

Confederation Feature - Part 2

Conference Reaffirms Concept Of Bicultural Canada

Last fall David Estrin, a second-year arts student at the University of Alberta, attended a seminar of the Western Region of the Canadian Union of Students at the Banff School of Fine Arts.

The Gateway erred in not printing Part Two of his feature article, "Confederation and Western Canada," "next week" as we promised.

Here is the second installment written by our newly-elected CUS Chairman for 1964-65, David Estrin.



SUGGESTED ROLE

What should be the role of the provinces in Confederation? Mr. Blakeney suggested that

- they should continue to administer social services;
- they should not be allowed to impose new taxes which would divide Canada into competing economic blocks;
- they should receive continuing funds from the federal government;
- they should press the claims of ethnic groups within their regions.

In answering questions from the delegates, the cabinet minister was accurately pessimistic in predicting the chances for redistribution of powers at the November Federal-Provincial Conference. "There is not any prospect," he said, "for Mr. Lesage's government at this time to agree to a transfer of powers."

THIRSTY, TIRED TRAVELLERS

Friday morning, Oct. 25, the delegates very wearily arrived at the Banff School from Holiday House. The mountain air was so invigorating that the students just had to take advantage of it. (It seemed to make them very, very, thirsty.)

"If English-speaking Canadians want to preserve some form of Confederation, they must be willing to accept some fundamental changes in the constitutional structure," a political scientist from the University of British Columbia told the delegates.

Dr. D. V. Smiley, editor of *The Rowell-Sirois Report, Bk. 1*, which recently appeared in the Carleton Library series of Canadian social science publications, reminded the students "a federal system is always on trial," and therefore we must be prepared to accept these changes.

BACK TO ORIGINAL MEANING

Quebec's challenge to Ottawa is an attempt to drive the federal government back to the original meaning of the British North America Act, Dr. Smiley said. He forecast increasingly different relations between Ottawa and Quebec than the rest of Canada with the federal capital.

"Even British Columbia would not restrict Ottawa to the role envisaged by Quebec. Quebec wants to end the federal monopoly in the tax field and to stem Ottawa's growing role in areas such as hospitals, social welfare, and municipal loans. English Canadians wish to do these things through the federal government and thus they antagonize Quebec."

Yet Dr. Smiley argued that if the federal government was restricted to the role sought by Quebec, the Dominion would be powerless to provide a national level of employment and "other federal objectives."

CONCESSION LIST

Also on the French-Canadian concession list was equality of opportunity in Canada's civil service and the English-oriented programs of our immigration and external affairs policy, he said.

To remedy these French-Canadian grievances, and to ensure to them that the powers of federal government will not be used against their best interests, a new set of formal guarantees is need-

ed. "French-Canada," Dr. Smiley said, "must have a veto on federal policies."

"On the other hand, the English-Canadian majority will not find acceptable a solution where every initiative of the federal government is subject to a veto from French-Canada. There is room for political imagination and hard bargaining here," he said. "Our slogan might be 'Beyond Sentimentality to Bargaining'" he suggested.

13 PER CENT SEPARATISTS

The Nov. 2 issue of *Maclean's Magazine's* find that 13 per cent of French Canadians are separatist brought different responses from two University of Alberta professors during Friday's proceedings.

UAC historian Dr. G. Self, claimed the 13 per cent were made up of students, who are prone to take extreme positions. He thought age and a reasonable re-writing of Confederation would erode their separatist tendencies. "Young French-Canadians are abysmally ignorant of the rest of Canada," he added.

But U of A sociologist, Dr. Charles Hobart disagreed,

He said the separatist group, while young, was well-educated and came from the city, and with growing urbanization, separatist attitudes need not wither with age.

SOME DON'T KNOW

The sociologist explained parochialism as the reason that 21 per cent of the French in Quebec haven't even heard of separatism.

"What happens when this breakdown comes?" he asked. "It probably won't take much longer."

Dr. Hobart suggested that of those 23 per cent of French-Canadians in Quebec who are undecided about separating with Canada, more are in favor than against.

