



**Report of the Canadian Parliamentary Delegation
to the France-Canada Symposium**

“L’empreinte de la France au Canada après 400 ans”

**Canadian Branch of the *Assemblée parlementaire de la
Francophonie (APF)***

**Paris, France
March 7 and 8, 2008**

Report

The parliamentary delegation of the Canadian Branch of the Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie (APF) that attended the France-Canada Symposium, "*L'empreinte de la France au Canada après 400 ans*", in Paris, France, on March 7 and 8, 2008 has the honour to present its report. The delegation was composed of the Honourable Pierre De Bané, Senator.

The symposium was organized by the French Senate and the France-Canada Interparliamentary Association in connection with the 400th anniversary of the settlement of Samuel de Champlain in Quebec City in 1608, and was an opportunity for delegates to attend presentations of historical research on relations between France and Canada during and after the French colonial era.

Opening Session

Senator **Marcel-Pierre Cléach** opened the symposium by welcoming delegates on behalf of the Speaker of the French Senate and the France-Canada Interparliamentary Group. Senator Cléach said that the symposium had two components: the first would take place in Paris and the second in Ottawa in November 2008. He then thanked Canadian Senator Serge Joyal, who played a major role in organizing the symposium, and the Ambassador of Canada in Paris, Marc Lortie, who has maintained good relations with the interparliamentary group.

Senator Cléach introduced the guests of honour present at the opening ceremony:

- The Right Honourable Beverley McLachlin, P.C., Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Canada
- The Right Honourable Andrienne Clarkson, P.C., former Governor General of Canada
- The Honourable Rose-Marie Losier-Cool, Senator and *pro tempore* Speaker of the Senate of Canada
- Mr. Gilbert Laurin, Ambassador and Permanent Delegate of Canada to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)
- Mr. Wilfrid-Guy Licari, Quebec Delegate General in Paris
- The Honourable Lise Bacon, Senator and Chair of the Canada-France Interparliamentary Association
- Mr. Alfred Siefer-Gaillardin, President of the Institut France-Amériques
- Mr. Jean-Michel Lacroix, Recteur d'académie

In conclusion, Senator Cléach expressed his great affection and that of French senators and members of National Assembly for Canada.

Senator **Lise Bacon** then spoke to thank Senator Cléach and the French Senate for hosting the symposium in France at the Palais du Luxembourg. This gathering is the

first session of a two part symposium with the same theme which includes parliamentarians from both countries. She said that she truly hoped that the symposium will provide a model for further meetings in future. The symposium will also provide an opportunity for an in-depth examination of the history shared by Canada and France and re-examination of the old conclusions to see whether they are still valid in light of current knowledge.

Senator Bacon said it was important that the symposium be open to the public so that members of the public would be able to assess the observations, reinterpretations and conclusions presented by the speakers, because they might influence research and policy-making, and even lead to legislation being enacted by the parliaments of the two countries.

Senator Bacon concluded by expressing her hope that the symposium would look at the legacy of Samuel de Champlain and the influence of the French Régime on contemporary Canadian institutions.

The Ambassador of Canada in France, **Marc Lortie**, noted the importance of the symposium to mark the celebrations of the 400th anniversary of Quebec City. He observed that this is the golden age of Canada-France relations and that we are witnessing exceptional cooperation in politics, culture, the military, science and technology. The symposium would help to provide a better understanding of the ties between the two countries and its effect would be felt in our relations over the next decade. He concluded by stating that people today should be inspired by the exploring and pioneering spirit of Champlain in their work of discovery and in the sciences.

Senator **Serge Joyal** began his speech by summarizing Samuel de Champlain's travels in eastern Canada. He said that the result of his explorations had been to open up the continent for the King of France, ultimately leading to the creation of Canada. The founding of Quebec City also established the French presence in America.

Canada has two major cultures, only one of which was original to the founding of Canada. France's influence has been felt at every stage of the development of Canada. One of the goals of the symposium is to study the influence of France throughout Canada's history. To cover 400 years, the symposium will have two sessions, one to take place in France and the other in Canada. The senator announced that the sessions would be broadcast on the Cable Public Affairs Channel (CPAC), the parliamentary channel of the French Senate and Radio-Canada. The Université de Montréal has also undertaken to publish the papers presented by speakers.

