

Le Droit 25/01/01

Blondin et Bean devront attendre

Ivanie Blondin et Nicolas Bean ont échoué dans leur tentative de représenter le Canada aux quatre premières étapes de la Coupe du monde de patinage de vitesse sur courte piste.

Le Droit
sports@ledroit.com

Les deux Franco-Ontariens originaires respectivement de Gloucester et Cumberland n'ont pas été en mesure de terminer parmi les trois meilleurs aux épreuves de 500, 1000 et 1500 mètres des sélections de l'équipe nationales présentées le week-end dernier à Calgary, en Alberta. Six places étaient disponibles, autant chez les femmes que les hommes.

La formation féminine sera composée de Kalya Roberge (St-Étienne-de-Lauzon), Anne Maltais (Québec), Tania Vicent (Verchères), Amanda Overland (Montréal), Andréa Do-Duc (Montréal) et Jessica Gregg (Edmonton).

Du côté masculin, ce sont Mathieu Giroux (Montréal), Alex Boisvert-Lacroix (Sherbrooke), Charles Hamelin (Sainte-Julie), Steve Robillard (Montréal), François-Louis Tremblay (Montréal) et Marc-André Monette (Pointe-aux-Trembles) qui formeront l'équipe.

D'AUTRES ÉPREUVES EN JANVIER

Une nouvelle série de sélections aura lieu en janvier afin de choisir les patineurs qui participeront à la deuxième moitié de saison de la Coupe du monde. Blondin, âgée de 17 ans, avait pris le départ à trois étapes l'hiver dernier. Elle était alors la deuxième plus jeune en piste.



Ivanie Blondin, l'an dernier.

