

Excalibur poll: Quebecois entitled to create own future

A strongly federalist campus, whose students are skeptical supporters of Pierre Trudeau, and overwhelmingly favour letting the people of Quebec decide their own future, is the picture of York which has emerged from Excalibur's October 20 poll on the future of Canada.

One-hundred and seventy-six people responded and produced some surprising results.

The poll's respondents decisively rejected the idea of keeping Canada together by force by a vote of 128-to-23, with 25 not sure.

But though Prime Minister Trudeau got more support than Tory leader Joe Clark and NDP chief Ed Broadbent combined, (87 votes against 35 for Clark and 23 for Broadbent) only 45 agreed that the PM is handling the situation well.

One hundred of those polled disagreed with the statement that the Trudeau government is doing a good job in dealing with the Quebec situation.

Supporters of the Trudeau and Clark seem to have more faith in their choices than do Broadbent backers. Broadbent's strongest support (8 votes) came from those favouring Quebec independence, who turned in (16) agreements to statement nine's suggestion that "none of the three national party leaders is capable of handling the Quebec situation well."

Clark's strongest support (18 votes) was among those who did not agree that either an independent Quebec, a united and bilingual Canada, or special status for Quebec is a good solution to the Quebec problem.

Some comments from these respondents indicated that many of them are federalists who oppose bilingualism. Another group which opposed the poll's three choices for Canada's future, apparently consists of leftists who would have preferred a chance to support radical change in all Canada.

Responses to statements 10 and 11 show strong opposition to the Parti Quebecois' language program and a prevailing belief that the PQ is discriminating against the province's English minority.

However results from statement 12 show a very significant number (68) of the poll's respondents believe the English have oppressed and exploited the French in Canada, since the battle of the Plains of Abraham.



Aislin graphic

Most of the York community appears convinced that Quebec will be better off in Canada, and the response to statement 13 shows considerable uncertainty in regard to the possibility of totalitarianism in an independent Quebec.

While the respondents differ sharply on the question of Quebec independence and the nature of Canadian society, they share considerable confidence in the country's ability to remain independent of the United States. One hundred and five disagreed with proposition 15, which forecast part or all of Canada becoming part of the United States, in the event of Quebec's separation.

While a decided majority of respondents believe the Quebec issue to be more important than Canada's dependence on the US, one third of those polled, in statement 16, hold the contrary opinion.

When you consider this, along with the 73 respondents who agreed to proposition seven's assertion that:

"the Trudeau government is exploiting the Quebec situation, to cover up its inability to deal with unemployment and other social issues"; it is evident that many believe the Quebec situation should be placed on the back burner, while more pressing problems are dealt with.

Students of all shades of opinion voiced dissatisfaction with media coverage of the Quebec issue. Results indicate that federalists who favour bilingualism are the most satisfied with the job the press, radio and television are doing.

The large number of respondents who did not agree to any of the poll's first three statements, indicate a problem with the clarity and extent of the choices offered. We'll try to do better next time.

Doesn't a wide-open newspaper poll carry a considerable risk of ballot stuffing? It certainly does, but fortunately our staffers foiled the only significant attempts.

On Friday October 28 a few dozen obviously rigged, left-wing, pro-Independence and pro-Broadbent ballots arrived the paper's office.

On Monday a right-winger had a try at it, and sent us a batch of pro-Clark returns which were given away by their appearance and their absolutely unanimous advocacy of holding the country together by force.

So here, after close inspection, are the results of Excalibur's poll on the future of the country.

Despite its imperfections, the diversity and general moderation of the results seem to bear the scent of reality.

But have a look at the stats and judge for yourself.

Statistics compiled and analyzed by Paul Stuart

About a quarter of the poll's respondents took the time to jot down their thoughts on the issues. Here as many as we have space to print. The comments are divided into groups according to their authors' opinions on Quebec independence, Confederation, and the "special status" solution.

Group One

Most English Canadians have little or no idea of what is happening in Quebec today...The media has been largely to blame...The Toronto Star, Canada's largest newspaper, continues a campaign of hate and yellow journalism which may surpass the worst of the Hearst newspapers of the 1930's.

French Canadian History is almost not taught beyond the Plains of Abraham. Quebecois culture is almost unheard of in English Canada.

...The separation of the two "nations" is almost total now. For all their talk I've seen little real effort on the part of English Canadians to correct the situation. I think most Quebecois have just finally given up on us.

