

Speech from "the 9<sup>th</sup> Francofête – Concours *Conjuguons lire et écrire*"

By special guest Mr. Bradley Zhao

March 25, 2018, Montreal

Dear organizers,

Dear teachers and students,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Good afternoon to all. My name is Bradley Zhao. I am the director of Elite College, a tutoring school which focuses on promoting the French language among the younger generation, including mainly local children as well as some children of immigrants. Our students come from nearly every community in Montreal, and even from Trois-Rivières, Gatineau and Quebec City. It is an honor for me to speak here and to share my ideas with you.

Today, I want to say, I am proud of being a Quebecois.

### **Quebec, I remember you**

Twenty years ago, I was approved to immigrate to Canada. I debated where I should land, because from my understanding, it is not so easy to get a job as a new immigrant. Meanwhile, I knew a friend who was doing his post-doc at Laval University, and was visiting China. He suggested to me to go to Montreal, where there is a "COFI" program (now called Francisation). One could join the program and receive subsidies from the government to support their new life. No other province had a similar program. That is why you see me here, in Montreal, even today.

After I landed in Montreal, I participated in the "COFI" program. Quebec provided hundreds of dollars to me and to my wife every month. After two months, I was accepted by Concordia University to pursue a master's degree in computer science in the fall of 1997. Then I applied and was accepted for loans and bursaries, to support my studies and my family, including my son's daycare cost. Therefore, I was able to concentrate on my studies in my new field.

Around the year 2000, the field of computer science was booming. Thus, many of my classmates moved to the United States or to other provinces after graduation, where they might obtain a higher salary and pay less tax. But I wanted to stay in Montreal, in Quebec, because I think I received so much support from Quebec and from Quebec taxpayers. And I would like to give something in return to society as a taxpayer in Quebec.

Since then, I have contributed, at first as an individual tax payer and then as a business tax payer as well. I hope people in need can benefit from my contribution. I hope the Quebec society will be more prosperous with my contributions. And I will continue to live in Quebec.

Quebec, I remember you.