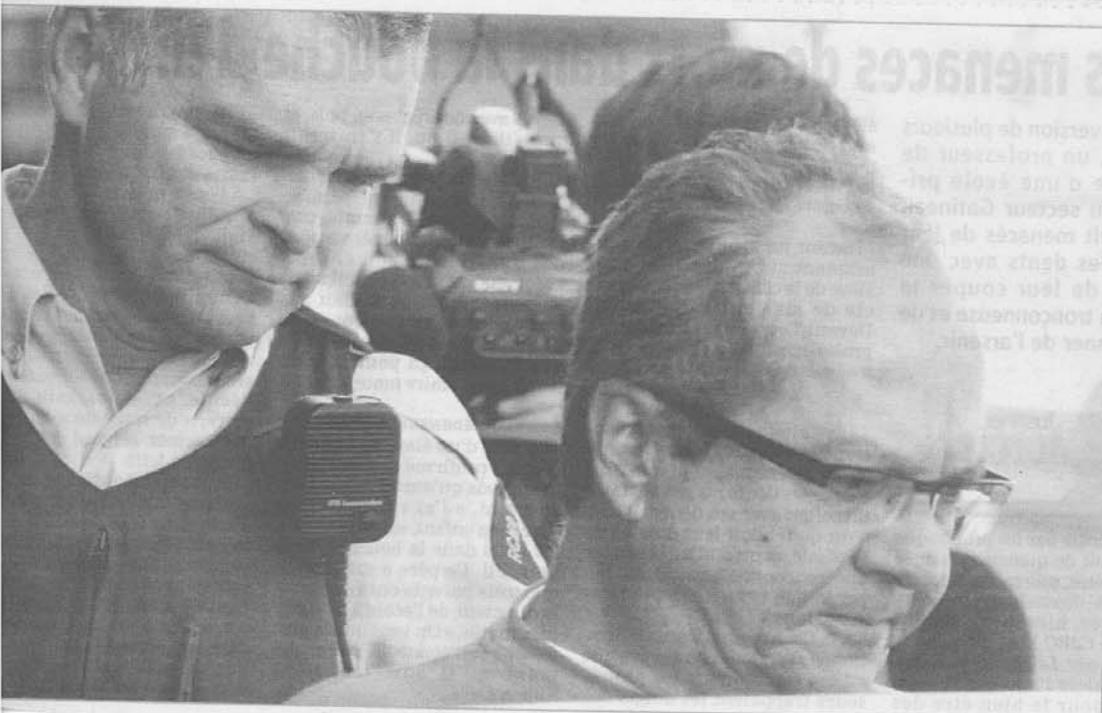


PHOTO: MIKE CARROCCETTO, The Ottawa Citizen

Refusée par une école d'Ottawa

Le Droit 25 sept

Une fille de 15 ans d'Ottawa est refusée à l'école publique française parce que son frère est inscrit dans une école d'un conseil scolaire différent, en Ontario.



Charles Thériault

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C'est ce que dénonce M. Faouzi Houha, père de deux enfants, Yasmine (15 ans) et Riad (10 ans). M. Houha a expliqué au *Droit* qu'il n'a pu inscrire sa fille Yasmine dans une école publique francophone au début du mois.

«Je suis veuf et je m'occupe seul de mes deux enfants. En arrivant à Ottawa, j'ai décidé d'inscrire mon fils dans une école publique anglophone, mais dans un programme d'immersion en français mais je voulais que ma fille, qui est handicapée, continue à l'école française. Le Conseil des écoles publiques de l'est de l'Ontario (CEPEO) a refusé d'inscrire ma fille à moins que mon fils fréquente aussi une école de ce conseil. «Mais mon fils est bien installé dans sa nouvelle école, il a de nouveaux amis et il est habitué à la routine. Pourquoi le changer d'école?» demande M. Houha qui croit que la décision du CEPEO viole les articles 15 et 1 de la Charte canadienne des droits et libertés.

La porte-parole du CEPEO, Andrée Myette, a indiqué que le conseil scolaire serait très heureux d'accueillir la fille de M. Houha. «Il y a une place pour elle dans une de nos écoles mais nous devons respecter la Loi de l'éducation de l'Ontario qui oblige les parents à inscrire tous leurs enfants au même conseil scolaire. Nous devons traiter tous les cas de la même façon. Nous n'avons pas le choix», a déclaré M^{me} Myette.

NUANCES

Cependant, la responsable des communications du ministère de l'Éducation de l'Ontario, Patricia MacNeil, a apporté des nuances. M^{me} MacNeil a indiqué que des enfants d'une même famille peuvent fréquenter des écoles de deux conseils scolaires différents si l'un des deux conseils le permet.

De plus, la Charte canadienne des droits et libertés prévoit qu'un élève d'une minorité linguistique peut choisir une école d'un conseil scolaire de l'autre langue, s'il habite sur le territoire de ce conseil scolaire.

M^{me} MacNeil n'a toutefois pas émis d'opinion sur le cas précis de Yasmine Houha.

LE DROIT OTTAWA

Le Droit 25 sept

Les écoles confessionnelles: une question qui colle

Le chef des conservateurs ontariens, John Tory, doit vraiment se demander comment les choses en sont arrivées là. Sa promesse de financer les écoles confessionnelles qui se conformeraient aux critères de l'enseignement public, devait plaire particulièrement aux leaders des communautés juives, musulmanes, bouddhistes, etc. Or, ceux-là même semblent se tourner contre lui.



Adrien Cantin

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Vendredi, l'Association canadienne des libertés civiles (ACLC) qui s'en mêlait. Elle publiait une déclaration conjointe signée par une cinquantaine d'Ontariens « connus et respectés » s'opposant à un tel financement. Parmi les signataires, de sages de la gauche tels Edward Broadbent et le professeur Michael Bliss. L'écrivaine Katherine Govier, le criminaliste Edward Greenspan et encore le cinéaste David Cronenberg, entre autres, ont également signé.

