



**Report of the Canadian Parliamentary Delegation on its
Participation in the 31st Regional Assembly of the
America Region of the *Assemblée parlementaire de la
Francophonie* (APF)**

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

**Lafayette and Lake Charles, United States of America
July 27 to 31, 2015**

Report

The parliamentary delegation that represented the Canadian Branch at the 31st Regional Assembly of the America Region of the *Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie* (APF) and the Conference of Branch Chairs (CBC) in Lafayette and Lake Charles, United States, from July 27 to 31, 2015, has the honour of presenting its report.

The delegation from the Canadian Branch of the APF was made up of the Hon. Senator **Paul E. McIntyre**, QC, International President of the APF and head of the delegation, of the Hon. Senator **Michel Rivard**, and of the Administrative Secretary of the Canadian Branch of the APF, Ms. Michelle Tittley.

In addition to the Canadian Branch, nine regional branches also participated in the working sessions: Alberta, Canada, Louisiana, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Ontario, Prince Edward Island, Quebec and Saskatchewan. The Parliamentary Secretary General of the APF and the Chargé de Mission for Europe were also present.

Conference of Branch Chairs

The Conference of Branch Chairs (CBC) was chaired by Canadian Senator and Chair of the CBC, **the Hon. Paul E. McIntyre**.

The Chair began by welcoming the participants and acknowledging the presence of the new America Region Chargée de Mission, **Marie-France Lalonde**; and the new Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of Prince Edward Island, **the Hon. Francis (Buck) Watts**.

Minutes of the APF Bureau meeting

After the adoption of the agenda, the Chair presented the highlights of the APF Bureau meeting in Bern, Switzerland, on July 6, 2015. Among the topics discussed at that meeting was implementation of the APF program *Jeunes pousses*.

Report by the Chargée de Mission from February to July 2015

The Chargée de Mission presented her activity report for February to July 2015. She reported that at the last CBC there was extensive discussion about the rules for attending the *Parlement francophone des jeunes* (PFJ), which resulted in the Chargé de Mission being asked to contact Parliamentary Secretary General **Pascal Terrasse**. Then there was a discussion about these issues, and the Parliamentary Affairs Committee was asked to present an opinion to the APF Bureau at the July 2016 meeting. It was agreed that the issue would be discussed in greater detail as part of other business at this meeting.

Statement of revenues and expenses, America Region, for 2014–2015 and updated budget figures for 2015–2016

The Chargée de Mission then presented the statement of revenues and expenses for the America Region for 2014–2015 and the updated budget figures for 2015–2016. The budget numbers were updated following the February 2015 decision to provide the Haiti Branch with a \$6,000 grant to attend the *Programme international de formation parlementaire* in Quebec City from June 10 to 19, 2015.

Eligibility criteria for financial assistance from the America Region

The Chair started off the discussion so that members could agree on eligibility criteria for providing financial assistance from the Region to a branch or any other organization that requests it.

On the Quebec Branch's recommendation, the CBC decided to form a subcommittee of two or three branches supported by the Regional Secretariat. This subcommittee will be responsible for developing draft criteria for approval by all members at its February 2016 meeting. It will be made up of the Quebec, Louisiana and New Brunswick branches.

America Region consolidation/expansion plan

Ms. **Carole Poirier**, Vice-President of the Quebec Branch, presented an action plan for consolidating and expanding the Region. During her time as Chair of the CBC from 2011 to 2015, Ms. **Poirier** was involved in developing the plan put before the members. The members referred to the January chairs' meeting in Nunavut, as well as the activities of the Parliamentary Confederation of the Americas (COPA), ParlAmericas and the various organizations made up of U.S. states.

The America Region consolidation/expansion plan as presented by the Quebec Branch was endorsed by the CBC. In February the Chargée de Mission will present a work plan based on this document. A report on the year's activities will be presented at the next Regional Assembly in 2016.

