QUEBEC AND THE QUESTION OF IMMIGRATION: FROM ETHNOCENTRISM TO ETHNIC PLURALISM, 1900-1985

Michael D. Behiels
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QUEBEC AND THE QUESTION OF IMMIGRATION:
FROM ETHNOCENTRISM TO ETHNIC PLURALISM,
1900-1985*

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University of Ottawa

*IN MEMORY OF HOWARD PALMER, A GREAT FRIEND, A KINDRED SPIRIT AND AN INSPIRING COLLEAGUE. HE SHALL BE MISSED DEARLY.
### TABLE ONE

MONTREAL ISLAND POPULATION BY ETHNIC ORIGIN
1901-1941: SELECTED GROUPS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1901</th>
<th>1911</th>
<th>1921</th>
<th>1931</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>French</td>
<td>230,607</td>
<td>348,107</td>
<td>439,840</td>
<td>604,827</td>
<td>699,517</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>63.9%</td>
<td>62.7%</td>
<td>60.7%</td>
<td>60.2%</td>
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<tr>
<td>British</td>
<td>113,993</td>
<td>152,257</td>
<td>197,725</td>
<td>263,779</td>
<td>273,370</td>
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<td></td>
<td>31.6%</td>
<td>27.4%</td>
<td>27.3%</td>
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<td>24.5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jews</td>
<td>6,962</td>
<td>28,872</td>
<td>45,792</td>
<td>57,996</td>
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<td>6.3%</td>
<td>5.8%</td>
<td>5.7%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Italians</td>
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<td>2.3%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
<td>5.5%</td>
<td>5.3%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

SOURCE: Censuses of Canada

### TABLE TWO

MONTREAL ISLAND POPULATION BY ETHNIC ORIGIN 1951-1981: SELECTED GROUPS

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<thead>
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<th></th>
<th>1951</th>
<th>1961</th>
<th>1971</th>
<th>1981</th>
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<tr>
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<td>842,100</td>
<td>1,083,676</td>
<td>1,155,625</td>
<td>980,525</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>63.8%</td>
<td>62.0%</td>
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<tr>
<td>British</td>
<td>293,147</td>
<td>316,157</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>18.1%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jews</td>
<td>71,403</td>
<td>70,183</td>
<td>101,390</td>
<td>78,385</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5.4%</td>
<td>4.0%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Italians</td>
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<td>97,210</td>
<td>148,725</td>
<td>138,980</td>
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<td>2.3%</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
<td>7.6%</td>
<td>8.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
<td>10.3%</td>
<td>11.2%</td>
<td>17.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SOURCE: Censuses of Canada
QUEBEC AND THE QUESTION OF IMMIGRATION:
FROM ETHNOCENTRISM TO ETHNIC PLURALISM,
1900-1985

Michael D. Behiels

I — INTRODUCTION

The question of immigration has always aroused considerable debate and tension in Quebec. The arrival of the Loyalists following the American Revolution prompted British colonial authorities to divide the Old Province of Quebec into Upper and Lower Canada in order to separate the two very different cultural, linguistic and religious communities. This policy of segregation was soon upset by the arrival of American, English, Scottish, Irish and Welsh immigrants in the first half of the 19th century. The growth of the anglophone minority fuelled the flames of Louis-Joseph Papineau’s republican and separatist nationalist movement which envisioned Lower Canada as a homogeneous society of French-Canadian Catholics living peacefully on the seigneuries under the guidance of a new francophone professional middle class. The Patriotes’ policy of exclusivism, however, went up in smoke with their defeat in the Rebellions of 1837-38.

In the aftermath of the Rebellions a new strategy was adopted by the francophone leadership. Clerical and political leaders responded to the overcrowding in the seigneuries and the large influx of Irish immigrants in the 1840s and 50s with an ambitious policy of French-Canadian colonization, both in the Eastern Townships and on the North Shore. Meanwhile, a rapidly expanding French-Canadian rural proletariat competed, sometimes violently, with Irish labourers for the seasonal jobs in the forestry, canal and railroad construction industries and for the longshoremen positions in the ports of Quebec and Montreal. With the rapid decline in British immigration after the 1850s, the debate in Quebec shifted from immigration to emigration. Between 1860 and 1900, approximately 400,000 French-Canadians abandoned their ancestral homelands on the overcrowded seigneuries in search of employment in the textile and clothing factories of New England. The Catholic Church, with some financial support from the province, pursued an aggressive and quite successful policy of colonization. Thousands of French Canadians were settled on the land, particularly in the Eastern Townships where they bought out the English-speaking settlers and on the North Shore in the valleys of the Laurentians. Furthermore, French-Canadian political and economic leaders, often aided and abetted by local parish priests, attempted to stem the tide of emigration by promoting industrialization. These combined efforts succeeded in keeping a considerable number of francophones in the homeland who might have otherwise joined their fellow expatriots in New England.
At Confederation, Quebec’s majority francophone and Catholic society, responding to the existence of an economically and politically powerful English-speaking minority in the province, allowed the entrenchment of bilingualism in the provincial legislature and courts. The francophone majority also agreed, somewhat reluctantly, to a dual confessional, Catholic and Protestant, educational system. During the latter half of the 19th century Quebec’s anglophone farmers increasingly abandoned the province for the western United States or Canada. This set the pattern for the 20th century. Rural Quebec would become increasingly francophone, except for parts of the Eastern Townships and the Ottawa Valley. Metropolitan Montreal would retain its pluralistic ethnic and religious character but its majority would switch from English- to French-speaking by the end of the 19th century.

The demographic and ethnic composition of Quebec, like the rest of Canada, was transformed dramatically during the first three decades of the 20th century. Between 1896 and 1914 nearly 3 million immigrants from Great Britain, the United States and Europe entered the country; a further 1.2 million arrived during the 1920s. Approximately 700,000 of this 4.2 million chose to settle in the province of Quebec. During the same period Quebec lost over 822,000 of its citizens through emigration. It is estimated that 310,000 of these emigrants were francophones, the majority of whom moved to the United States, although smaller numbers moved to eastern and northern Ontario, northeastern New Brunswick and a few found their way into the West. One major consequence of this influx and outpouring of people was a change in the ethnic composition of Quebec. The percentage of non-francophones and non-anglophones in Quebec rose from 2.2 per cent in 1901 to 6.0 per cent in 1931. The vast majority of immigrants who chose to settle permanently in Quebec did so in and around the City of Montreal. By 1931 over 60 per cent of Quebec’s anglophones lived on Montreal Island along side nearly 80 per cent of all Quebec’s non-French and non-English speaking citizens, generally referred to as allophones. During these three decades the francophone proportion of Montreal Island declined from 63.9 per cent to 60.2 per cent and the anglophone from 31.6 per cent to 26.3 per cent, while the allophone percentage rose from a mere 4.5 per cent to 13.5 per cent. This evolving demographic and social reality would precipitate a permanent, and at times, very bitter struggle among these ethnic communities over economic and educational prerogatives.