Mais aussi, et cela a dû faire grimacer M. Tory le président du Congrès des musulmans canadiens, Farzana Hassan. Et le président fondateur du Canadian-Chinese National Council, le Dr Joseph Wong, en plus d'une bonne demi-douzaine d'intellectuels et universitaires juifs. Ouch! que ça fait mal, ça. Même les leaders d'opinion des communautés qui aurait, en principe, dû le remercier à genoux ne veulent pas de ce cadeau.

« Nous demandons aux partis politiques d'affirmer leur engagement à bâtir un système d'éducation publique fort, et de rejeter la proposition de financer les écoles religieuses privées. Ensembles, continuons de bâtir un système d'éducation public qui est réceptif à toutes les croyances, cultures et communautés, et qui fait de l'Ontario un exemple de tolérance sociale et d'harmonie », indique la déclaration (notre traduction).

LES CATHOLIQUES AUSSI

C'est ce que dit le premier ministre Dalton McGuinty, non ? Il doit être content, M. McGuinty. Mais non, il n'est pas particulièrement content. Parce que l'ACLC s'oppose au financement de toutes les écoles confessionnelles, incluant les écoles catholiques, que le discours de M. McGuinty met au même rang que les écoles publiques.

C'est une question de justice, dit l'ACLC, qui demande à M. McGuinty de cesser de financer les écoles catholiques que fréquentent 600 000 enfants

en Ontario. « La façon d'éliminer (cette iniquité) et de mettre derrière nous la question du financement public des écoles religieuses, est d'éliminer le financement pour les écoles catholiques », déclarait au Toronto Star le directeur général de l'ACLC, Alan Borovoy.

Cette question est devenue le point de mire de la campagne électorale. Les médias veulent en parler tous les jours. M. Tory a dû la défendre encore une fois hier matin dans une entrevue à une radio de Toronto. M. McGuinty a dû répondre à des questions à ce sujet avant de monter dans son autobus de campagne, hier, à Walkerton, dans le sud-ouest de la province.

ÉCOLES FRANÇAISES

Cette discussion, bien sûr, interpelle également les francophones de l'Ontario et leurs deux systèmes scolaires, le catholique et le public. Présentement, 72 000 jeunes franco-phones fréquentent les écoles catholiques en Ontario, et un peu plus de 22 000 sont inscrits dans les écoles publiques non

confessionnelles.

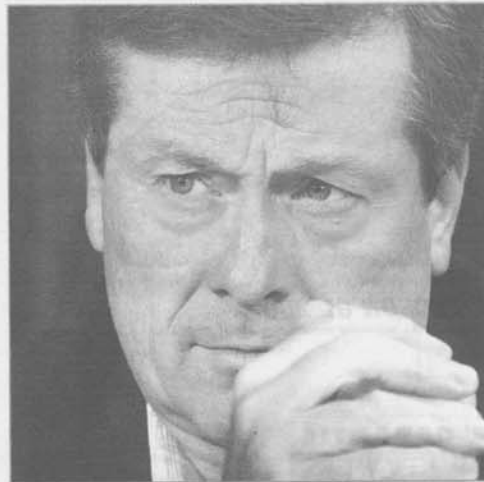
On a toujours cherché, dans notre communauté, à éviter toute discussion sur cette question à cause de la charge émotionnelle qui s'y dissimule. Mais nous n'aurons peut-être bientôt plus le choix que de le faire et il vaudrait mieux s'y préparer plutôt que de s'enfourer la tête dans le sable.

Ce n'est en effet pas un sacrilège que de se demander de quoi aurait l'air un système public unique de langue française en Ontario. D'abord, 94 000 élèves. Mais davantage, un seul réseau de transport scolaire, un seul niveau de haute gestion, des ressources pédagogiques et des installations physiques qui ne seraient plus dédoublées, une mission commune.