APF's Jeunes pousses program

The new program for young francophone parliamentarians, *Jeunes pousses*, consists of four working sessions lasting 4 to 5 days over two years, each one hosted by one of the four APF regions. The first session will take place in October 2015 in France and Belgium. The America Region has been asked to host a session in 2016 or 2017. Interested branches are invited to contact the Secretariat as soon as possible. The Chair informed the CBC that the Quebec, Canada and Ontario branches could work together to host this session in Quebec City and Ottawa in fall 2016 or spring 2017 (to be determined). The Quebec Branch suggested that the subcommittee created earlier also look into covering the program cost. The subcommittee will consider the item.

Scheduled regional activities

The Chargée de Mission then presented the America Region's draft schedule of activities for 2015–2016. She invited the branches to the 68th Convention of the Association canadienne d'éducation de langue française (ACELF) taking place from September 24 to 26, 2015.

For the next America Regional Assembly, the Quebec Branch recommended a theme related to the social economy, stating that several branches have relevant experience to share.

At the close of the CBC, Ms. **France Gélinas** raised her branch's concerns about the rules for attending the *Parlement francophones des jeunes*. It was agreed that the Chargée de Mission would raise these issues at the February 2016 APF Bureau meeting. The Region's branches attending the spring meeting of the Parliamentary Affairs Committee promised to present the America Region's position.

Regional Assembly of the America Region

Chaired by the Chargée de Mission, the proceedings began with the topic of communication and synergy between parliamentarians and young minority francophones. The topic was presented by the President of the Louisiana Branch. He said that francophone parliamentarians representing communities where French is in the minority are faced with the challenge of keeping their language alive, especially the difficulty of passing this linguistic and cultural heritage on to the younger generation (15–35 years). They have considerable influence, and the legislative tools at their disposal can help create a more favourable environment for promoting French. This is the case in Louisiana, where about a dozen representatives and senators support French-immersion classes in schools.

Reports on communication and synergy between parliamentarians and young minority francophones

Senator **Eric Lafleur**, President of the Louisiana Branch; the Hon. Senator **Paul McIntyre**, President of the Canadian Branch; Mr. **Wilfrid Roussel**, MLA and President of the New Brunswick Branch; Ms. **Lena Diab**, Nova Scotia MLA and Attorney General and Minister of Justice and of Immigration; Ms. **Carole Poirier**, Quebec MNA; Ms. **Cathy Sproule**, Saskatchewan MLA; Ms. **France Gélinas** and Ms. **Lisa MacLeod**, Ontario MPPs; and Ms. **Annie McKittrick**, Alberta MLA; presented reports on the topic.

The presentations focused on various subjects related to young people and parliamentary initiatives to support them. Discussions centred on French-language education.

The discussion on the topic was greatly enhanced by presentations from young francophone Louisianians who spoke about their connection to the French language and the Francophonie. There was also a discussion about what could be done to promote the civic engagement of young francophones and about communication between parliamentarians and young people.

The meeting concluded with participants adopting a motion expressing condolences to the loved ones of the victims of the tragic event in Lafayette on July 23, 2015.

By participating in the meeting of the Conference of Branch Chairs and the assembly of the America Region, the Canadian Branch achieved its goals of meeting its international and regional obligations, presenting a report, representing the budgetary interests of the Canadian Branch, maintaining regional contacts and representing its interests.

Respectfully submitted,

The Hon. Paul E. McIntyre, QC, Senator
President 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</i> (APF)
ACTIVITY	31st Regional Assembly of the America Region of the <i>Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie</i> (APF)
DESTINATION	Lafayette and Lake Charles, United States of America
DATES	July 27 to 31, 2015
DELEGATION	
SENATE	Hon. Paul E. McIntyre Hon. Michel Rivard
HOUSE OF COMMONS	
STAFF	Michelle Tittley
TRANSPORTATION	\$10,356.04
ACCOMMODATION	\$ 2,834.32
HOSPITALITY	\$ 0.00
PER DIEMS	\$ 924.38
OFFICIAL GIFTS	\$ 0.00
MISCELLANEOUS / REGISTRATION FEES	\$ 790.01
TOTAL	\$14,904.75