Montreal has often been described quite aptly as “la ville des petites patries”, that is, a city of well-defined cultural communities. Indeed, metropolitan Montreal is an amalgamation of dozens of distinctive villages and former rural parishes, many of them almost as old as the City itself. Many of these villages and parishes acquired very special communal identities, often demarcated by unique architectural styles, because they were appropriated in the early decades of this century by particular ethnic groups or social classes. Several studies have demonstrated that Montreal has the most diversified and the most autonomous and residentially segregated, ethnic communities of all North American cities of similar size. The
rate of linguistic transfer, to French or English, is slower in Montreal than in all other Canadian cities while the rate of maternal language retention among Montreal’s ethnic groups is the highest in the country. The survival and development of Montreal’s ethnic communities, especially the Jewish and Italian communities, has its origins in the nature of the response of the two “reluctant host” communities to the various ethnic groups. Neither francophone nor anglophone community leaders wanted the provincial government to alter the dual ethnic and religious constitutional structure. Their respective unwillingness to come to terms with religious and ethnic pluralism set the pattern for nearly seven decades and contributed in no small measure to the linguistic and cultural crises of the 1970s and 80s.

II — FRANCOPHONE ELITE REACTIONS TO ETHNIC AND RELIGIOUS PLURALISM: 1901-45

The development of religious and ethnic pluralism in Montreal took place in the context of the continually hostile reaction of Quebec’s francophone élites to the immigration policies of the national government. Between 1900 and 1940, virtually all nationalist organizations and their leaders put on record their opposition to the “open door” immigration policy of the national government. Leaders and members of Quebec’s Conservative Party, federally and provincially, continually berated the Liberal party, which was in power at both levels during most of this period, for its laissez-faire attitude toward immigration, especially its decision to allow industrial and railroad magnates to recruit thousands of destitute and landless peasants of central, eastern and southern Europe. Similarly, senior French-Canadian Catholic Church leaders spoke out against immigration and allowed official Catholic newspapers such as L’Action catholique, and La Semaine religieuse du Québec, and non-official Catholic papers such as Le Devoir to carry on an incessant campaign denouncing both immigration policies and, upon occasion, the immigrants themselves.

The most consistent supporters of an aggressive policy of immigration were the Liberal party and representatives of the francophone and anglophone business communities. It was their contention that Quebec’s future was industrial, not agricultural, and that the settlement of the prairies by whatever groups were capable of making the soil productive would greatly benefit the commercial, industrial and transportation sectors of Quebec’s economy. Only a very rapid expansion of the province’s economy, they argued with sincere conviction and considerable accuracy, would stem the tide of emigration of francophones to the United States. As long as the economy continued to grow and significant numbers of jobs were being created, the majority of Quebec’s citizens continued to accept this linkage between the settlement of the West through immigration with the industrial expansion of Quebec. Once western settlement had been accomplished and the country experienced a long and painful depression, however, the Liberal party and business organizations were forced to revise their policies and views on immigration.
The arguments against immigration can be classified into several categories: demographic, economic, socio-cultural and political. French-Canadian nationalists contended that British-Canadian leaders were deliberately trying to swamp Canada with a policy of massive immigration of anglophones and allophones. The census statistics of 1921 seemed to bear out this charge. The French-Canadian proportion of the population declined from 30.7 per cent in 1901 to 27.9 per cent by 1921. Only French Canada’s prolific birth rate, referred to positively by nationalists and clergics as the revenge of the cradle, combined with the precipitous decline of both immigration and emigration in the 1930s, ensured that the francophone percentage returned to 30.3 per cent by 1941. Henri Bourassa and his colleagues in the Ligue nationaliste denounced the Laurier government’s decision to open Canada’s doors wide to non-British and non-French immigrants from Central and Eastern Europe for fear the policy would undermine the bicultural and bilingual compact of Confederation. As late as the 1930s Bourassa was still bemoaning the fact that the Laurier government had allowed the prairie provinces to be occupied by “foreigners” rather than keep the region closed until members of Canada’s two founding communities saw the need to occupy and make this region productive. Clearly, nationalists were determined that political power should not shift into the hands of “foreigners”.

Moreover, nationalists and Church leaders were very concerned with the socio-economic impact of massive immigration. The dual processes of industrialization and urbanization in Quebec, particularly in Montreal, threatened the very fabric of the traditional rural and Catholic French-Canadian society as well as the ability of the francophone professional middle class and clerical leaders to retain effective control over that society. Thousands upon thousands of French-Canadian habitant families abandoned their ancestral roots in rural Quebec to join the ranks of the burgeoning working class in the materialistic and secular environment of the cities. The cultural division of labour deepened as the Anglo-Canadian minority of Montreal and foreign investors gained undisputed dominance over the leading sectors of Quebec’s economy. The developing francophone bourgeoisie limited itself to the traditional areas of real estate, commerce and small to medium scale industries where they had the capital, technology and the labour to compete effectively. On the other hand, the vast majority of French-Canadian workers, because they lacked secondary education, were relegated to unskilled and semi-skilled blue collar jobs and some service sector occupations. When unemployment rose dramatically in the early 1920s, nationalist, Church and labour spokesmen contended that the government’s immigration policy was to blame. Destitute British and European immigrants, eager, they claimed, to work for starvation wages, were taking jobs away from French Canadians. When the Depression hit in the 1930s this economic argument against all immigration became very effective, not only in Quebec, but throughout Canada. Immigration from all countries was brought to a virtual standstill and nativist sentiment became more pervasive and public.
Reinforcing these socio-economic concerns over immigration were the paranoid fears of nationalist and Church leaders of the potential influence of foreign ideologies brought in by the immigrants. These ideologies, they feared, stood to win the hearts and minds of naïve and ignorant working-class French Canadians. It was precisely such fears that motivated Church leaders to create the Catholic labour movement between 1911 and 1921 and to support numerous endeavours, such as the Jesuit-run *Ecole sociale populaire*, designed to disseminate widely the ideology of social catholicism to counter the spread of materialism, secularism, liberalism and socialism throughout Quebec society. In the 1930s, Catholic Church leaders carried out a vitriolic and widespread campaign against communism and socialism, particularly among the working class immigrants who, they maintained, supported and disseminated these ideologies. This ideological battle was crowned by the 1937 Padlock Law of Maurice Duplessis. Instituted at the bequest of the entire Quebec Catholic hierarchy and actively supported by nationalists organizations at all levels, this law gave the government of Quebec the power to padlock any premises where alleged communists congregated or where the provincial police found communist literature. The law was an effective tool against organized labour which attracted militant and knowledgeable immigrant workers and leaders.

Against this background of growing hostility the immigrants to Montreal struggled to establish themselves. Because of its demographic weight, the Jewish community during the pre-World War II period played a particularly significant part in confronting the entrenched linguistic, socio-economic, and political institutions of the anglophone and francophone communities of Montreal. Their success demonstrates how and why the dynamic of inter-ethnic relations contributed eventually to the survival and entrenchment of a vibrant ethnic pluralism in metropolitan Montreal. Their struggle over educational rights best demonstrates why Montreal’s Jewish community was compelled by the host francophone and anglophone societies to develop strategies of socio-economic and residential segregation and institutional autonomy.

