



# AFFILIATION QUEBEC

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-Allen E. Nutik, Party Leader*

## Opinion - What is the Canadian 'nation'?

July 17, 2008

By Allen E. Nutik, Leader, AffiliationQuebec  
Special to The Suburban

The ceremonial and often political speeches at the recent 400th anniversary founding commemoration in Quebec City reveal some common truths that most Canadians cannot bring themselves to admit.

The Prime Minister of France, François Fillon, referred to Quebec as a "country" during at least two instances, but later clarified that "pays" has a wider meaning in French, and said he should have said "nation".

Indeed, Filion should have been much more circumspect in his choice of words, just as Charles de Gaulle never should have uttered at Montreal city hall in 1967, "Vive le Quebec Libre." But they both definitely articulated incendiary words, whether they meant to or not, and that is the stuff of history books and op-ed speculation.

The misspoken word of the French Prime Minister is code for one of Canada's greatest unspoken truths.

Thanks to Canada's long slide to decentralization and the constant appeasement of Quebec nationalist demands in the pursuit of maintaining the façade of a strong Canadian federation, Quebec has all but separated from Canada many years ago.

As long as the Canadian cash keeps coming, along with regular transfers of federal powers, and the right to opt out of national programs so long as it suits the Quebec agenda, the tenuous status quo and the fiction of the Canadian federation will continue to remain intact.

But then, Prime Minister Stephen Harper and no less the Parliament of Canada has conferred the recognition and designation of the "Québécois Nation" on the people of Quebec, while remaining mute on the status of the more than one million anglophone, allophone, and other minority Quebecers who are clearly not part of this identified nation in Quebec nationalist terminology.

Notwithstanding that Canada is constitutionally obligated to render services to its citizens in English and in French (a fact which we at Affiliation Quebec fully support), is it not disingenuous for Canada to pursue a policy of nationwide institutional bilingualism while Quebec has promulgated its own French only, unilingual society?

But the most important question now left to Mr. Harper and Parliament, having already identified but not defined the "Québécois Nation" is: what is the Canadian nation? What is it other than a place of birth or the acquisition of Canadian citizenship papers or passport that otherwise distinguishes the rights and obligations of being Canadian?

Is a sense of patriotism or a true belonging as a full participating citizen of Canada, part of the package? What acts or feelings comprise this unrecognized Canadian patriotism? And if, indeed, it does exist and we hope it does, how would we know if we could recognize it if and when we were lucky enough to observe it?

One fact is certain; we see precious little of Canadian patriotism in Quebec at any time, and we saw none of it at all during the Fête de la St Jean Baptiste (oops.... La Fête Nationale). Come to think of it, we do not see much of it clearly displayed anywhere else in Canada, either.

On Canada's national day of celebration this past July 1, one would have expected federal members of Parliament to participate in the Canada Day parade in downtown Montreal, or someone from the federalist Quebec Liberal Party, at very least one or all of the four English members of the Quebec National Assembly. Alas, the only Quebec politician present was the lonely leader of Affiliation Quebec, not that anyone noticed... or even cared.

What about a professed and avowed affinity for the destruction of Canada through open support for separatism of Quebec or Alberta or British Columbia? In some democratic countries, such feelings of separation are considered to be treasonous; in Canada, we regret to observe, such feelings are openly tolerated, and the courting of holders of such divisive thoughts is common practice in national politics.

Take the case of former conservative but now Liberal MP Garth Turner who created headlines recently, and incurred rebuke from all parties for his blog and comments on separatists.

According to Garth, "The issue is a single sentence in my last post in which I drew comparisons between those who wish to separate from Canada, whether they live in Quebec or Alberta. I called such separatists, who put regional and self-interest ahead of the national cause, "self-aggrandizing, hostile, me-first, greedy, macho, selfish and balkanizing". Worse, Turner called them "losers".

That statement about separatists in Canada, is a self evident truth as large as the elephant in the room, the one you can smell, but which you must pretend you cannot see. And certainly, political correctness requires that the willful and would- be destroyers of our country must never be derided.

Turner's Liberal leader, Stéphane Dion, author of the Clarity Act, and apparently on record as having said of Quebec's clearly discriminatory language law, "Bill 101 was a great Canadian law", demanded an apology.

Environment Minister John Baird urged Liberal leader Dion to "rein in" Mr Turner. Baird said Turner's blog is "stirring up a hornets' nest" of past unity problems in eastern Canada. Indeed!

That is another truth; referring to the urgency neither to disturb nor to criticize the enemies of Canada, because one man's enemy might be the Prime Minister's intended voter in the quest for a majority government, or a future MP from Quebec.

Regretfully, political and historical truths in Canada are often difficult to discern.

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