ENGLISH-TYPE PREJUDICE

In "Analyzing French Canada in Sociological Perspective," Dr. Hobart suggested we "live in an age of minorities which are beginning to press for first class citizenship." Discrimination is a two-way threat. In Eastern Canada the English fear the reproductivity of the French; this situation is similar in the United States where Negroes move into white areas. Such occurrences give rise to an English type of prejudice.

"On the other hand, the English domination of the area gives the French a persecution complex. Understanding and cooperation become difficult and then the religious aspect enters in." There is then a serious communications problem because of the different cultural and religious backgrounds.

Dr. Hobart (like other Americans on the Edmonton faculty) expressed his amazement at Canada's lack of any national symbols.

INS vs. OUTS

"The ones that we do have are British. This leads to regional separation," he said. "In-group out-group tensions develop; loyalty develops in the in-groups and they fight the out-groups."

The Edmonton sociologist described this as a potentially dangerous situation. "In a crisis those on the fence will jump to the defence of the militant separatists. The more rabid French-Canadians may trigger actions which will



DAVID ESTRIN

make English-Canada take action."

Canada's greatest source of culture was not English but French-Canadian tradition, and this country's concept of many cultures was far superior to the U.S. melting pot, he said.

WE NEED EACH OTHER

"English Canadians badly need the French to save them from the Americans," the U.S.-born and educated sociologist added. "We must have stronger ways of distinguishing ourselves from the Americans. Our vision must be caught from French-Canada," Dr. Hobart concluded.

The 28 delegates to the seminar were told Friday evening that federal financing and co-ordination of Canadian education is needed today.

Dr. J. E. Cheal, associate professor of educational administration, U of A, Calgary, told the students a central office of education, under control of an existing federal minister should:

- Give aid to universities and "poorer" provinces to equalize educational opportunity across Canada;
- Take control over certain realms of education, such as vocational training, from the department of labor;
- Sponsor scholarships and research into educational methods; and
- Support exchanges of teachers and ideas, assist liaison between provinces, and maintain national journals of education.

PLAN WOULD UNIFY

Such a plan would, said Dr. Cheal, "be the one unifying force in Canada which would help keep the country together." Until recently education has been an isolated field and provinces didn't bother to look over their fences to see what others were doing in the field. Now, however, post graduate courses in educational administration are sending men into all provinces and increasing the interchange of ideas, he said.

Dr. Cheal presented statistics to show attainment of students in individual provinces related directly to expenditure on education and the amount of denominationalism caused by separate school systems.

He said British Columbia leads the nation in percentage of students passing Grade XI, because it spends more on education, has more trained teachers, and has no separate schools.

STATISTICS

B.C.'s retention rate is 68 per cent compared with 60 per cent, Alberta; 47 per cent, Saskatchewan; 46 per cent, Manitoba; 41 per cent, Ontario; 20 per cent, Quebec (18 per cent in its Roman Catholic schools and 37 per cent in separatist Protestant schools); 35 per cent, P.E.I. and New Brunswick; 40 per cent, Nova

Scotia and 29 per cent, Newfoundland.

Dr. Cheal said the lower results in Eastern Canada retard its residents in the labor market and "this is more basic to the (Eastern economic) problem than whether they speak French and we speak English."

The author of a textbook on educational administration attributed the low attainment in Eastern Canada to lack of funds and denominationalism. "The more denominationalism a provincial school system, the less the educational output," Dr. Cheal said.

ALTA. HORRIBLE EXAMPLE

The example is shown in Alberta he said, where small separate schools outside main cities have almost double the public schools' failure rate on departmental examinations.

In Grade IX departmentals, he continued, town public school students had an 8.5 per cent failure rate, while the comparable separate schools had a 16.3 per cent rate.

At Grade XII, 62 per cent of the public school students had A or B standings, but only 45 per cent of the separate school students did as well. In science, he added, there was more than a 20 per cent difference between standings, in public and separate schools.

Separate schools systems foster "smaller schools and school districts, lower teacher qualifications, and higher drop out rates," he concluded.