Ce n'est pas un secret pour personne qui s'intéresse le moins à la chose scolaire chez nous. Les responsables de chacun des deux systèmes s'observent comme chien et loup pour tenter de deviner lequel des deux ouvrira le premier une nouvelle école sur tel territoire, investira dans un gymnase ou une cafétéria, achètera des instruments de musique. Pour tenter de lui faire concurrence. Pas très productif et pas très sain, ça.

L'idée de John Tory de promouvoir le financement de toutes les écoles confessionnelles en Ontario n'était peut-être pas la plus brillante. Mais elle aura permis à une foule d'Ontariens qui n'y auraient jamais pensé autrement de se questionner sur la gouvernance de nos écoles.

Juste pour ça, il faut remercier M. Tory.



ARCHIVES, LA PRESSE CANADIENNE

Le chef du Parti conservateur de l'Ontario, John Tory

School of thought

Could Canadian teachers do with a little competition?



Paul
Berton



Michael
Coren

POINTCOUNTERPOINT

Join the debate
at canoe.ca/education

Providing public money to all faith-based schools is a key issue in the Ontario election campaign. Sun Media columnist Michael Coren and Paul Berton, national comment editor, take it a step further by sparring over whether the Canadian public education system as we know it needs to be scrapped in favour of one that would put the power of choice in the hands of parents and foster competition between schools and among teachers.

COREN: Part of our problem in Canada is that we are terribly conservative. Not Tory or right wing but conservative. We refuse to think outside of the box and our political culture stagnates. When it comes to education we are terrified of considering alternatives to the failed, expensive, public system that deprives parents of choice and produces increasingly poor results. Scrap public education and start again.

BERTON: Poor results? An Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) study recently compared Canadian students to those in 31 other countries. Canada is among the few, second only to Finland actually, that scored near the top in reading, mathematics and science.

COREN: Incredible would be the kindest word to use. Ask university professors and employers about the "lit-

eracy" of kids who have graduated high school. They all tell the same sorry story. But I'm not arguing that our public system is worse than foreign public systems. They're almost all awful.

BERTON: Oh, I see, it's the old "things-were-better-when-I-was-a-kid" view. Well they weren't. Our education system is not without problems, but it is better than it was. I have as much or more faith in the abilities of today's students than in those of my day.

COREN: Some things were indeed better, just as some things were worse. Young people read more, knew more, wrote more. Their spelling, grasp of concepts and understanding of history and literature was superior to today. Public education is only part of the problem, but it's hardly any of the solution.

BERTON: Says who? Maybe they're reading less Shakespeare, but it's undeniable they're reading more Harry Potter. And I question whether they knew more. Modern learning tools, including television and the especially the Internet, and the free-wheeling aspects of both, may well be giving them a better "education" than being forced to conform to the ideas in an old-fashioned textbook. Meanwhile, the Internet and computers have created far more writers today than ever before, never mind the dubious skills of some.

BERTON: Poor results? An Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) study recently compared Canadian students to those in 31 other countries. Canada is among the few, second only to Finland actually, that scored near the top in reading, mathematics and science.



FILE PHOTO

Eager Canadian students are already among the highest achieving in the world, but could taxpayers get a better bang for their buck if the current system were overhauled to create competition among schools?

COREN: Far more bad writers. But you make a valid point. More Harry Potter than Shakespeare. Says it all really. J.K. Rowling isn't bad, but what we heard from legions of teachers and parents was that at last kids were reading anything at all! If you don't read, you don't know. And if you don't know, we're all in trouble. Public education had its day, but that day is long gone. We need radical solutions.

BERTON: Such as?
COREN: Liberate people's tax dollars and allow them to choose their own schools for their own children. This will provide competition, better education and make sure that it is not only the wealthy who can send their sons and daughters to the best schools. It will also break the stranglehold of the teachers' unions, who bring politics into the classroom and obstruct any change that threatens their comfort level. And that's just for starters.

