



## Parlez-vous le frog ?

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Laurentian University

Quebec has a problem in Canada, and yet our anglo-saxon sterile attitude seems to be ignoring her unhappiness.

Most people are guilty of either incomplete understanding or complete indifference. But even the English-speaking Canadians who are aware of the turmoil can't match "la

passion" or "la raison" with which a French-Canadian can support his views.

Separatism seems radical and shameful, but how many of us can retaliate with a substantial defence against the claim that Quebec is not benefitting from the federalist system within Confederation? Our knowledge of Frenchmen rarely goes beyond our labeling them as "frogs" who live in poverty, go to mass, vote Liberal, and multiply rapidly.

## Independence or equality; two solutions to the problem

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The only solutions to the French-Canadian problem are independence or equality.

Independence is a harsh solution. The Rassemblement pour l'Indépendance Nationale makes demands which reflect an attitude of dissatisfaction and impatience. Briefly the RIN calls for:

- the complete independence of the state of Quebec and negotiations on customs agreements with Canada and other countries
- nationalization of all federal property in Quebec and nationalization of railroads, navigation routes in the St. Lawrence, national ports, etc.
- negotiations concerning Quebec's admission into the United Nations
- recognition of the right of all nations to independence and liberty and opposition to all forms of colonialism or imperialism
- adoption of a policy on non-commitment to the major existing military blocs and future formulation of the following principles: 1. rejection of war as a solution to international differences 2. a policy of disarmament with control measures 3. creation of an international guard under the auspices of the United Nations 4. opposition to experimentation and utilization of nuclear arms 5. refusal to keep any nuclear arms in Quebec and denunciation of any talks on this subject 6. devoting a part of the national revenue to aid underdeveloped countries 7. refusal to recognize the past decision of the Privy Council of London in setting the boundaries of Labrador and 8. refusal to recognize these boundaries and assertion of "la souveraineté" of the Quebec territory.

## Separatism would create havoc

Separatism would create havoc; it is not fervently supported by too many French-Canadians. Johnson spoke for the majority when he said that he was a Canadian and wanted to remain a Canadian.

The other alternative, equality of the dual cultures, is regarded by many to be a solution par excellence. By equality, the French-Canadian is talking about self-determination and cultural "épanouissement" or the full flowering of the French community.

He does not feel that this can be achieved without acquiring more power from Ottawa. The areas Quebec wishes to control more completely are social security (over which she already has most of the control), broadcasting, university research, housing, manpower, regional economics development and the right to sign international agreements on matters under Quebec's jurisdiction.

There have been proposals for the creation of a special Quebec citizenship to help immigrants and encourage them to join the French community rather than the English, and for the right of Quebec to dissociate itself from a limited class of federal decisions, except in times of war or revolution.

## 'Equality' or 'special status'

Under these proposals Quebec would be able to use her own tax resources to support these responsibilities. This "equality" or more specifically "special status" leaves the existing forms of federal government as they are but assigns special powers to Quebec which would not be enjoyed by the other nine provinces. Special status entitles Quebec to be consulted about monetary and tariff policy in order to protect the products of certain vital "Canadien" industries and prevent the exploitation of natural resources by harmful tax structures.

Just how naive do the proponents of separate status and independence think the rest of Canada to be? None of the above suggested has a prayer.

## One WASP's opinion of the French-Canadians

The trouble with our loud-mouthed French-Canadian friends is that they're too damn arrogant.

This big yap about separatism has turned them into a highly-suspicious bunch of slobbs intent on ruling the world. They decry their plight, but it was their own fault they are in such a bad situation.

For years, they let M. Duplessis and the parasitic clergy run their lives for them. And after Duplessis was dead and buried, they elected an enlightened government that tried to bring them out of the Stone Age.

It was then they began to realize they weren't doing so well. So they blame les anglais for their problems. Really, though, the recent separatist activities are not new. Duplessis was the first separatist. Where else in Canada could you graduate from engineering school without knowing what a slide rule was? Where else in Canada did you have to pay

tuition fees to go to school past Grade VII?

So what these separatists are doing is blaming the rest of Canada for the insufferable conditions imposed upon them by a government they elected year after year.

They are blaming us for the fact that French-Canadians are discriminated against because they have a poorer education. They didn't even have an organized school curriculum until after Duplessis kicked the bucket.

They want action. They want everything right now. It seems as though they expect some magic power, such as allowing Quebec to look after itself entirely, will suddenly cure all their ills.

It's like expecting to cure leukemia with an aspirin.

What they have to do is become a little more humble.

Deliberately giving an English

Canadian the wrong directions in Montreal because he didn't (or can't) speak French is ridiculous. If you can't speak French, the only way to make sure you are getting the correct directions is to ask a woman with a poodle on a leash. That way, you know she speaks English and you can explain your problems to somebody who is more likely to help you.

Developing humility does not involve blowing up mail boxes, preaching separatism or demanding to take over most of Ottawa's powers in the province.

What it does involve is requesting (not demanding) some expert advice on how to improve the situation.

One of the first steps to better the Quebecers' plight was to remove tuition fees from junior and senior high schools, to encourage more people to attend past Grade VI.

Education plays a big part in the

modernization of Quebec and it won't change the situation overnight—it takes time, time that the separatists didn't seem to notice too many years ago.

Another problem area is cultural understanding. Our friends from Quebec claim that we don't understand them. I'll bet they understand our culture even less.

At least we try.. Witness French Canada Week on campus here in 1965. We put on something like this and they still bitch.

But if we try, they should try—and they don't seem to be too willing to do it.

I don't think we should ignore the French-Canadians, nor do I think we should coddle them. What we need to do is to help them understand the mechanizations of the modern world. Then, maybe, they will help themselves—to the benefit of the whole country.