WELCOME TO THE CLUB

Well dear reader, congratulations are in order if you have read this far; you must be interested in this ambiguous notion that Canada is a nation, perhaps even a nation worth preserving. And having read this far, do you demand to know the future of the Canadian federation? If so let us see what answers a panel discussing this very topic on the last day of the CUS Western Regional Seminar came up with. Taking part were Doctors Smiley, Brown, Cheal, Hobart, and Self.

"Confederation must be renegotiated," this panel of professors concluded.

"At best it has been a marriage of convenience," said Dr. Smiley, "which has been maintained by shrewd political bargaining. In the future we must have sympathy and use imagination in dealing with French-Canada. We must make Confederation acceptable to all regions," he said, and predicted that we are moving towards a bilingual society.

PRINCIPLE WILL REMAIN

Agreeing with the political scientist's analysis, Dr. Brown concluded that "in the renegotiation we all seem to agree that the framework of 1867 will be utilized. There is no doubt that the broad principle of federalism will remain," he said.

Yet multiculturalism, termed one of the most unique and exciting ideas in the world by Dr. Hobart, is being thrown in as a screen to cloud the major issue of biculturalism, as is being done in Western Canada, charged Dr. Smiley.

"And it will be used in a machiavellian way by Western Canadian politicians, Diefenbaker, Manning, the Calgary Herald editorially, and people who want an Anglo-Saxon nation, as a smoke screen," he added.

OUR FATE?

Still exasperated as to Canada's fate, dear reader? Consider this found observation by Dr. Self. "This country," he said, "was an impossibility to begin with, it continues to be, and it will continue to be—but it will continue."

And what were the conclusions of the students attending this conference in part to prepare a Western delegation with a representative point of view for a national

conference on Biculturalism?

The basic conclusion was that they did not agree, nor says the chairman, Irving Rootman of UAC, would they have agreed if the seminar had lasted for the rest of the year.

ONE RESOLUTION PASSED

Only one resolution was passed at the seminar, and this "resolved the conference is in favor of retention of the Canadian Federal Union, therein including a special position for Quebec."

As pointed out in a letter to the Editor of the Calgary Herald, after that paper had charged, among other things, that "students in Western Canada have completely lost perspective in allowing themselves to be intimidated by nationalistic frothings from a certain province to the East of here," this was the only resolution passed. And it was passed only after considerable discussion as to its wording to make sure that it would not be misinterpreted.

The real danger to Confederation, the seminar chairman wrote The Herald, "comes not from students who attempt to discuss a problem of national importance (as the editorial charged), but from people who consider they can pass judgment on a situation of which they do not know the facts. If they are shortsighted enough to believe that Quebec does not now have a position in Confederation which is somewhat different from the other provinces, you are sir, displaying what might be called 'an alarming lack of reason,'" Rootman charged.

REPORTS TO BE PRESENTED

As a direct result of this CUS Western Regional Seminar, the University of Alberta, together with the six other campuses that participated, have compiled reports which will be drafted together to be presented before the Royal Commission on Biculturalism and Bilingualism.

Do you, dear reader, agree with these nine propositions supported by the three Edmonton delegates—Ted Regehr, Betty Milligan, and David Estrin—as summarized below? If not, let's hear from you. They were your representatives.

The University of Alberta, Edmonton delegates to the CUS Western Regional Seminar on "Confederation and Western Canada" wish to express their support of the following propositions.

1. That the Canadian Confederation is eminently worthy of preservation.
2. That it be recognized that the province of Quebec does and should continue to occupy a special position within the Canadian Confederation.
3. That any further constitutional concessions be not interpreted as a grant of greater provincial autonomy generally.
4. That Canada is a bicultural nation.
5. That French be taught in all Canadian high schools but that students in high school be given the option, where feasible, to study other foreign languages.
6. That a federal office of education be established in Canada.
7. That a greater portion of equalization payments to the provinces be made in the form of unconditional grants.
8. That the federal government seriously endeavor to make the federal civil service bilingual, by offering instruction to present and prospective employees at government expense and on government time.
9. That the federal government increase its efforts to promote a better understanding among Canadians outside of Quebec of the views, aspirations and complaints of French Canada, and should similarly seek to promote a better understanding of the rest of Canada among French Canadians.