**III — THE JEWISH EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE**

Fleeing religious and political persecution in Central and Eastern Europe, thousands of Jewish refugees fled to North America after the turn of the century. Because Montreal was Canada’s major port of entry and offered employment in the labour intensive textile and clothing factories, many Jews chose to make it their new home. Montreal’s Jewish community grew very rapidly from slightly under 7,000 in 1901 to nearly 64,000 by 1941, that is from under 2 per cent to 5.7 per cent of the Island’s population. By 1981, a highly diversified and prosperous Jewish community of nearly 102,000 people, shared the municipality of Outremont and the Cote-des-Neiges quarter with francophones while comprising the lion’s share of the municipalities of Hampstead and Cote-Saint-Luc and Snowdon quartier alongside anglophones. The Jewish community developed a more
complete institutional network of hospitals, schools, leisure and cultural and religious facilities than other ethnic groups.

One must first understand the institutional framework into which the Jewish community was thrust. Prior to 1914, the dual confessional public school system was administered by the Catholic and Protestant Committees of the Council of Public Instruction. In Montreal and Quebec City, all schools administered by the Protestant and Catholic Boards were both "confessional" and "public" and ostensibly open to children of all faiths and ethnic backgrounds. The Commission des Ecoles Catholiques de Montréal (CECM) had two linguistic divisions, a majority one for French-Canadian Catholics and a minority one for anglophone Catholics — Irish, Scottish, English and increasingly after the turn of the century, Poles, Ukrainians and Italians. The Protestant School Board of Greater Montreal attracted non-Catholic children because the language of instruction was English and the religious demands were few. On the other hand, Catholic school officials actively dissuaded non-Catholic children from enrolling in their system because they would threaten both the faith and the language of the French-Canadian children.

By the early 1900s, the financial strain placed upon the Protestant School Commission of Montreal by the rapidly expanding enrolment of Jewish children prompted the Protestant commissioners to seek financial assistance from the Quebec Legislative Assembly. After much procrastination, the Legislative Assembly was forced to deal with problem in 1903 after the Protestant Commission denied a Jewish student, Pinsler, a scholarship on the grounds that his father had paid no taxes to the Protestant system. When the Jewish community contested the decision in court, the judge ruled in favour of the Commission on the grounds that Quebec's schools were "confessional" and not "public". Jewish children attended these schools on sufferance and had no legal rights. Lacking the resources to appeal this ominous ruling, the Jewish community reluctantly agreed to accept a settlement proposed by the Protestant Board and passed into law in April 1903. The Act declared Jews to be Protestants for educational purposes and "accorded them the same rights and privileges as the latter". In return the Protestant Board received tax revenues in proportion to its actual share of the student population. In reality, Jewish parents and children received none of the same rights and privileges. The Protestant Board, continuing to act as if it were strictly a "denominational" Board, maintained that Jewish parents had no right to elect or be elected or appointed to any school board. By 1924, when nearly 40 per cent of its 31,000 students were Jewish, only 70 of the Commission's 1,000 teachers were Jewish. Not a single high school teacher was Jewish. Furthermore, Jewish children were being segregated into separate classrooms and schools. Adding insult to injury, Protestant prayers and religious instruction were foisted upon Jewish children while parents were denied the right to keep their children home on Jewish holidays.
In reaction to the repeated attempts of some members of the Jewish community to gain representation on the Protestant Commission, some Jewish community leaders, advocates of a policy of school segregation for Jewish children, demanded that the Act of 1903 be amended. They wanted the government to designate the Jews as neutrals, that is, non-catholic and non-protestant for tax purposes. This would allow the government to place the administration of Jewish schools under the jurisdiction of a Neutral Panel. The majority of the Jewish community, who favoured integration for educational purposes, objected loudly to these proposals. They demanded that the spirit and the letter of the 1903 Act providing for equality of rights and privileges for Jews be respected completely.

The Liberal government of Alexandre Taschereau, favouring integration, held back on approving the amendments while urging integrationists on both sides to achieve a negotiated settlement. The government’s hopes were dashed by a growing minority of recently arrived Orthodox Jews who campaigned vigorously for the creation of a separate Jewish educational system. When negotiations faltered in 1924, Taschereau appointed a Special Inquiry Commission which referred the 1903 Act to the courts to determine its legality. In February 1928, the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council ruled that the Act of 1903 was in vire in those provisions pertaining to the Cities of Montreal and Quebec except for the provision that allowed Jews to be appointed to the Protestant Board of School Commissioners. The Board had to accept Jewish students but the Province could not compel it to hire Jewish teachers or appoint Jewish representatives to the Protestant Committee or the Protestant Board of Montreal. The Court confirmed that the Province had the power to create a separate Jewish School system.

It was this last stipulation which set the cat among the pigeons. It forced the hand of the government by reinforcing the segregationists’ claim for a separate Jewish school system. After several months of frustrating negotiations with the Jewish and Protestant leaders and the Catholic Bishops, the government passed a bill in April 1930 that created a School Commission for Montreal’s Jewish community, an organization directly under the supervision of the Superintendent of Public Instruction. The Bill also contained a provision that allowed the integrationists to reach a negotiated settlement. The Bill was roundly condemned by the Catholic Church, led by Cardinal Rouleau and his Coadjutor Archbishop Gauthier of Montreal, because it created a non-Christian educational Committee on a par with the Catholic and Protestant Committees. The Bishops feared that such a system would allow Catholic parents to escape a church-controlled system. A third board, they argued, introduced a secularizing process that would lead eventually to the re-introduction of a Ministry of Education, anathema to the Catholic Church. As a minimum, Cardinal Rouleau wanted the Jewish Committee placed under the jurisdiction of the Council of Public Instruction, that is, the Catholic and Protestant Committees. French-Canadian nationalists, on the other hand, objected to the Bill because its provisions symbolized the legal recognition of ethnic pluralism and equality, thereby undermining their
cherished two nation conception of Canada. According to the nationalists, the Jewish community or any other ethnic group could not be given legal recognition as a distinct nationality. Jewish children, as was the case with children of all other ethnic groups, must be integrated into either the francophone or anglophone societies and this integration process was to be achieved primarily through the denominational educational system. Bi-nationalism, not ethnic pluralism, remained the French-Canadian nationalists' clearly stated objective. This objective, they argued, must not be undermined in any way by the Jewish community.

Indeed, the 1930 Bill allowed moderates on the Protestant Board and the seven Jewish integrationists appointed to the Jewish School Commission to reach an accord for the education of Jewish children in the Protestant system. Premier Taschereau had promised as much to the Bishops. In return for its cooperation, the Protestant Board received increased funding from the government to compensate for the large numbers of Jewish students. The Jews received somewhat vague guarantees of fair and equitable treatment. In April 1931, the government introduced a new Bill which did away with the Jewish School Commission, much to the chagrin of the Jewish segregationists who demanded the resignation of their seven representatives on the Jewish Commission, and ratified the 15 year accord signed by the parties. Both government leaders and Catholic Church officials were satisfied that the dual confessional Christian structure had survived intact. The nationalists, extreme and moderate, were elated as they could claim a victory, one of the few they had experienced under the Taschereau regime.