BERTON: If that's just for starters, I don't think I can face the encore. Liberating tax dollars, as you say, sounds sexy, but in this case it's just plain dumb. Your half-baked

plan will prohibit lower-income earners from affording any education at all. The result will be just the opposite of what you propose and that will be a disaster for the Canadian economy. Meanwhile, yes, the public system is restricted by unions on many things, but not what we teach our children.

COREN: Ah, the caring liberal speaks! Poor people can't manage choice and their kids' education. Nonsense. In fact, where choice has been applied in inner cities in the United States, poor, mainly black and Hispanic children, have benefited enormously. Their parents, rather than the state, have taken charge and opted for better schools. As for our economy, public education is a drain rather than an asset.

BERTON: I don't think we want to look too closely at the results of those experiments in the U.S. The fact is the jury is out on whether such a sys-

tem of choice works — or whether it would work on a large scale. It's simply swallowed hook, line and sinker by the right wing. There is an assumption by the rich (and perhaps the poor) but no evidence whatsoever that Canadians get a better education at private schools than public ones. There is, however, lots of hard evidence Canadian children, including immigrant children in Canada, get a better education here than their peers in most other countries.

COREN: Most other countries? There is a crisis in western culture and western education but I urge you to spend some time with children in eastern Europe, India or west Africa. You'd be amazed. Look, this isn't about me being right-wing or left-wing, but caring about parental rights and educational quality. Put briefly, caring about children and our future.

BERTON: I'm all for paren-

tal rights and educational quality. But parents have rights now, and too many of them send their children to school without breakfast and so hungry they can't listen or learn. They don't or can't help their kids with homework. They ignore them in favour of their jobs or consumerist pursuits. They send them to school with the emotional baggage that comes from a broken or breaking home or one with financial problems or substance abuse. These are the children who face our hard-working teachers.

COREN: At last we agree. Yes, parents are frequently too concerned with their own careers and issues to do their jobs properly. Many of them are wealthy yet prefer to let nannies or day-care workers raise their children. Their "self-fulfilment" comes before parenting. Hungry kids? Yes and no. Two litres of milk, a loaf of bread and a box of cereal will provide breakfast for a week. That's \$10. Neglect rather than poverty. But yes, teachers often pick up the pieces. From parents raised in public schools. All part of a big picture of social decay.

"Public education has had its day, but that day is long gone. We need radical solutions."

Michael Coren

ONTARIO VOTES 2007

A leap of faith

John Tory takes a gamble with religious schools vow



Moira MacDonald

MISSISSAUGA — Sadia Ahmed's Grade 2 class has just wrapped an animated talk about the popular children's book *Ramona the Pest*. The class of 27 is organized into groups of five desks, each a mix of boys and girls.

Ahmed calls each group to sit on a carpet at the front in order of the best behaved.

"Even if you don't have homework every night there's still one thing you have to do.

"What's that?" she asks her charges.

"Read?" asks one. "That's right. Reading," she says, explaining each child must log their weekly reading at home and do a weekly report on their favourite book.

After some housekeeping items, Ahmed asks the children for suggestions for names for the classroom's pair of fish.

It's all standard stuff for Grade 2 — up until the call to Salah, Muslim prayers, comes over the loudspeaker, sung by a child in classical Arabic.

Everyone lines up, boys separate from girls, every head covered, to go to the prayer hall in the library.

Welcome to ISNA Elementary, a private Islamic school with 260 students, operating since 1983, moving to a closed public school in 1985.

Schools such as ISNA, one of an estimated more than 400 in Ontario, have become the focal point of the provincial election's hottest issue — faith-based school funding.

Progressive Conservative leader John Tory triggered the issue, promising to extend public funding to non-Catholic, faith-based schools.

Politicians are squaring off and radio talk-show lines burning up over the issue.

"Regressive," is what Liberal



SUSAN BRADNAM/SUN MEDIA

Amira Ghenniwa, 13, is in Grade 8 at the Al-Taqwa Islamic School in London.

