translation of the document was made available. In January 2013 a committee commissioned by the provincial government to examine the legal aspects of the recommendations of the Select Committee produced its 450-page report. In the

opinion of many, both the report of the Select Committee and of the Ménard Committee attempt to create a false consensus on this issue, a consensus which, in fact, does not exist. This is evidenced by the more than 460 Quebec doctors who were signatories to a declaration produced by the Physician's Alliance for Total Refusal of Euthanasia (<http://www.totalrefusal.blogspot.ca/p/the-declaration.html>).

The ESCC has maintained links with the organization, Living with Dignity, Vivre dans La Dignité and has sought to provide names of lawyers known to the Board who might be interested in forming a similar coalition of opposition to the decriminalization of euthanasia. It is expected that legislation proposing such will be deposited at the Quebec National Assembly before the end of the parliamentary session (June 2013).

BILL 14, An Act to amend the Charter of the French language, the Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms and other legislative provisions

In December 2012, the Parti Québécois introduced Bill 14, *An Act to amend the Charter of the French language, the Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms and other legislative provisions*. Hearings on the proposed legislation began in March 2013 and lasted for little over a month. The Quebec Community Groups Network submitted a brief to the Committee of Health and Education, and spoke before the Committee on April 13, 2013. In the concluding paragraph of their brief, the QCGN summarized, "Quebec's English-speaking community understands the need to protect the French language. It is, after all, a significant part of our province's heritage and legacy. Rather than causing French-speaking and English-speaking Quebecers to drift further apart by tinkering with conflict-ridden legislation, Quebec's government should be thinking of constructive ways to enhance mutual empathy between our two communities. Quebec leaders have stated that the English-speaking community is an asset to Quebec. If we are indeed an asset, we need to be recognized and respected as a linguistic minority that participates in and contributes to the social, economic, cultural and political life of Quebec. This piece of legislation will not lead us there." As a member organization of the QCGN, the ESCC drafted a letter of support of the actions and resolutions taken by the QCGN in opposition to Bill 14. The letter made a number of points, but voiced serious concern about the moves made in Bill 14 to grant a philosophical primacy to the French language in Quebec:

"Quebec is a multi-lingual, multi-cultural society which has benefitted right throughout its history from this rich confluence of languages and cultures. While respectfully acknowledging the primacy of the French language and culture to the province of Quebec, it must be acknowledged that the English language and culture, as well as other linguistic cultures, are an essential part of both the historical development of Quebec and contemporary Quebec society. To make claims for the French language ignoring this obvious truth is harmful to the social fabric of our society."

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

- The Council's audited financial statements for the period April 1, 2012 to March 31, 2013 are presented in the 2012-2013 ESCC Annual Report.
- Canadian Not-for-Profit Corporations and Registered Charities which are federally incorporated (as is the ESCC), are required to apply for a Certificate of Continuance before 2014 or be subject to dissolution. The ESCC has been briefed on the responsibilities associated with the new Act and is following the steps in the transition requirements.

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, institutional and government officials and provides input on issues affecting the community.

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