INTERVIEW

Rémi Frenette

HOW DO YOU DESCRIBE YOUR OWN IDENTITY?

My own identity, I am one of those people who find that identities cohabit well together, but I still tend to have some that I love more than others. So I would say I am Acadian first, then New Brunswicker, then Canadian. Then I combine all of this together. But in my daily life, I live my Acaniannité more than anything else.

WHAT ASPECT OF CANADA MAKES YOU MOST PROUD?

What I appreciate about Canada, and there is still a lot of work to be done on that side, but it is a country which values inclusion, tolerance, with a good multiculturalist model. I see it as the opposite of the so-called "American melting pot" and I see Canada as a country where, even if everything is not perfect, every culture, every identity can still claim a certain space and even a legitimacy. I believe this is where the effervescence of the Acadian culture comes from, so this is an aspect which I appreciate of the country.

WHAT IS NEEDED TO MAKE DIALOGUE BETWEEN ABORIGINAL AND NON-ABORIGINAL PEOPLE WORK IN CANADA?

Well, the relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in Canada is just starting to develop in a healthy way. We are now inheriting a colonial past that is very dark, very heavy, very violent and, to my knowledge, only since the 90s with the closure of the last residential schools has there really been a public discourse about this past. So it's just starting, maybe three decades or so. We had the Truth and Reconciliation Commission for example, which is a step in the right direction. I believe that we must project a future focused on hope and take concrete actions to bring about healing and reconciliation. We have to listen a lot, Canadians have to listen a lot and I think it just starts like this.

WHAT IS IT ABOUT CANADA THAT MAKES YOU PROUD?

What makes me proud about Canada is it's a multicultural country, but it accepts and it recognizes different peoples and cultures and communities. It really gives them the chance to assert themselves and fully be a part of Canada.