Premier Dalton McGuinty has called Tory's plan, warning it'll lead to "sequestered and segregated" students and raid public schools of \$500 million of an \$18.4-billion budget.

Tory pegs the cost at \$400 million, arguing in a multicultural province where Catholic schools are the only religious schools funded, "it's the right thing to do."

The New Democrats have done their best to side-step the issue, complaining it's being used to avoid debating the real problem — education underfunding.

Extending funding to religious schools is an issue with a long history. Older Ontarians will recall the surprise move in 1984 by Tory's then-boss, former Conservative premier Bill Davis, to extend full funding to Catholic schools. Until then, they only had government funding to Grade 10.

Canada's constitution guaranteed support for Catholic elementary schools in Ontario, legally interpreted to include Grades 9 and 10 (because some Catholic elementary schools included those grades at the time), but

Catholic supporters had campaigned from the late 19th century on for more.

Even Davis had opposed such a move for more than a decade, arguing in the 1970s if he did it, other groups might come looking, too. Once he changed his mind he also commissioned a report to address the question what to do about other minorities' schools.

The 1985 Shapiro report recommended private schools, including religious ones, be given the chance to associate with their local school boards, and receive a

government grant based on how much it cost to educate students in the board's other schools.

The report remains on the shelf, mostly unadopted. Former Ontario Conservative finance minister Jim Flaherty tried to fix the situation when he popped a plan in 2001 to give a tax credit to parents who sent their kids to private schools. The plan was barely underway when the PCs lost the 2003 election and the McGuinty Liberals quickly scrapped it.

In other provinces, what the Shapiro report recommended is a reality. Ontario is alone among the provinces in giving public funds to Catholic schools but not to other religions, which the United Nations Human Rights Commission condemned in 1999.

Quebec and Newfoundland exited their obligations to provide Catholic schooling with constitutional amendments in the 1990s. British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Quebec all offer some form of funding for independent religious schools, and funding or subsidies for both religious and at least some non-religious private schools.

But that's not swaying Ontario voters. An SES Research/Sun Media poll, taken early in the campaign for the Oct. 10 election, found half of voters oppose Tory's faith-based school vow, while 43% are supportive.

Meanwhile, the issue is hitting the Tories' core support. Lifelong voters have called phone-in shows, saying this will be the first time they'll vote for another party. Some unhappy Tory backbenchers are even downplaying the issue in their own campaigns.

"Certainly, I'm not hearing from people (that) there is an appetite for it," said Queen's Park veteran Bob Runciman of Brockville, the Tory house leader in the last legislature.

Moira MacDonald is a Sun Media education reporter.

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WHO STANDS WHERE

Takes by the Big Three political parties on extending public funding to faith-based schools:

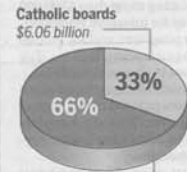
- PCs: In favour ✓
- Liberals: Opposed X
- NDP: Opposed X

Friday, September 14, 2007
The Second Day of Ramadan

8:35-8:45	Prayer
8:45-9:25	French
9:25-10:05	Islamic Studies
10:05-10:15	Recess
10:15-10:55	Math
10:55-11:35	English
11:35-11:45	Lunch
11:45-12:25	Science
12:25-1:05	History
1:05-1:45	English Agendas
1:45-2:00	Prayer
2:00-2:40	Arabic

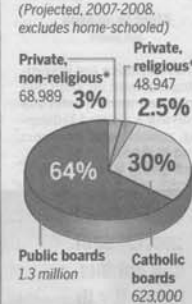
ONTARIO SCHOOLS

ANNUAL SPENDING: \$18.4 billion (Projected, 2007-2008)



Public boards \$12.26 billion

TOTAL ENROLMENT: 2.04 million (Projected, 2007-2008, excludes home-schooled)



Figures are rounded *Figures for 2004-05 Source: Ontario Education Ministry