

Canadian Branch of the
Assemblée parlementaire
de la Francophonie



Section canadienne de
l'Assemblée parlementaire
de la Francophonie

Report of the Canadian Branch of the Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie

**37th Session of the America Region of the APF and
Conference of Branch Chairs**

Edmonton, Alberta, Canada

July 18 to 22, 2022

Report

The delegation was led by Francis Drouin, MP, Chair of the Canadian Branch of the APF and President of the APF, and also included the following parliamentarians:

- **the Honourable Jean-Guy Dagenais**, Senator;
- **Marie-France Lalonde**, MP;
- **Sébastien Lemire**, MP;
- **Darrell Samson**, MP, and Vice-Chair of the Canadian Branch; and
- **René Villemure**, MP, and Vice-Chair of the Canadian Branch.

The parliamentarians were assisted by Gabrielle de Billy Brown, advisor to the Canadian Branch.

Parliamentarians from nine branches of the APF took part in the proceedings of the CBC and of the Session.

Conference of Branch Chairs

Prior to the proceedings of the 37th Session, the CBC of the Regional Assembly of the Americas met on 18 July 2022 in hybrid format. The CBC oversees the execution of the Regional Assembly's decisions, which seek to promote the French language and francophone culture among the member branches. Two parliamentarians took part in the proceedings, namely **Francis Drouin**, MP, as President of the APF, and **Darrell Samson**, MP, as a representative of the Canadian Branch of the APF. The acting chargé de mission for the Americas Region, Ronnie Leblanc (MLA, Nova Scotia), reported on activities since the last meeting of the CBC in April 2022, and presented the statement of revenues and expenses for the past year, as well as the budget forecasts for 2022–2023.

Darrell Samson then provided an update on activities in Canada's Parliament over the past few months. He talked about Bill C-14, on provincial representation in the House of Commons, which received Royal Assent on 23 June 2022. He also discussed immigration issues and the government's action plan for francophone immigration in Canada. Mr. Samson also took part in discussions following interventions from other participants on issues related to access to French-language education in Canada and the need for accurate data on francophone demographics. Following discussions among participants, the CBC decided to propose a resolution on the theme of francophone immigration at the end of the Session's proceedings.

The CBC participants also discussed the follow-up of the 2019–2022 work plan for consolidating the Americas Region of the APF, as well as work to develop the next work plan, which will cover the period from 2023 to 2026. **Darrell Samson** proposed that the Americas Region hold discussions in the fall of 2022 regarding this new document so that it can be finalized and adopted at the next CBC planned for the winter of 2023.

Regional Assembly of the Americas

The APF's Regional Assembly of the Americas brings together all the branches in the Americas Region. The Assembly provides branches with the opportunity to meet and discuss themes specific to the Francophonie at annual meetings.

The theme selected by the Alberta Branch for the 37th Session of the Regional Assembly of the Americas was "Celebrating francophone culture." **Francis Drouin**, MP, opened the proceedings of the 37th Session on 18 July 2022 as President of the APF. He underscored the importance of culture for Canada's Francophonie, especially in Alberta. He also thanked the Alberta Branch for hosting the event. Lastly, Mr. Drouin called on all participants to remain "franco-curious" and explore the richness of the Francophonie, especially in minority communities.

The first working session focused on the history and legacy of Franco-Albertan culture. Three panellists were invited to share their reflections, namely Denis Perreux, Executive Director of the Société historique francophone de l'Alberta; Valérie Lapointe-Gagnon, associate professor of history at the Campus Saint-Jean of the University of Alberta; and Yic Camara, the Prairies and Northwest Territories Regional Director of the Settlement Workers in Schools Program of Francophonie Albertaine Plurielle. **Darrell Samson**, MP, spoke about the importance of immigration and education and how they are key to the vitality of communities.

The second working session focused on maximizing culture and cultural tourism in the business community. The panellists were Étienne Alary, Executive Director of the Conseil de développement économique de l'Alberta; Alèthe Kabore, entrepreneur; and Daniel Cournoyer, Executive Director of the Flying Canoë Volant Festival. They discussed the importance of promoting Canada's Francophonie internationally, while being careful not to lose their francophone specificity by opening up to bilingualism. They also highlighted the role of the diversity of Alberta's Francophonie in tourism.

The theme of the third working session was youth culture and the future of Franco-Albertan culture. Young Franco-Albertans who are active in their communities as well as leaders in the world of education came together to talk about their realities and their vision of the future. The panellists were Tanya Saumure of the Fédération des conseils scolaires francophones de l'Alberta; Habone Osman-Hachi, Vice-Principal at École Gabrielle-Roy; Gloria Livingston, President of Francophonie Jeunesse de l'Alberta; and two graduates of Campus Saint-Jean, Julie Perich and Joannie Fogue. During the question period, **Darrell Samson**, MP, talked about the importance of schools for the survival of Canada's Francophonie.

The fourth working session focused on francophone culture in the digital age. Three panellists were invited to speak, namely Josée Thibeault, an artist and one of the creators of the podcast La Place, as well as Alyson Roussel and Ariane Corneau from Boréal FM, the francophone community radio station in Plamondon, Alberta. They explained to the parliamentarians the challenges associated with creating French-language digital content in Alberta. **René Villemure**, MP, asked about the funding available for such projects. The panellists described how complicated the process is to find grants, the number of applications they have to submit and the lack of funding adapted to their specific situation.

The theme of the fifth and final working session was francophone art and culture. Franco-Albertan artists were invited to share their observations on the status of the arts

community in Alberta: Sylvie Thériault, Executive Director of the Regroupement artistique francophone de l'Alberta; Pierrette Requier, author and poet; Éric Doucet, musician; and Julianna Damer, visual artist. They underscored how difficult it is for artists in minority language communities to have to manage communications and marketing in addition to working on their art. They also mentioned the public's desire for the return of live performances after more than two years of the COVID-19 pandemic. In response to a question from **the Honourable Jean-Guy Dagenais**, Senator, the panellists explained that there is no specific union representing just Franco-Albertan artists.

The proceedings concluded with the adoption, after discussions, of a motion on the importance of francophone immigration. **Darrell Samson**, MP, took the floor to propose, on behalf of the Regional Assembly of the Americas, a motion to thank the Alberta Branch. He thanked the branch for hosting the event and for sharing the richness of francophone culture through the week's activities. Lastly, it was decided that the 38th Session of the Regional Assembly of the Americas would be held in 2023 in Louisiana, at the invitation of the Louisiana Branch.

Respectfully submitted,

Francis Drouin, MP

Chair

Canadian Branch of the Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie

Travel Costs

ASSOCIATION	Canadian Branch of the Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie
ACTIVITY	37 th Session of the America Region of the APF and Conference of Branch Chairs
DESTINATION	Edmonton, Alberta, Canada
DATES	July 18 to 22, 2022
DELEGATION	
SENATE	Hon. Jean-Guy Dagenais
	Francis Drouin
HOUSE OF COMMONS	Marie-France Lalonde
	Sébastien Lemire
	Darrell Samson

René Villemure

STAFF

Jean-François Lafleur¹
Gabrielle de Billy Brown

TRANSPORTATION	\$2,556.48
ACCOMMODATION	\$744.50
PER DIEMS	\$275.49
OFFICIAL GIFTS	\$0.00
MISCELLANEOUS/REGISTRATION FEES	\$1,400.00
TOTAL	\$4,976.47

¹*A flight ticket credit was issued due to trip cancellation for this parliamentary staff.*