In the context of rising anti-semitism in Montreal during the very difficult years of the Depression, it is understandable that the majority of Jews chose the compromise solution. Anglophone anti-semitism was the lesser of two evils and most Jewish parents were so eager to have their children learn English in order to prepare them for a very competitive job market, that they were willing to endure political and social discrimination. Nevertheless, this compromise solution had important long term ramifications. It allowed the anglophone community of Montreal to continue to integrate linguistically the Jewish community, although there was little or no socio-economic integration until after the Second World War. Second, it contributed immeasurably, because of the size of the Jewish student population, to turning the Protestant school system into a de facto public secular system that was open to all immigrants, Catholic and non-Catholic, as well as making it very attractive to increased numbers of French-Canadian children whose parents were dissatisfied for one reason or another with the Catholic system. In short, the emergence of a public system gave all parents and children an option that Church leaders and nationalists considered offensive. Clearly, a publicly-funded Jewish School Commission offering a bilingual or trilingual curriculum would have prepared the ground for improved relations with the francophone community at some point in the future. Unfortunately, shortsighted political, nationalist and clerical leaders, concerned with preserving the status quo against the ever increasing pressures of a changing society,
effectively destroyed that option. Thus, Quebec entered the era of massive immigration in the post-World War Two period with an education system designed to reflect and to perpetuate religious and cultural dualism.

IV — CHANGING ATTITUDES OF THE CHURCH AND NATIONALISTS TOWARD IMMIGRATION, 1945-1965

At the close of the Second World War, the prevalent attitude toward immigration among French-Canadian leaders remained that of open hostility. When confronted with a new wave of British and European immigration, traditional nationalists expressed considerable resentment, even outrage. Responding to a July 1947 Report by a Committee of Senate which recommended a policy of massive immigration, French-Canadian nationalists claimed that Ottawa’s approach to immigration was intended primarily to counter French Canada’s much deplored “revenge of the cradle”. *Le Devoir*, French Canada’s foremost nationalist daily, reacted to the perceived threat by denouncing the federal government’s mass immigration policy as one motivated by “des intérêts sordides et du racisme chevronné”. In 1951-52, François-Albert Angers, an outspoken traditional nationalist, reminded French Canadians that the battle over immigration policy was a continuation of “la grande bataille des races dans laquelle nous sommes engagés depuis bientôt 200 ans”. He condemned the Canadian Chamber of Commerce’s arguments on behalf of a policy of mass immigration as specious, misleading and self-serving and asserted that under existing guidelines the Canadian business community could obtain all the manpower it required. The Chamber of Commerce’s true motive for advocating a policy of massive immigration, he concluded, was to assimilate the French-Canadian society. Such a hostile immigration policy had to be countered immediately.

Concern over the demographic impact of immigration was expressed by a University of Montreal professor, Pierre Dumareau, in 1952. Initiating the contemporary battle of demographic statistics, he argued that the combined effect of immigration, the increased birth rate throughout English-speaking Canada, a decline in the natural increase among the French-Canadian society, and the joining of Newfoundland, would drop the percentage of French Canadians in Canada to 30.3 per cent rather than see it rise to 32.2 per cent as had been projected in the mid-1940s. If these factors persisted throughout the 1950s, he predicted that the proportion of French Canadians would decline to 29.6 per cent by 1961. Indeed, if other negative factors emerged, such as a drop in Anglo-Canadian immigration to the United States, a further decline in the natural increase of the French-Canadian population, and an accelerated rate of assimilation of francophones outside Quebec, the proportion was going to be considerably lower than 29.6 per cent. In Dumareau’s view, Quebec would only be able to guarantee its demographic future through well-coordinated political and cultural policies.
Concerns over Quebec's demographic future and the sensitive issue of Catholic refugees from Communist Eastern Europe did, however, begin to alter the traditional attitudes of Catholic Church leaders and some French-Canadian nationalists. The impetus for change in the Catholic Church came from Rome when, in 1947, Pope Pius XII implored all Christian countries to take in the thousands and thousands of refugees and meet their spiritual and social needs. The Papacy established the Commission internationale catholique pour les migrations to provide specific guidelines for Church leaders and within a very short time, Quebec's Archbishops and Bishops began to implement administrative measures in response to Pius XII's directives. They created the Société catholique d'aide aux immigrants, the diocese of Quebec established the Société du Bien-être des Immigrants, and Archbishop Charbonneau of Montreal encouraged the creation of the Société d'Assistance aux Immigrants.

In April 1951, l'Action catholique canadienne convened a national conference on immigration to make Catholics aware of their personal and collective responsibilities towards immigrants. Over 200 delegates, representing a wide range of public and private organizations, gathered to discuss the full range of problems confronting immigrants. A poll done by the Institut de psychologie de l'Université de Montréal revealed that in Montreal 67 per cent of the francophones and 37 per cent of anglophones opposed immigration. Delegates learned that all French-Canadian Catholic organizations and movements except the Fédération des guides catholiques, the equivalent of the Federation of scouts and guides in other provinces, denied immigrants the right to regular membership. French-Canadian businessmen were criticized for mistrusting immigrants, yet exploiting them for economic gain. Several speakers chided the Catholic union movement for its insensitivity to the special problems of immigrants and French-Canadian professional organizations for blocking immigrant professionals from receiving accreditation. While French-Canadian Catholic health and social-welfare organizations were working flat out to accommodate immigrants, delegates were told that most immigrants preferred to call upon the services of the English Protestant or neutral social service agencies because of their greater financial and physical resources. The prerequisite for a resolution of all the problems posed by immigration involved a change of attitude on the part of all French Canadians toward complex problems immigrants faced in adjusting to their host societies.

During the 1950s, when it became clear that the majority of immigrants were no longer British but European, a small group of neo-nationalists, sensing the Catholic Church's revised attitude toward immigrants, became increasingly conscious of the demographic consequences that would ensue if French Canada continued to display hostility toward immigrants. While acknowledging the serious problems faced by immigrants, Le Devoir's publisher, Gerard Filion, applauded the Church-sponsored organizations that were working to encourage a smooth integration of Catholic immigrants into French-Canadian society. Neo-nationalists concluded that French Canada must favour a selective immigration
policy while doing everything in its power to integrate as many new Canadians as possible.

One of the most determined and active neo-nationalist spokesmen in favour of French Canada revising its attitudes towards immigrants was Jean-Marc Léger, a journalist at *Le Devoir* and *La Presse*. He and his neo-nationalist colleagues were profoundly shocked by the lukewarm reception given to the 6000 French immigrants arriving in the early 1950s. Who was to blame? Traditional French-Canadian nationalists, declared Léger. They had perpetuated an unrealistic attitude toward immigration. French Canada, he argued, certainly had to defend its demographic position but he wondered whether "une politique d'amicale collaboration et un effort d'absorption au sein de l'élément français de la plus grande partie possible des immigrants n'eussent-ils pas constitué une attitude infiniment plus intelligente et plus féconde (et du point de vue national et du point de vue religieux) que le refus systématique, qui, jusqu'à ces dernières années représentait le plus clair de notre comportement envers la question de l'immigration et envers les immigrants eux-mêmes"?

