

Features

Glendon after the referendum...

Cultural cooperation continues

Leora Aisenberg

Last May, while most students were recovering from final exams, some members of the York community were faced with a momentous decision—how to vote in the Quebec referendum. For much of Glendon College's French Canadian population, it was a decision they will never forget.

According to Glendon Student Union president Dorothy Watson, approximately 23 per cent of the college's total student body is francophone. The fact that Glendon is largely a bilingual

institution, says Watson, allows for a higher degree of "awareness" amongst anglophone students.

First year student Julie Lizotte agrees. Lizotte, who came to Glendon to improve her English skills after receiving her BA in Industrial Relations from Laval, finds little animosity between English and French speaking factions. She does feel, however, that English Canadians regard the Quebecois with less esteem than they reserve for francophones of European origin. Lizotte points out that when first meeting anglophones, they invariably ask

whether she's from France or Quebec. "And the referendum is always a question," she added.

Francophones at Glendon are a unique group, says sociology major Claude Boucher. "A

"A 'complete separatist' would not be attending school in Ontario."

'complete separatist would not be attending school in Ontario,' he noted. Boucher contends that the majority of French Canadian students were "non" supporters. "I personally would have voted 'oui,'" said the Toronto resident, "not to separate per se, but to gain more bargaining power."

Third year translation student Jean Paradis shares his sentiments about a "yes" vote, but feels that the referendum was still successful to the extent that it attracted the attention of English Canadians. Moreover, maintain some students, it opened the door for other provinces to express regional discontent.

Pro Tem editor Joseph Holmes believes that the majority of francophones at Glendon were "oui" supporters. Said Holmes: "In general, I find French Canadians at Glendon outspoken but apathetic in terms of action." He divides the college's French speaking population into two groups, "one that understands other points of view, and the other opposed to anything anglophone."

Similarly, Glendon's anglo-



Heather Whyte

"Just a few apples..."

phones have their share of what Claude Boucher calls "a few apples in a barrel of oranges. You always get a small minority who curse bilingualism on washroom walls."

Little confrontation between the two language groups

Nevertheless, virtually every student contacted by *Excalibur* stressed the openness of the lines of communication between the two language groups. Political


debate seems no more prevalent in the halls of Glendon than their Downsview counterparts. Although numerous heated arguments could be heard on campus during the months leading up to the referendum, the closest thing to "radical" activity, says Dorothy Watson, was the voicing of opinion by the "usual socialist groups".

Has Glendon been directly affected by the referendum decision? Most students think not. In any case, the college provides a rare environment in which a minority fighting for cultural survival is met by cooperation, rather than confrontation.





Heather Whyte

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