

# What Happens In Quebec Now ?

By SANDY LYTH

What happens in Quebec now? French-English relations seem to be at a turning point.

The unexpected death of Premier Daniel Johnson left a great deal of uncertainty as to where the unpredictable road to "Equality or Independence" will lead next. Of all the men in Mr. Johnson's cabinet, there were two who had risen out of the anonymity behind Mr. Johnson's personal charisma. Jean-Guy Cardinal was notable for his Gabon fiasco, and Jean-Jacques Bertrand, former Justice Minister, acted as Premier in Mr. Johnson's absences, and appeared to be his right-hand man. At the leadership convention in 1961, Johnson, upholder of the status quo, defeated Bertrand and his enthusiasm for party reform by a small margin. Johnson's National Union came out of the 1966 election with a hand-full majority, and when the various independents opted for Le Sage's Liberals, Johnson's position became even more precarious. He was only able to retain power by utilizing his personal charm to the utmost, and autocratically managing and controlling every aspect of his party's government. With his death, the National Union was depleted by one precious vote until a bi-election, and the question now arises whether M. Bertrand has the qualities necessary to control his government effectively. If not, when will the next election be held?

Thanksgiving weekend, the situation was altered yet again, Rene Levesque organized and founded a new party - Parti Quebecois. Gilles Gregoire's rightist Ralliement Nationale (R.N.) and Levesque's leftist Mouvement Souverainete Association (M.S.A.) united to form the first and only electable Quebec party dedicated to the cause of separatism. Two weeks later, Pierre Bourgault, leader of the activist Rassemblement pour l'Independence Nationale, (R.I.N.), announced that party directors had decided to dissolve the party, and urged supporters to back the Parti Quebecois. Such unification and organization among separatist groups is unprecedented. The amalgamation of the R.N., the R.I.N., and the M.S.A. brought together much of Gregoire's rural support and Levesque's and Bourgault's urban following - enough to perhaps win a significant number of seats in the next election. Mr. Levesque is of the opinion that his party could conceivably win enough seats to hold the balance of power, and from all indications this is quite possible. The Liberals and the National Union have been more or less deadlocked for several years, and many voters feel that any change would be an improvement.

Should this balance of power fall into Levesque's hands, however, it would put the majority party in a very awkward and compromising position both within the province and in the country as a whole. Mr. Levesque

would be able to wield more power than his support would warrant.

But do the people as a whole want Quebec to separate? A National Gallup Poll published last month divided Canada into four sections: Maritimes, Quebec, Ontario, and the West. In any one of these areas, not more than 13 per cent of the people polled were in favor of separatism, and the highest proportion came from Ontario. The highest percentage of 'undecided' understandably was in Quebec, but even there it did not reach 18 per cent. Nationally, the age group most in favour of separation - people in their twenties - did not vote over 15 per cent for Quebec sovereignty.

From these results, it is likely that Rene Levesque is not as sure of his success as he says he is. His party has very little cohesion; the factions brought together by his party differ on such vital issues as policy, method, and even the final goal. Ideas range from very leftist to very rightist, from demonstrations and violence if necessary to peaceful legislation, from complete independence to political autonomy with a strong economic tie with Canada. Forming a coherent election platform from such a chaotic mixture is highly problematic. And even if the party could achieve unity and popular support, would the rest of Canada let Quebec separate? Civil war or "Vive le Quebec Libre"????

## Student Occupation Ends Friday

MONTREAL (CUP) -- The month-long student occupation of Ecole des Beaux Arts will finally end Friday (Nov. 15).

Over 500 students at the school voted over the weekend to open the school doors. The Fine Arts school was the last holdout in last month's province-wide student rebellion. Since students seized control on October 11, they have been running their own classes, managing the cafeteria and maintaining the physical plant.

A spokesman for the group said the students would negotiate with authorities Friday in an attempt to establish a more democratic decision-making process in the administration of the institution.

## U of Toronto students March On Legislature

TORONTO (CUP) -- Over 200 University of Toronto students, upset by government delays in handling student financial grievances, will march on the provincial legislature Wednesday (Nov. 20) to demand changes in the Ontario Student Awards Program.

A student council committee has been meeting since mid-September compiling complaints from students caught in a tightening of OSAP regulations this year.

They have presented two briefs to the ministry of university affairs calling for a more liberal program, but have received no reply.

The students are asking for:

\* Presentation by the department of an overall plan for the achievement of universal accessibility.

\* Revision of the "independent status" clause, which set stringent definitions for the attainment of "independent" status.

\* A larger proportion of grants as opposed to loans.

\* A change in the policy of student contributions which requires a given amount of student savings to supplement the loan or grant.

Steve Langdon, student president, said Wednesday (Nov. 13) all university registrars and aid officers in the province have requested changes in the restrictive program.

"They haven't received any response from the department either", he said.

Langdon accused the department of manipulating public opinion against the students: "We constantly read . . . of isolated cases of students cheating in applying for their loans. But we never read about the large number of students who can't continue their education because of the restrictive nature of the program."

The Toronto students will attempt to gain support from other schools in the province equally hard hit by the OSAP regulations.

The first Gazette Literary Supplement will appear beginning about the first of January. Submit essays, poems, etc. to "Buttons" Clarke at the Gazette office.

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