V — THE ITALIAN EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE

In contrast to the Jewish community, the Italian community grew more slowly and experienced fewer problems of integration, at least until the Depression decade. From a mere couple of thousand migrants in 1901, the community could boast of a population of some 25,000 permanent residents by the outbreak of Second World War. The majority settled around two national parishes, Notre-Dame-du-Mont-Carmel in centre town and Notre-Dame de-la-Défense in the quartier of Mile-End. The community grew slowly to just over 30,000 by 1951, more than tripled to 97,000 by 1961 and reached nearly 150,000 by 1971.

The Italians were Catholic and the Quebec Catholic Church readily responded to their requests for national parish Churches and schools so as to ensure the retention of their religion. As a result, the Italian community integrated relatively easily into the economic and social fabric of francophone working-class Montreal. In due course, many working-class Italians shared several quartiers in the north and north-east sectors of the Montreal Island with francophones because the existing Catholic parish institutions were adapted to their particular cultural and linguistic needs and families had easy access to open land for vegetable gardening. Until the 1930s, the rapport between the Italian and French-Canadian élites was fairly cordial. While the Italian and French-Canadian workers competed in the labour market, the overwhelming majority of Italian parents chose to send their children to French-language Catholic schools.

This pattern began to change during the 1930s and 1940s. The Depression created increased ethnic conflict in the labour market while revealing to destitute Italian families the severe financial limitations of the Catholic Church's social service institutions. Many Italian families were forced to turn to Protestant
social welfare agencies where they were encouraged to enrol their children in the Protestant schools in order to qualify for social welfare. More importantly, most families began to perceive the need for their children to learn the English language in order to enhance their job prospects. This was impossible in the French-language sector of the CECM schools because these schools were prohibited by law from teaching English until after grade five. While some Italians chose to send their children to Protestant schools because these were convenient, increasing numbers began to transfer their children to the English-language sector of the CECM which was under the firm control of Montreal’s Irish Catholics — teachers, principals, administrators and clerics. Catholic Church leaders, deeply concerned over the transfer of some 2,000 Catholic children from the various ethnic communities to Protestant schools, convinced the CECM in 1936-37 to institute a system of foreign language classes in the various parish schools where immigrant children predominated. The CECM even tried to get permission from the Catholic Committee to allow teaching English as early as grade three but the strong nationalist outcry against “integral bilingualism” was so strong that the CECM’s request was turned down. In fact, so many French-Canadian principals were actively encouraging new Canadian students to enrol in English language schools that CECM administrators quietly allowed the majority of the foreign-language classes to be set up in English-language schools, thereby providing a further incentive for immigrant parents to shift their children into those schools.

By the end of World War II, a combination of factors had established a clear trend toward English language instruction for children of Catholic immigrants enrolled in CECM schools. Fifty per cent of Italian children were enrolled in the English-language sector where they were joined by children from a wide variety of smaller central and eastern European ethnic groups. In 1947-48, when this trend became evident to a small group of French-Canadian nationalists within the CECM, they convinced the Commission to create the Comité des Néo-Canadiens to recommend ways to turn things around, particularly among the Italian community which was by far the most numerous. After its research revealed an interesting trilingual curriculum operating in some Italian parish schools, the Comité recommended the creation of a bilingual curriculum with some maternal language instruction in the early years for all new Canadian children. The Comité proposed to expand the programme to children in the Ukrainian and Polish national parish schools with the hope that if they proved successful a couple of new Canadian schools could be set up and administered by a third division within the CECM. Comité members were convinced that this was the only way to ensure that new Canadian children would learn the French language and thereby to facilitate their eventual integration into the French-Canadian society. The programme, Comité members were convinced, would be attractive to parents because it offered maternal, English and French language instruction.
Little did the Comité realize that its aggressive involvement in the problem would provoke a backlash that jeopardized the existing trilingual curriculum that was operating in some of the Italians parish schools. The Comité's concerted attempts to consolidate and extend this curriculum to other ethnic groups were effectively undermined during 1952-53 by francophone and anglophone opponents within and outside the CECM. The President of the CECM reminded the Comité that the Council of Public Instruction could not authorize the segregation of new Canadian children into special classes for maternal language instruction. The CECM allowed such classes for the Italian children in grades one to three on sufferance to facilitate their entry into the regular school curriculum. CECM members, francophone and Irish, effectively blocked the trilingual program by refusing to authorize the necessary funds to pay for the transportation of new Canadian children to a select number of schools. The Comité des Néo-Canadiens was instructed that it had absolutely no mandate over curriculum policy. With its major endeavour effectively scuttled, the Comité concentrated its efforts on administering French and bilingual languages classes for immigrant adults and children.

The flow of immigrants, especially Italians, grew dramatically during the 1950s and by 1957 nearly 75 per cent of all immigrant children were enrolled in English-language schools. Fearful of the demographic and political consequences if this trend were allowed to go unchecked, neo-nationalists at the CECM, Le Devoir and in the Société d'assistance aux immigrants initiated a public campaign to encourage the Quebec state to become directly involved in all areas of education so that the majority of immigrants would integrate into the francophone society. The Catholic Committee of the Council of Public Instruction, responding to these pressures, set up an Inquiry Committee, headed by Chanoine Drouin, president of the Comité des Néo-Canadiens, to investigate the educational problems of new Canadians in Quebec, with special emphasis on Montreal's Italian community. Their Report confirmed the existence of a veritable flood towards English-language education among all immigrant groups, but especially among the rapidly expanding Italian community. The Inquiry identified two structural problems in the Catholic system that contributed to this trend. Immigrant children could not get English language instruction until grade six in the French-language sector of the CECM, and there was no fully developed French-language Catholic public high school system. Consequently, most parents had little choice but to send their children to English-language elementary schools, Catholic or Protestant, in order to prepare them to qualify for entry into the English-language Protestant high schools.

The Inquiry Committee recommended a special curriculum for new Canadian children, one which would ensure that they would learn both official languages as well as provide them with some instruction, primarily in religion, in their maternal languages. The Report also recommended that these special classes for new Canadians be placed in French-language schools under the supervision of an official of the Department of Public Instruction and that a representative of the
immigrant communities be appointed to the CECM. A special curriculum was designed and approved by the Catholic Committee in May 1961. Aware of what was coming, the CECM implemented the new curriculum in schools located in the Italian parish of Notre-Dame-de-la Défense in the Fall of 1960 and made plans to extend the curriculum to 13 schools, six French and seven English, in September 1961. Principals and administrators in the English-language sector flatly refused to implement the new curriculum. When in May 1962 the CECM approved in principle the creation of a distinct new Canadian division within the CECM, vigorous coordinated opposition to the entire scheme emerged from various Montreal Anglophone organizations, namely the Association of Catholic Principals, the Provincial Association of Catholic Teachers, and the English Catholic Parent-Teacher Association. A majority of CECM members caved in under the pressure and rescinded the approval of a third division within the CECM to administer the new bilingual curriculum in designated schools for Neo-Canadian children.