English Canadians should be free to develop their own national identity, without having to compromise their culture with French interests.

The liberation of the nation of the Quebecois is inspiring to all humanists and can become an example for the nascent Canadian nation to follow, vis-a-vis the States.

If they want to separate let them. Enough of the BS; they'll be back.

Joe Clark would be better to lead the country, but not necessarily adequate. English Canadians should stop worrying about Quebec and let them separate.

Trudeau is the one who has caused a rift between French and English.

The Parti Quebecois is the most feasible solution for Quebec now, not necessarily the "best answer".

The independence aspirations of the Quebecois people cannot be realized within the confines of capitalism. Only when the Quebecois people wrench political and economic control from the handful of wealthy American and Canadian anglos who own and control Quebec, only then can Quebec fully realize itself as a nation for the Quebecois.

That translates into worker's control of society which translates into socialism.

Group Two

Quebec, the French culture and people, are a valuable part of the Canadian experience. To lose Quebec would be to lose a part of the Canadian soul and bring us even closer to the total Americanization of our culture. Long live Quebec. Long live Canada. Together as one.

I think the media should leave Quebec alone and let the people vote for independence through a referendum. Most people will probably vote to stay in Confederation.



THE N.D.P. HAS ALL OF THE ANSWERS EVEN THOUGH WE HAVE A PROBLEM FORMULATING QUESTIONS

I suggest Premier Davis attend to Ontario's problems and stop trying to take advantage of a possible crisis to gain political favour.

The English Canadians insist on the firm belief that the world should be inhabited by only the British and American peoples and that no other racial or cultural group should deserve respect of tolerance.

It is beyond any doubt that Canada will not survive past the decade.

French should be compulsory in at least grades nine and ten. Media should act responsibly and refuse to give outright bigots a voice.

I believe most people would not mind a bilingual Canada. But it has to be bilingual all across the country — not just in Quebec.

More tolerance on the part of the English in Canada toward all minority ethnic groups, especially the French.

Tabernac Pierre.

Looking at the world's problems today, the French Canadian separatists don't know when they have it made. Their outlook is selfish and narrow.

A restructured constitution is essential to maintaining our national unity; awarding any "special status" to Quebec negates that effort.

Down with Levesque.

English Canada's attitude must change from bigotry to brotherhood. Efforts of English Canadian provincial governments and the federal government are misdirected, aside from the offer of reciprocal language school rights.



A separate Quebec will be absorbed by the US and will therefore have to give up the French language and culture...

I think the French are "over represented" in the upper levels of government. The French hold too many ministerial positions in government and as a result the Western provinces are not fairly represented.

A new Confederation should be hammered out, giving each province special status, which all deserve, in recognition of regional disparities.

This is a highly biased poll, totally inadequate.

Group Three

Rene Levesque is destructive to Canadian culture and identity as a whole. Foreign countries are losing faith in Canada because of the unity problem.

Group Four

Although I feel the Trudeau government is the one "best prepared" to deal with the Quebec problem, I have heavy criticism of the "non-action" policy it has pursued to this date.

We need a new constitution giving a better deal to all provinces, not just Quebec. An independent Quebec will fail in its efforts to save the French language.

Group Five

Trudeau should stay away from the hornet's nest...the Wasps are getting ready for the kill.

The only proper function of government is to protect individual liberties, not to do what it thinks is best for the majority of the people, as that means that minorities' rights are abrogated.

Two hundred years ago the French were defeated—but allowed to keep their language, religion, and culture. Surely this was more than fair.

Economic independence for Quebec as a nation on its own is unfair. The development of resources and industries in the province are due to input from outside the province i.e. money from federal funds.

Quebec doesn't have the right to walk out with that isn't truly theirs.

We should be more concerned with the economy; less foolish spending by governments.

The French don't seem to realize that Canada has done a lot for them, economically, and in relation to bilingualism. They seem to be pushing their luck too far. I think they're asking too much from a country beset with problems already.

Maybe Quebec will become part of the USA.

I am fed up with the whole Quebec problem. They are being unreasonable and demanding now. I am ready to say the hell with Quebec—let them separate.

Trudeau: self-evident problem. Clark: Joe(Who?); Liberal implant. Broadbent: lack of mentality evident by membership in NDP.

CANADA

The answers we received: lots of stats

Respondents to our "What Lies ahead for Canada poll," were divided into five groups.

