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Canada best for Quebec says Le Devoir editor

By AGNES KRUCHIO

Quebec would be much better off within a Canadian federal system than to have to face an entire anglophone continent on its own, newspaper editor Claude Ryan told an audience at Glendon College Thursday.

He was speaking at the inaugural session of a series of lectures Glendon is holding on federalism, entitled "Which way Quebec, which way Canada?"

Ryan, who has been the editor of Le Devoir for the past 15 years, said his newspaper had supported the Parti Quebecois before the election, because the editorial board saw a chance for a change for the better for Quebec.

"Le Devoir chose an option for life instead of decrepit federalism," he said.

Ryan said he wasn't happy on election night, because, "I'm not happy with the election of any government". This has alienated him from some of the more ardent supporters of the Parti Quebecois, Ryan said, among whom he counted a majority of the people in his newsroom.

CONFEDERATION

He said he feels it is preferable for Quebec to remain within confederation, because this will make for a more open society.

"A large political system allows for diversity of traditions and greater liberty", Ryan said. "There are far less checks in this kind of society than if we had a monolithic Quebec", he added.

The other reason for remaining within confederation is economic, Ryan said, because Canada is better endowed with natural resources than Quebec is. He feels Quebec now has immense potential to develop as a nation, which would not exist if Quebec were to separate.

"We have resources in some areas, but are deprived in others, and now we are assured of supplies in these from the rest of Canada," he said.

Ryan believes the French Fact has a better chance of prospering in Canada in spite of the fact they are often oppressed in Canada, Ryan said.

FEDERALISM

Ryan warned that the arguments that support the case for federalism must be convincingly stated again



and again to the people of Quebec, and these reasons must be thoroughly re-examined, by Quebecois and the rest of Canada.

The rest of Canada will have to have sound leadership to cope with the problem, "They will have to gain the support of labour, youth, intellectuals and farmers" if the battle of the referendum is to be won.

He said the PQ have only support of 10-20 per cent of the people for separation in Quebec.

"The federalists have only 10-20 per cent of the population's support, he added. The people in between are "moderate-minded Quebecers who are willing to listen and might be influenced."

There is a danger, however, in the Levesque government capitalizing on frictions between the provincial and federal governments.

"They will do whatever they can do to build a powerful case, they will take full advantage in using the instruments of government to try to persuade the people to separate in preparation for the referendum," he said.

Ryan said the PQ got elected

because they insisted before the election that separatism was not the main issue.

"Two days before the election, the paid for a large advertisement in Le Devoir, Ryan explained. "They mentioned better ambulances, better health services, more assistance to farmers, but not a word about separatism."

NEXT STEP

The next step for Levesque will be to grapple with an ailing economy, Ryan said. "For now this is not too dangerous because the Levesque government can insist they inherited the problems".

But the real challenge for Levesque will be to be able to create jobs in Quebec when practically all cities in the province of Quebec, except Quebec City, depend on industrial plants which are branches of American corporations, Ryan said. "For now this is not too dangerous because the Levesque government can insist they inherited the problems."

"If there are no changes in the federal system, the instability of the province will continue," he said.



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