Clearly, Montreal’s Catholic anglophone community leaders did not want to lose control over the education of immigrant children. With the departure of immigrant children the English-language sector would have been reduced by over 50 per cent and the anglophone community’s ability to integrate new Canadians into its milieu seriously undermined. Indeed, the English language sector’s response to this threat was to propose that French be taught beginning in grade one in order make their system more attractive to parents wishing their children to become bilingual. The CECM approved this request and the program was implemented in the Fall of 1962. The relative ease with which the anglophone community was able to pressure the CECM to back down was the result, in part, of rising expectations within an increasingly secularized Italian community. Italian community leaders, lay and clerical, had failed to rally behind the CECM’s original scheme for a bilingual curriculum administered by a third division because the proposal did not give the Italian leaders control over a greater number of parish schools. Montreal’s anglophone Catholics, numbering some 60,000, controlled 31 parishes and nearly 60 schools. Montreal’s Italians, who numbered nearly 160,000, controlled only five parishes and two schools. The educational system, Italian leaders argued, had to be changed to reflect this new demographic reality. What they wanted was to take over the English-language sector of the CECM and rebuild it to suit the perceived needs of the Italian community.

The ambitions of Montreal’s fast growing Italian community clashed head on with the rapidly evolving aspirations of Québécois neo-nationalists. In fact, proponents of the scheme in the CECM had expected support from various Québécois neo-nationalist organizations who had been arguing throughout the 1950s for the integration of all immigrants into the francophone milieu. This support was no longer forthcoming by the early 1960s. The neo-nationalist movement was no longer willing to accept a separate bilingual division within the CECM for new Canadians because such a structure would give the ethnic communities too much independence. By 1962-3, militant traditional and neo-nationalists wanted comprehensive language legislation that would stream all immigrants into the French-language school system. All Catholic school boards
would then be forced to make the necessary alterations to see that this objective was achieved. The struggle between Montreal's anglophone, francophone and allophone communities was beginning to enter a new, more intense phase with the advent of the Quiet Revolution.

VI — THE QUEBEC STATE AND IMMIGRATION, 1965-85

Quebec's Quiet Revolution was symbolized by the rising tide of neo-nationalism and the increased activity of the state in virtually every dimension of the lives of the province's citizenry. Two issues emerged which would focus the attention of the political and nationalist elites on the question of immigration. The first was a social product, in large measure, of the Quiet Revolution. It involved the very dramatic decline in the birth rate for Quebec, from 28.8 to 13.1 per thousand between 1958 and 1985. The second issue involved the longstanding linguistic integration of allophone immigrants into the anglophone community of Montreal. Within short order, these unrelated developments precipitated a significant change in the way Quebec's nationalist intelligentsia and political elite approached the question of immigration. They feared the decline in Quebec's francophone population would weaken Quebec's political clout in the federal system while the growth of the anglophone community in Montreal would undermine the majority francophone character of the City.

These political and demographic concerns prompted nationalist organizations to demand that Quebec acquire full control over all aspects of immigration. This included the selection of immigrants and their linguistic and social integration into the francophone community through a wide range of very positive socioeconomic and educational support measures. The singificance of the extraordinary expansion of the Ministry of Immigration and the long term impact of its policies and practices has been obscured by first Bill 22 and then Bill 101, which streamed 65 per cent of primary and secondary immigrant children into French-language schools by 1986-87, up from 30 per cent in 1977-78. In due course, the integration of 45,000 immigrant children into French-language Catholic schools by the 1980s precipitated an intense debate within the Conseil Supérieur de l'éducation du Québec and the Commission des Ecoles catholiques de Montréal on the need for an educational curriculum that incorporated the concerns and aspirations of the various ethnocultural communities. By the mid-1980s many Québécois nationalists were questioning the long term impact that a myriad of cultures in the schools would have on francophone culture and society. Taken together, the language legislation and the numerous programmes and activities of the Ministry of Immigration have changed the attitudes and perceptions of an increasing majority of francophones towards the ethnocultural communities. This process has been a politically explosive one requiring adjustment and adaptation on the part of the majority francophone host community and the minority anglophone host community as well as the established and recently-formed ethnocultural communities.

The Lesage government, which came to power in 1960, was very reluctant to involve itself directly in the area of immigration but pressures from nationalist groups and the opposition party, the Union Nationale, led to the creation in
February 1965 of an Immigration Service attached to the Ministry of Cultural Affairs. The Union Nationale renamed it the Direction générale de l'Immigration in 1966 and created an Interministerial Committee of members from the Ministries of Education and Cultural Affairs to prepare a report on the teaching of languages to new Canadians. The Committee, chaired by René Gauthier, the Directeur générale de l'Immigration and formerly of the CECM's Service des Néo-Canadiens, produced a far-ranging, provocative Report in January 1967 that provided the bureaucratic rationale for immediate, extensive and permanent state intervention in the areas of immigration and language legislation.

The Report began with the assumption that the health, vigour and "normality" of the francophone society could be readily judged by how quickly and successfully it absorbed and integrated immigrants. This process was to be accomplished primarily through language and education and secondarily through work and the media. It was imperative for the host society to protect its personality and its composition by recruiting immigrants mostly likely to integrate without undermining its fundamental characteristics. Integration into the francophone community was certainly not the case in Quebec. The 1961 Census showed that 90 per cent of all immigrants opted for English as their second language, thereby accentuating their linguistic but not necessarily their cultural integration into the Anglophone community of Montreal. The Report reviewed the two valiant attempts made since the early 1950s to end the anglicization of Quebec's immigrants. The attempts failed, according to the Report, because of the unwillingness of successive Quebec governments and the Quebec state to devote enough attention and resources to the problem.

The primary objective of the Report was to reverse the process of anglicization of the new Canadians. It argued that once French had become the language of work for the vast majority of Quebec's citizens they would automatically choose French as their primary language of education. In the interim, all immigrant parents, regardless of language or point of origin, had to be obliged by the province to enrol their children in French-language confessional and non-confessional schools or in bilingual confessional and non-confessional schools where French predominated. In sum, the Quebec government was called upon to adopt Ontario's assimilationist educational policy by substituting French for English. Quebec would become, in due course, as French as Ontario was English and all immigrants would integrate readily into the francophone society. To ensure the development of a supportive context for the successful implementation of these educational measures, the Report recommended that Quebec exercise exclusive jurisdiction over the funding and administration of all French language and civics courses for adult immigrants and that the government should legislate French as the priority language of work, public advertising and communications. Little did the Interministerial Committee members realize how politically explosive these recommendations were going to become over the next two decades.
The province of Quebec stood on firm constitutional ground in its demand to exercise partial jurisdiction in the field of immigration. Under the BNA Act the provinces had shared jurisdiction over immigration but had allowed Ottawa to carry out this responsibility since the 1870s. Québécois neo-nationalists, inside and outside the Quebec bureaucracy and government, decided that the best way to gain eventual control over immigration was to create an activist Ministry of Immigration. The Union Natonale government took that step in November 1968. Successive Liberal and Parti Québécois Ministers of Immigration subsequently negotiated a series of agreements with their Ottawa counterparts which culminated in the Couture-Cullen Agreement of 1978. Under this agreement Quebec effectively acquired a veto over the selection of non-sponsored immigrants wishing to settle in the province. Quebec also obtained the right to determine its own criteria for immigrants who had to meet these requirements as well as those of the Canadian government.

