

I think it's a true testament to Islanders, to this great country, that we're able to have two official languages. I'm very happy to be representing a province that is moving forward in terms of recognizing our bilingualism here on Prince Edward Island and to be able to stand up and recognize our Acadian-Francophone community in this motion is very important.

I know that it's not something that we probably wish we didn't have to have this motion. But we do have to be able to recognize it. It's unfortunate what took part 250 years ago, but it's important that we learn from our past so that we can make sure that our future is that much better. I believe that by working with our Francophone and Acadian community here on Prince Edward Island that's exactly what will happen into the future. Prince Edward Island as a whole will be in a much better situation the more we can embrace our Francophone and Acadian community here on Prince Edward Island.

With that I'll close.

Merci beaucoup, Madame la Présidente.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: I'll now move to the hon. Member from Evangeline-Miscouche to second the motion.

Mr. Gallant: *Merci beaucoup Madame la Présidente.*

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

I'd like to welcome everyone to the gallery from the Acadian community. Nice to see you here this morning. I won't mention any names because I can't see behind me. I'd also like to congratulate the great contribution that the Acadian Francophone community has contributed to our Island economically and culturally. It's a pleasure to stand here today and second this motion.

In the year 1720, our Island was known as Isle St. Jean and it was a French colony. The original settlers of our province were from France and it's still evident in the names we hear and read each day in the telephone book, names like Gallant, Arsenault, Gaudet, and Doucette, just to name a few. An interesting fact I uncovered in my research was that in the first census of Isle St. Jean conducted in 1728 there

were 297 permanent residents, and out of that number there was 127 fishers. By the year 1752, 25 years later, another census indicated the population of the colony had grown to 2,223, an increase of approximately 495 Acadians.

With the arrival of the British military and government officials the threat was realized and the first wave of deportation from the Maritimes started in 1755. This action targeted 6,000, 7000 Acadians from Nova Scotia. These people were deported to the southern colonies, Massachusetts and Georgia. As history as shown, a significant number of Acadian families deported from Nova Scotia fled and took refuge on the Island, Isle of St. Jean. Island Acadians were targeted for deportation starting in 1758 after the fall of Louisbourg on Cape Breton Island. By then the population of our Island had grown another 2,477 Acadians to a total of 4,700. Eventually British troops arrived on Isle St. Jean at the beginning of August 1758 and started rounding up civilians almost immediately.

As seconder of the important motion, I would like to say that some statistics on the deportation of these 4,700 inhabitants of this colony show that 3,100 were resourcefully expelled. Another 14 to 1,500 escaped between most of northeastern New Brunswick to the base of our Miramichi areas. Of the 3,100 that were expelled, close to 1,700 died at sea, either from sickness or drowning when ships came in (Indistinct) sank. While 1,000 died from sickness on the ships or after reaching our destination because of illness contacted on ships, the sinking of the *Violet* and the *Duke William* on December 1758 is often referred to as an event that caused the most significant loss of life at close to 700 deaths between two ships.

While there has been extensive research and writings on the subject of deportation of the Acadians for the year 1755, the targeted Acadians from Nova Scotia (Indistinct) very little recorded about the deportation of Island Acadians that began in 1758.

As an Acadian and a Member of the Legislative Assembly, I take pride in seconding this motion introduced by the hon. Premier, and urge that the Legislative Assembly encourage all Islanders to participate in various activities which

will take place throughout this year to commemorate the deportation and celebration of the vitality, of the Acadian and Francophone communities, notably the unveiling of the monument this summer at Port-la-Joye-Amherst national historic site, the location of the original French settlement.

Madam Speaker, "that the Government of Prince Edward Island actively pursue its commitment to the development and enhancement of Acadian and Francophone community."

Merci beaucoup.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Communities, Cultural Affairs and Labour.

Could one of the Pages please get her the podium? Thank you.

Ms. Bertram: *Merci, Madame la présidente.*

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

En tant que ministre responsable des Affaires acadiennes et francophones, je suis heureuse de prendre parole à la Chambre et d'appuyer la présente motion.

As Minister responsible for Acadian and Francophone Affairs, it is my pleasure to rise and speak in support of this motion.

Certainement, je veux dire bonjour à tout le monde qui nous joignent aujourd'hui et c'était une bonne année à travailler avec la communauté acadienne et francophone de l'Île-du-Prince-Édouard et j'espère que nous pourrons continuer à travailler encore plus. Mais aujourd'hui je veux parler de cette vraiment importante résolution.

I certainly want to say hello to the people who have joined us here today and that it was a good year to be working with the Acadian and Francophone community of Prince Edward Island and I hope that we can continue working together even more. But today, I want to talk about this really important resolution.

The Deportation of the Island Acadians which began in 1758 is indeed a dark chapter in our province's history. It's important to remember that before the deportation order was given French and Acadian settlers had been present on the Island for almost 40 years. During that