Mr. John Ralston Saul

The evolution of Canada and France toward a model society based on humanist values (*L'évolution du Canada et de la France vers un modèle social fondé sur des valeurs humanistes*)

The delegation heard first from John Ralston Saul, a Canadian author and essayist. He explained in his presentation that the individual in today's society has become a complex being, and that the elites and democratic institutions of some modern nation-states were no longer a good match for the "humanistic complexities" of their citizens. Much of the vocabulary used by elites comes from the 19th century and has not

changed. This old vocabulary impedes efficient communication between elected representatives and the public. In another time, people wanted to create simple nation-states to govern, with a centralized and monolithic administrative structure. Nation-states enjoyed great success. But today, people are discovering that simply political institutions no longer work and are calling for more complex systems to meet their needs. Europe is currently being transformed into a complex humanistic society.

In Mr. Saul's view, Canada has left the old model behind; its history and experiences run counter to the concept of the nation-state. Initially, the elites tried to impose the vocabulary of the nation-state, but because Canada was not a homogeneous nation, it had to develop complex systems to govern a pluralistic population.

Professor Alain Beaulieu (Université du Québec à Montréal)

The French colonial empire and the Aboriginal nations (L'Empire colonial français et les Nations autochtones)

In his presentation, Professor Alain Beaulieu examined relations between the French authorities in New France and the various Aboriginal peoples. To achieve their objectives of expanding access to the fur trade and building the French empire in America, the French had to have the support of the Aboriginal people. A number of alliances were formed to provide stability and encourage trade. Professor Beaulieu said that after good relations were established with the neighbouring tribes, a policy of assimilation and francization was instituted, and included encouraging marriages between the French colonists and Aboriginal women, sending members of religious orders to convert the Amerindians to Catholicism, and teaching them French. That policy was applied in the areas around the St. Lawrence and when the French Régime expanded into Ontario. Assimilation enabled the French to penetrate deeper into the continent.

France's efforts to become the dominant authority did not produce the desired results, however. While the Amerindian peoples recognized European pre-eminence in certain regards, they thought of the colonists as good partners. The French played a dual role as mediators in disputes and as police in imposing peace treaties between the peoples. The result was that the French established a relationship with those peoples in which they were both parent and supplier: they both protected them and provided them with supplies. Over time, the special relationship with the peoples in the region led to conflicts with other Amerindian groups. In addition, the continual reinterpretation of treaties by some chiefs, arising from the oral tradition and the fact that the treaties were not in writing, created insurmountable tensions with the French. The Amerindians' tradition of forming alliances nonetheless signified major successes for the French.

Professor John A. Dickinson (Université de Montréal)

France's legacy in Canada by the conclusion of the 1763 Treaty of Paris (L'héritage laissé par la France au Canada à la conclusion du Traité de Paris en 1763)

Professor John Dickinson listed a number of the features bequeathed to the Canadians by the French Regime from 1534 to 1763. If one looks at geographic maps of Quebec, the French imprint is clear: many lakes, rivers and towns are named for religious personalities, the King, nobles or important figures in France. Once the population

began working the land, a system of *seigneuries* running parallel to the river was introduced, and its mark can still be seen today.

With a permanent and growing population, a judicial system was developed, and with it the appointment of governors, *seigneurs* and judges and the creation of courts of law. With the advent of the *Compagnie des cent associés* came notaries, who brought the *Code Civil de Paris* to the colony, along with the customary laws.

Professor Dickinson also discussed the religious influence in New France, and how it continued under English rule. The churches and religious orders handled official record-keeping, and were responsible for birth, baptism and death certificates, as well as providing social services (schools, hospitals). Religion and the state have played closely connected roles in most institutions up to the modern era.

Professor Françoise Le Jeune (Université de Nantes)

Conquered or handed over – the historical interpretation of France’s political objectives vis-à-vis Canada: 1763; 1778; 1804; 1837-38; 1855 (*Conquête ou cession – l’interprétation historique des objectifs politiques de la France à l’égard du Canada: 1763; 1778; 1804; 1837-38; 1855*)

Professor Françoise Le Jeune studied five episodes in the history of North America, drawing on memoirs and the archives of the court of the King at that time, and concluded that the conquest of New France is a myth. Rather, the colony was abandoned by the mother country. Her research shows that the King of France had turned his attention to Louisiana and the Antilles, which were more profitable for the crown, at the expense of the northern colonies. She found that the King’s principal advisers felt that the northern colonies were too difficult to defend and that the King did not have the resources needed for continuing to defend his colonies. In negotiating the Treaty of Paris, France effectively surrendered New France for its own benefit.