Since its inception in 1968, Quebec’s Ministry of Immigration has been very active in virtually every aspect of immigration. Its budget grew from $2.8 million in 1969 to $20 million in 1979-1980, a third of which came from the federal government. The number of civil servants jumped from 35 to 463 to administer the 25,000 immigrants which, on average, Quebec received annually, just over 16 per cent of all immigrants admitted to Canada. Until the province gained jurisdiction over the recruitment and reception processes, the Ministry concentrated its resources and energy on the integration of immigrants into Quebec society.

It created an employment search service and through its Adaptation Department provided support for community groups and ethnic organizations involved in the establishment and adjustment of immigrants in Quebec. It also funded ethnic organizations to help them preserve their cultural and linguistic heritages as well as preparing literature for the host francophone society and the numerous ethnic communities in hopes of building bridges between them.

The bulk of the Ministry’s efforts and hopes were focused on the Centres d’orientation et de formation des immigrants (COFI), six in Montreal and four in other regions, which offered 30-week languages courses, first in French and English and then only in French after the Parti Québécois came into office in 1976. In November 1978 the Quebec government provided financial support for immigrants meeting its criteria but who did not qualify for federal government financial assistance. By 1980-81 the ten centres enrolled nearly 4,600 immigrant students at a total cost of $8.5 million while a further 2,300 immigrant students participated in part-time language courses offered in 41 Regional School Commissions at a cost of just over $5 million. The Ministry also offered a range of specialized language courses for different occupational and professional ethnic groups. In 1980-81 some 3,500 immigrants enrolled in these courses at a cost of $4.7 million. The government of Quebec had clearly adopted a very interventionist role in immigration, particularly in the area of language acquisition and cultural adaptation.
Unfortunately, much that was very positive about these programs was often overlooked and, to some extent, undermined by the government's drive to implement very controversial coercive language legislation. The crisis first erupted in the Montreal suburban community of St.-Léonard which had a large Italian community. In the June 1968 elections to the elementary school board, members of the neo-nationalist Mouvement pour l'intégration scolaire gained control of the Board on a policy of French language schooling for all non-English immigrants. Despite vigorous protests from parents and students, the Board decreed that the policy would be implemented in September starting with grade one. Some 1700 new Canadian students who normally attended English-language schools refused to attend their assigned schools in September. Adding further confusion, secondary French-Canadian school students protested their uprooting to new schools by occupying a francophone school redesignated by the Board as an English-language school.

Spurred on by the St.-Léonard incident, francophone neo-nationalists appealed to the Union Nationale government of Daniel Johnson to force all immigrant children to attend French-language Schools. The language question entered a new phase as the Union Nationale Party faced a tough choice between Quebecers who supported freedom of choice with some persuasive language legislation and those who favoured no freedom of choice for immigrant children and coercive legislative measures. Anglophone and allophone parents appealed to the courts and to Ottawa for protection against impending language legislation but the Trudeau government demurred on the grounds that Ottawa could not interfere in educational matters. After Daniel Johnson died, his successor, Jean-Jacques Bertrand decided late in 1968 to introduce Bill 85, which confirmed freedom of choice for English-speaking parents while instructing the Ministries of Education and Immigration to study non-coercive ways and means of streaming immigrant children into French-language schools. After a heated debate, the government used its majority to refer the bill to committee where it was amended and eventually passed as Bill 63 in November 1969. Premier Bertrand also established a commission of enquiry on the French language and linguistic rights headed up by Jean-Denis Gendron. The Commission laboured for three years and produced a comprehensive three volume report that served as a catalyst to tougher language legislation.

In the interim, moderate and extreme nationalists came together in 1968 under the banner of the Parti Québécois led by René Lévesque. He moved with some success to keep the extremists in check by calling for the proclamation of French as the official language of Quebec in the private and public sectors and the formation of a language secretariat. A Quebec citizenship card would be granted to immigrants once they were proficient in the French language. All immigrant children would be enrolled in French language schools. The language question was quickly politicized and contributed to the impressive showing of the Parti Québécois in the 1970 election in which it polled 24 per cent of the vote, most of which came from Francophone ridings in and around Montreal.
The Bourassa Liberal party defeated the Union Nationale in the election of 1970 and soft-pedalled on the language issue in anticipation of the Gendron Commission Report. In the face of concerted opposition from the separatist Parti Québécois, the Liberal party was, nevertheless, re-elected in 1973 on a platform of economic development and cultural sovereignty. Once in office, Premier Bourassa faced a barrage of pessimistic forecasts from provincial government departments, Statistics Canada and the Gendron Commission Report about the demographic future of the francophone community of Quebec, particularly in Montreal. The birth rate continued to plummet, from 28.8 per thousand in 1958 to 13.8 by 1972 and the number of births by 37 per cent between 1963 and 1973. From 27.95 per cent of Canada's population in 1971, Statistics Canada estimated that Quebec's proportion would remain at best at 25.21 per cent and at worst drop to 21.9 per cent. Between 1968 and 1973 the percentage of English-speaking immigrants was increasing while the percentage of French-speaking was in decline. Not only were most immigrants in Montreal choosing English as their second language but increasing numbers of francophones were integrating into English-speaking Montreal. The province was also losing more children through emigration than it recuperated through immigration. Little wonder the immigration issue became intimately tied up with both the demographic crisis and the language debate.

The Gendron Commission finally issued its report in 1972. Although it maintained that the government had the constitutional authority to legislate in the area of language of instruction, the Commissioners did not make a formal recommendation to this effect, because they felt that a policy of coercion would only serve to create insurmountable barriers between the francophone majority society and the ethnic communities. Facing strong criticism from the neo-nationalists and committed to an aggressive policy of cultural sovereignty; the Bourassa government chose to ignore the Commission's advice. Bill 63 had failed to stem the flood of immigrants as well as the transfer of many francophones into English-language schools. A more forceful language law was deemed necessary. Bill 22, which was introduced into the National Assembly on 21 May 1974, made French the official language of Quebec. French would be the priority language in the public and para-public sectors and an elaborate francization policy would be instituted to make French the language of work in the private sector. The educational provisions of Bill 22 aroused the greatest controversy. All non-English children of immigrant parents were compelled to receive their primary and secondary education in French. Language tests would be administered to the children by provincial civil servants to determine who was eligible to enrol in English-language schools. Moreover, all anglophones had to have a knowledge of written and spoken French in order to graduate from secondary school.

