

Letters: A language test for candidates

MONTREAL GAZETTE AUGUST 22, 2012

Re: "[PQ would introduce language tests for politicians](#)" (Gazette, Aug. 22).

Having watched and read what the three political leaders have to say with respect to the anglophone community, it becomes very apparent that not one of them recognizes the fact that we are and always have been a valuable and strategic contributor to Quebec society.

Pauline Marois has made it clear that nobody other than a French Quebecer has any value. Her blatant disdain for anything English-sounding really makes me question the kind of future we would have in a Quebec governed by the Parti Québécois.

The Liberals led by Jean Charest take the English vote for granted and have yet to show support for anglophones' needs or concerns.

François Legault offers passive lip service to anglos but promises to strengthen Bill 101 and abolish school boards, and refuses to say he is a federalist.

How can anglophones support any party in good conscience?

I am a Quebecer who was born here and lives here by choice. I am fluently bilingual and have no issue whatsoever with speaking French. I am also a Canadian first and foremost.

We need a party dedicated to Canadian federalism and dedicated to maintaining and supporting a bilingual society. It should recognize the fact that we live in a global society where English is the common language. And it should create a bilingual school system for all Quebecers.

Until then, my vote is simple: none of the above.

Harry Selick

Kirkland

I often wonder how a society can feel so threatened about losing its language when no one is out to destroy it.

When I lived in Laval, the spoken word (French) was quite healthy and robust. I saw no signs of anyone threatening its existence. Living there as a non-French-speaking woman was extremely challenging for me, to say the least. Thank God for my husband, who could translate when necessary.

Now that I am back in my home province, I live with greater ease. I no longer have to worry about inadvertently breaking a law or offending someone, and I can read billboards and menus.

I am a survivor of the residential-school system where we were punished if we spoke our native tongue, but I have managed to hold onto the Cree language. Granted, it has not been easy, because I have lived in places where there was no one to converse with. Even so, I refused to let go of my language identity.

For the life of me, I cannot understand the obsession with “protecting” the French language in an environment where it thrives.

Isabel Cuerrier

Brandon, Man.

It would be better if Pauline Marois introduced an IQ test for politicians instead of a linguistic one. That would raise the quality of public discourse, benefiting all of Quebec society.

Robert A. Mariani

Baie d’Urfé

For Pauline Marois to try to force a language on people is just a rerun of what natives went through hundreds of years ago. She should stop trying to create hatred through language. Instead she should focus on things that really matter, like jobs, the homeless and health care.

Jennie Cross

Kanesatake

I am shocked at Pauline Marois’s proposal. My Quebec is open to the world and respectful.

I trust my fellow citizens to choose the best candidate without the Parti Québécois having them audition for So You Think You Can Speak French.”

Eric Prud’Homme

Montreal

I am outraged by Pauline Marois’s plan to require French tests for electoral candidates. Such a blatant attempt to limit one of our most basic civil rights must be vigorously opposed if the Parti Québécois is elected. When the PQ says “À nous de choisir,” it is clear that its “nous” does not include anglophones, allophones or natives.

Lorne Schweitzer

Hampstead

Re: “Referendum, corruption colour debate” (Gazette, Aug. 22).

I watched the Charest/Marois debate and there were a few comments that burned me up. When I heard Pauline Marois tell Jean Charest, "You never take responsibility for anything; it's always someone else's fault," I almost fell off my chair.

The PQ constantly blames Ottawa for everything that is not "right" in Quebec. If Marois perceives any injustice to the people of Quebec, Ottawa is to blame.

I have never seen Marois reveal any traits of a potential leader, a leader who could take charge, show initiative and make unpopular decisions, like in the student crisis.

How can Mme. Marois talk about taking responsibility when she has not taken any herself? The blame game does not get anyone anywhere.

Bruno Forte

Dollard des Ormeaux

In the debate between Jean Charest and François Legault, the saying "a leopard never changes its spots" came to mind.

When talk turned to Quebec's national identity, Mr. Legault fervently proclaimed his position as protector of the "Quebec nation" while loudly castigating Mr. Charest for not defending the French language and culture staunchly enough, echoing Mme. Marois's assertion that the French language is in peril in Montreal. He sounded just like Mme. Marois, like an anti-English sovereignist.

While respecting the French language and culture and recognizing the necessity of preserving them, we need to focus on programs benefiting all Quebecers, with priority given to the economy, health care and employment.

To voters contemplating a jump to Coalition Avenir Québec because they feel taken for granted by the Liberals: we would be treated no better by the CAQ.

Cynthia Jarjour

St. Lambert

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