Group one; 29 respondents, agreed that "The Parti Quebecois' goal of an independent French state in Quebec, united economically with Canada, is the best answer to the question of Quebec independence."

Group two; 74 respondents, agreed that "the best hope for all Canadians is a united, bilingual Confederation, including Quebec."

Group three; seven respondents, agreed that "a restructured Canadian constitution, which would maintain political unity and award special status to Quebec, is the best solution for all Canadians."

Group four; 17 respondents, agreed with both statements two and three, thereby opting for special Quebec status, in a strong, bilingual confederation.

Group five; 52 respondents, did not agree with any of the poll's first three assertions. They appear, in some cases, to consist of individuals who favoured radical social change, while others expressed agreement to a strong, unilingual Confederation.

		Agree	Disagree	Not Sure		Agree	Disagree	Not Sure		Agree	Disagree	Not Sure				
<p>FOUR: "If the Quebec people vote for independence in a free and democratic referendum, they should not be prevented from carrying out their decision."</p>	<p>Group one Group two Group three Group four Group five</p>	26 41 28 5	— 28 4 8	— 5 1 8	<p>TEN: "The Quebec government's language program, designed to make French the province's working language, is just and workable."</p>	<p>Group one Group two Group three Group four Group five</p>	9 11 55 8	12 2 4 1	5 8 1 6	<p>FOURTEEN: "Quebec will be better off as an independent country, than as a province within Canada."</p>	<p>Group one Group two Group three Group four Group five</p>	15 — 20 4 9	2 70 4 2 1	9 4 2 1 7		
<p>FIVE: "Force should be used to keep Quebec in Confederation."</p>	<p>Group one Group two Group three Group four Group five</p>	— 9 56 9	26 4 2 2	— 2 1 8 10	<p>ELEVEN: "The Parti Quebecois is discriminating against the English-speaking minority in Quebec."</p>	<p>Group one Group two Group three Group four Group five</p>	12 57 6 11	7 4 1 2	7 11 2 3	<p>FIFTEEN: "If Quebec separates, part or all of the rest of Canada will become part of the United States."</p>	<p>Group one Group two Group three Group four Group five</p>	3 18 40 4	19 16 4 2	4 16 2 7 12		
<p>SIX: "The Liberal government of Pierre Trudeau is handling the Quebec situation well."</p>	<p>Group one Group two Group three Group four Group five</p>	3 27 33 14	21 4 2 1	2 1 7 10	<p>TWELVE: "Since the battle of the Plains of Abraham, the French have been oppressed and exploited by the English in Canada."</p>	<p>Group one Group two Group three Group four Group five</p>	20 22 37 15	5 2 3 1	1 15 27	<p>SIXTEEN: "English Canada should stop worrying about Quebec independence and concern itself with its own lack of independence from the US economy and culture."</p>	<p>Group one Group two Group three Group four Group five</p>	14 17 47 3	12 4 7 1	— 10 — — 11		
<p>SEVEN: "The Trudeau government is exploiting the Quebec situation to cover up its inability to deal with unemployment and other social issues."</p>	<p>Group one Group two Group three Group four Group five</p>	20 19 42 13	4 3 3 1	2 13 5 11	<p>THIRTEEN: "If Quebec separates it will degenerate into a totalitarian state."</p>	<p>Group one Group two Group three Group four Group five</p>	5 14 24 36	12 4 5 8	9 36 21 21	<p>SEVENTEEN: "The media is providing unfair, inadequate and biased coverage of the Quebec situation."</p>	<p>Group one Group two Group three Group four Group five</p>	19 4 21 28 25	4 1 3 1	3 10 6 1 20		
	Totals	100	54	22		30	121	25		23	130	23		61	104	11
	Totals	70	74	32		41	56	79		75	50	51		65	68	43

Wake me up when the country's over.

PROPOSITION EIGHT: "Of the leaders of the three national parties, the man best qualified to lead Canada at this crucial time is:

	Pierre Trudeau	Joe Clark	Ed Broadbent
Group One	6	6	8
Group Two	48	9	4
Group Three	4	1	0
Group Four	11	1	3
Group Five	18	18	8
Totals	87	35	23

Some thirty-one respondents chose not to dignify this assertion with a response.

NINE: "None of the three national party leaders is capable of handling the Quebec situation well."

	Agree	Disagree	Not sure & no reply
Group One	16	2	8
Group Two	20	40	14
Group Three	3	3	1
Group Four	5	8	4
Group Five	21	15	16
Totals	65	68	43

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