Reaction from several quarters was swift and unrelenting. The Parti Québécois denounced Bill 22 claiming that there were too many loopholes in the legislation and decrying that the tests would become an administrative nightmare. The Mouvement Québec Français, formed to campaign for a unilingual Quebec,
denounced Bill 22 as too little too late. Anglophones and allophones also criticized it for denying parents and children freedom of choice. Francophone public opinion was strongly in favour of streaming all immigrant children into French-language schools but accepted the right of anglophone parents to send their children to English-language schools. An amended Bill 22, recognizing explicitly anglophone rights to their established English-language schools but with a cap on enrolments, became law after a very heated and divisive debate in the Assembly. Francophone public opinion placed Quebec's ethnic communities in a vulnerable situation. Immigrant and francophone parents organized English-language immersion classes for their pre-school children to ensure that they passed the government administered language test making them eligible to enter English schools. Other parents simply enrolled their children in English-language schools in violation of the law. These children became known as the illegals. For the most part, ethnic community leaders stood on the sidelines while prominent leaders from the anglophone community, such as the eminent constitutional lawyer Frank Scott, moved to challenge Bill 22 in the courts.

The intense political controversy aroused by Bill 22 in all sectors of Quebec society contributed in no small measure to the defeat of the Liberal government in the November 1976 provincial election. Once in office, the Parti Québécois moved quickly to address the language and cultural fears of the francophone majority and, in particular, of its various nationalist élites and organizations. The Parti Québécois's approach to the question of language was intimately related to its vision of an ethnically pluralistic but linguistically unilingual francophone nation state in Quebec. The PQ rejected the established bilingual and bicultural societal model and the socio-cultural division of labour associated with that model. The Charter of the French Language, known as Bill 101, represented the new vision. It was vigorously debated and passed into law in August 1977 after important concessions were made pertaining to the language of work in the private sector. It was in the use of language in the public sector that Bill 101 was much tougher than Bill 22. In particular, its policy of francization of all local institutions such as municipalities, school boards and health and social services would have an enormous impact on members of the ethnic communities. On the question of language of instruction, Bill 101 put an end to the language tests and streamed all immigrants and children entering Quebec from other provinces, regardless of their language or point of origin, into French-language schools. By this time the ethnic communities were resigned to their children being streamed into French-language schools. Yet they continued to express their displeasure at the legislation because, unlike Bill 22, the Charter of the French Language made no provision for instruction in Canada's second official language, English.

Indeed, the impact of The Charter of the French Language on Quebec's immigrant ethnic communities has been quite remarkable considering that it has been in operation for just over a decade. In 1969-70, over 85 per cent of all immigrant children were enrolled in English-language schools. This proportion
fell only slightly to 70 per cent in 1977-78 after the adoption of Bill 22 but plummeted to 36 per cent by 1986-87, that is, within ten years of the implementation of the Charter. In the Montreal region over three-quarters of all immigrant children were enrolled in French-language schools by 1982-83. In many inner-city francophone schools these immigrant children have come to constitute over a third of the enrolment. This reality has caused growing concern among parents of francophone children who fear that the integrity and viability of the francophone culture is being threatened.

The Quebec government’s official policy is not a provincial version of the federal policy of multiculturalism which it perceives as threatening the bicultural compact of Confederation. In its 1981 plan of action for the ethnocultural communities, entitled *Autant de façons d'être Québécois*, the government described its policy as one of cultural convergence. Its stated objective is to bring together the immigrants’ cultures and the Québécois francophone culture in such a way as to ensure the priority of the latter. This government policy has created a complex pedagogical and social challenge for the francophone teachers, the union administrators, the school boards, and the Ministry of Education all of whom are responsible for implementing the government’s stated policy of linguistic integration and cultural convergence. All appear to agree on one thing. It is highly unlikely that the immigrant children are going to be socially integrated into the francophone society if the schools lack a strong majority of francophone children.

The *Conseil supérieur de l'éducation* addressed some of the difficulties faced by the school boards and the teachers in the implementation of what appeared to many observers to be a contradictory policy of integrating the ethnocultural communities into the dominant francophone society while encouraging and supporting these communities in their attempts to maintain their own separate identities. The *Conseil’s* 1983 Report, entitled *L'éducation interculturelle*, recommended that the schools be made more accessible and more receptive to immigrant children and their parents. It also applauded the many programmes of Ministry of Education's *Bureau des service aux communautés culturelles*, especially the reception classes and the french-language training for immigrant children created in 1973 and the *Programme d’enseignement des langues d’origine* (PELO) established in 1977, and pointed out that studies demonstrated that the ability of the children to learn the French language was enhanced by such measures while they continued to retain and value their cultural identity. What was required were a number of intermediary measures in order to integrate these children into the mainstream classes more smoothly and effectively. Teachers had to become more knowledgeable about the cultural backgrounds of these immigrant children, and develop ongoing links with immigrant parents through the adult education services of the School Commissions. School commissions had to make a strong effort to hire staff from among the various ethnocultural communities to serve as role models for immigrant children as well as to teach the history, geography, literature and art of these communities. The school system had to move beyond
mere reception and linguistic integration of immigrant children and parents to a genuine acceptance of the ethnocultural communities and the positive features they bring to Quebec society.

The Conseil, in reality, reflected the ambivalent and paradoxical characteristics of the government policy it was mandated to carry out. While the Quebec educational system had to develop an openness to all cultures, its stated mandate was to ensure that the ethnocultural communities eventually integrate into the francophone society of Quebec. On the other hand, the Conseil also referred to the francophone culture as one in evolution that should be open to absorbing the best of the other cultural heritages that were prevalent in Quebec. While a majority of the francophone society supports the thrust of the Charter of the French language, the society leaders remain, nevertheless, deeply divided on the question of cultural and immigration policy. Many francophone nationalists object to the “melting-pot” conception of the Quebec society believing that it will eventually destroy the “distinctive” character of their own nationality. Yet many of these same nationalists advocate a policy of linguistic and cultural assimilation of all immigrants into a unilingual and unicultural francophone society. On the other hand, moderate nationalists advocate a policy of linguistic integration coupled with ethnocultural diversity, that is a pluralistic French-speaking society. A very small minority of genuine liberals do preach the vision of full-fledged ethnic pluralism leading eventually to a genuine open, tolerant, liberal-democratic, multicultural society. But these liberals have a difficult time finding a constituency as long as fears of cultural survival continue to prevail throughout the élites and the society at large.

Nonetheless, the 20th century experience of the two dominant ethnic communities in Montreal, the Jewish and the Italian communities, has demonstrated that while the francophone and anglophone host societies have been successful in integrating them linguistically, this development has not automatically led to their cultural integration and even less so to their assimilation. Indeed, their respective experiences have shown that the existence of two competing host communities with divergent visions of socio-economic and political organization has enhanced their opportunities to carve out a place for themselves in the Quebec society. In short, Montreal's ethnocultural pluralism will continue to survive because of the existence of the two host linguistic communities and despite the interventionist language and educational programmes of the state.
SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING


A general overview of the Italian community in Quebec can be found in Richard Poulin and Claude Painchaud, *Le phénomène migratoire italien et la formation de la communauté italo-québécoise* (Montréal, 1981). Donat J. Taddeo

