

census, the Acadian population numbered close to 700 individuals that would be found in three settlements: Malpeque, Baie-de-Fortune and Rustico.

La Banque des fermiers a été fondée en 1864 par le père Georges-Antoine Belcourt à titre de toute première « banque du peuple » au Canada. Elle a exercé des activités jusqu'en 1894. On dit qu'en tant que l'une des premières institutions financières publiques au pays, elle servit de modèle pour les caisses populaires d'aujourd'hui.

The Farmer's Bank was established in 1864 by father Georges-Antoine Belcourt as the very first "people's bank" in Canada. It operated until 1894. It is said that as one of the first public financial institutions in the country, it served as a model for the "caisses populaires" - the credit unions as we know them today.

Du point de vue architectural, l'édifice de la Banque des fermiers est un trésor national. L'an dernier, la Banque des fermiers figurait parmi les treize sites sélectionnés pour la Journée du patrimoine, organisée par la Fondation Héritage Canada. La Journée du patrimoine célèbre le patrimoine architectural et les lieux historiques du Canada.

Architecturally speaking, the Farmer's Bank building is a national treasure. Just last year, it was featured among the thirteen sites selected for Heritage Day which is organized by the Heritage Canada Foundation. Heritage Day celebrates the architectural heritage and historic places of Canada.

The theme for the 2007 Heritage Day was: Places for People - Our Heritage of the Everyday. It showcased lesser-known but nonetheless important structures found throughout Canada.

The Farmer's Bank was selected for its design and the materials used to build it - our famous red Island sandstone. To picture this impressive building being built in the 1800s is to grasp the importance of this ambitious undertaking.

Other than its architectural significance, the bank played a defining role in the survival of the Acadian community of Rustico. It ensured local farmers and fishers had access to small low-interest loans. This enabled them to keep farming and fishing,

and even to benefit from dividends paid out by the bank. Today, the museum of the Farmer's Bank showcases the bank's history, including that of its restoration. It also stands as a proud reminder of the perseverance and courage of the Acadian and Francophone community.

The Acadian culture is alive and well on PEI. Proof of that can be found in the many activities, festivals and special events that take place year-round. But this year, the City of Charlottetown is hosting a very special event, the 10th edition of the Événement Éloizes, which has already started, and it goes to May 4th. I know the hon. member that seconded this resolution from Miscouche attended Wednesday night's event.

This is a five-day cultural event during which the Acadian artists are recognized for their achievement in categories such as literature, visual arts, cinema-video, dance, music and theatre.

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C'est la première fois que cet événement aura lieu à l'Î.-P.-É. et seulement la deuxième fois depuis la création des Éloizes il y a dix ans, que l'événement aura lieu ailleurs qu'au Nouveau-Brunswick. L'événement se déroule à l'Île pour souligner le 250^e anniversaire de la Déportation.

It is the first time that this event is held in PEI and only the second time in the ten year history of the Éloizes that it is held outside New Brunswick. It is being held here on the Island to highlight the 250th anniversary of the Deportation.

L'événement des Éloizes est l'une des manifestations les plus courues par les artistes acadiens. Le fait que Charlottetown accueille cet événement est une excellente occasion de mettre l'Î.-P.-É. et la communauté acadienne et francophone en vedette.

The Éloizes is one of the most sought after events by Acadian artists. Hosting the event in Charlottetown is a tremendous opportunity to put the spotlight on PEI and the Acadian and Francophone community.

A very special Islander will be receiving the Prix Hommage at this year's awards gala. The Prix Hommage is given out to celebrate the career and body of work of an artist. Angèle Arsenault from Abram-Village will

be receiving this award. She is a recipient of the Order of Canada, the Order of PEI, and is one of the first Acadian women who promoted Acadie beyond the Maritimes. She is a widely successful and prolific singer-songwriter with over 20 albums to her credit, spanning her three decade-long career.

This past March, Angèle participated in the festival Nuits Acadiennes in Paris which showcased Acadian artists. Time and time again she has been an ambassador for the Acadian and Francophone community and for our province. It is very fitting that the prestigious Prix Hommage be given to her at this year's Éloizes event held here on Prince Edward Island.

On a personal note, it was by listening to Angèle's music that I gained further appreciation of the French language and French music. I can remember in the early 1980s when I attended Elliott River school for French immersion and I remember Angèle Arsenault coming and singing then. I still have those records that I came home and told my mother that she had to buy for me because I enjoyed the music so much. But I think she has certainly inspired a lot of children to enjoy music and certainly maybe learning French as a second language, music certainly. It makes it easier to learn a second language. Certainly, Angèle has helped a lot of young people along over the years.

When we think of Acadian culture, it is hard not to think about music. It is ever-present, lively, invigorating and will be showcased again this year during the Francofolies de Charlottetown that will take place this June 20th to June 22nd. This event is the successor to the Festival de Charlottetown which was created in 1901.

Victoria Row will come alive with French and Acadian music this year. The festival will feature a lineup of seasoned performers like homegrown talent Vishten, Groupe Suroît whose members hail from the Magdalen Islands, and New-Brunswick's, Jean-François Breau.

The anniversary of the deportation gives us pause to reflect on our past, our present and our future. We know for a fact that actions like the deportation of an entire people would never again take place in Canada. We must, however, remain proactive and ensure that the Acadian and