Professor Le Jeune described other examples of France’s abandonment of Canada. During the American War of Independence, France renounced its claim to the lands in the northern part of the continent in its alliance with the Americans. That indifference was also apparent during the rebellions of 1837-38. Government documents show that the authorities were unaware of what was going on in Upper Canada and passively followed events in Lower Canada in the press, whose coverage was biased by negative stereotypes.

Professor Yves Frenette (University of Ottawa)

French in Canada or Canadians in America? (Français du Canada ou Canadiens d’Amérique)

In his presentation, Professor Yves Frenette questioned the identity of francophones in Canada. Does a Canadian francophone self-identify as French-speaking Canadian (or North American) or as French in Canada? When immigrants settled in New France, they “made changes to their cultural baggage, and in the process they acquired new identities”. Those identities were then transformed again, becoming provincial (Québécois, Franco-ontarian, Fransaskois). Those groups retained their ties with France, but only as among other influences, including the United States.

Francophones were also successful in retaining one common identity feature other than language. Until the decades from 1950 to 1970, Catholicism and its institutions were of great significance in their everyday lives. This was not only because the Catholic Church was responsible for establishing and operating schools and hospitals, but also because it provided Acadians and French-Canadians with a feeling of security and belonging.

Professor Frenette concluded his presentation by examining the influence of American culture and the culture of France on French Canadians. He showed that both countries have played an important role in the history of francophones and that their influence is still in play today.

Professor Guy Martinière (Université de La Rochelle)

Champlain and the founding of Quebec City, between memory and history – 2008/1608 (*Champlain et la fondation de Québec, entre Mémoire et Histoire – 2008/1608*)

Professor Martinière gave a presentation on the description, interpretation and perception of the life of Samuel de Champlain through history. The image of Champlain and his role in the establishment and expansion of New France, including his role as an explorer of the lands in eastern North America and the father of New France, have been re-evaluated and reinterpreted in a number of published texts.

Senator Jean-Pierre Raffarin (French Senate)

Institut France-Amériques

The symposium concluded with a luncheon at which the former Prime Minister of France, Senator Jean-Pierre Raffarin, was the speaker. He drew participants' attention to the strength of the historical ties between France and Canada and reiterated the general view that New France was the cradle of Canada. He listed France's numerous contributions to the celebration of the 400th anniversary of Champlain's settlement at Quebec City, pointed to the architectural gift to the *Centre de la Francophonie pour les Amériques*, and spoke about the various ministerial missions that will be travelling to Quebec City this year.

The Senator recalled France's contributions to promoting French in America, and particularly in Canada. He also pointed out that through La Francophonie, France and Canada are engaged in defending cultural diversity throughout the world. People must work together to ensure that diversity of opinion is encouraged, and not stifled, while respecting current views. Great projects can be undertaken in which strength comes from diversity.

Conclusion and acknowledgements

The delegation would like to thank the organizers of the symposium and congratulate them on a great success. They would also like to express their particular thanks to Senator Marcel-Pierre Cléach, Senator Serge Joyal and the Ambassador of Canada in Paris, Marc Lortie. The delegation would like as well to thank the staff of the French Senate and the National Assembly as well as the Embassy of Canada in Paris, in particular Matthieu Meissonnier, Bruno Bas and Marc Berthiaume.

Respectfully submitted,

Pierre De Bané, Senator
Member of the Canadian Branch of the
Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie (APF)

Travel Cost

ASSOCIATION	Canadian Branch of the <i>Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie (APF)</i>
ACTIVITY	France-Canada Symposium: « L’empreinte de la France au Canada après 400 ans »
DESTINATION	Paris, France
DATES	March 7 and 8, 2008
DELEGATION	
SENATE	Hon. Pierre De Bané
HOUSE OF COMMONS	
STAFF	
TRANSPORTATION	\$ 4,707.87
PER DIEMS	\$ 774.02
TOTAL	\$ 5,481.89