

Beginning Of The End For French Canada

(EDITORS NOTE: Robert Issenman graduated from Harvard University, in the department of government. He is presently at the Université de Montréal, Faculty of Law. He wrote his thesis on the Ligue pour l'Intégration Scolaire.

Peter Starr is presently at the Université de Montréal in the department of Sociology. He is editor of the well-known Montreal underground newspaper, *Uncensored Version*, and was formerly co-chairman of the Provincial Association of Secondary Students.

They are covering the opposition to Bill 63 for Canadian University Press and the McGill Daily).

Turmoil rocked the entire province of Québec this past week, over the issue of "language of education".

Strikes have paralysed most of the large French universities in the province. Junior colleges throughout Québec have been hit by massive class boycotts while numerous high schools are shut down entirely.

10,000 students staged a spectacular non-violent march on the Montréal headquarters of the ruling Union Nationale party on Tuesday (October 28). This followed a frenzied teach-in which jammed the entire Université de Montréal sports arena. Other demonstrations, against targets such as the Montréal City Hall occurred throughout the week.

Momentum was building up rapidly for a massive confrontation before the Parliament Building in Québec on Friday. By keeping the earlier demonstrations peaceful, leaders hoped to amass general support for the Friday action to the tune of 500,000 demonstrators.

The "week of protest" was sparked by the provincial government's attempt to introduce a bill - Bill 63 - enabling both English Canadians and "New Canadians" to choose freely between English - and French-language education for their children.

The "language of education" issue has been building up over the last two years in Québec, initially ignited by an educational crisis in the Montréal suburb of St. Léonard.

The freedom of Italian residents to choose English language schooling lay at the base of that conflict. In May 1968, a newly-elected school commission decided to abolish all English language public schools in the community over a period of six years. Children of "English origin" were to be bussed out of St. Léonard for their education.

The English and Italian residents of the community reacted violently to this sudden liquidation of their "fundamental rights." They refused to submit to the imposition of French language schools and established their own classes in local homes.

Spearheading the drive to abolish English language schooling was Raymond Lemieux. His Ligue pour l'Intégration Scolaire "attempted to carry the "unilingualist" position to other communities in the provinces.

While no other St. Léonard situation has been provoked, the issue of French unilingualism has captured the imagination of French Canadian nationalists, journalists and students throughout Québec.

The unilingualists are particularly concerned that almost all immigrants to Québec are assimilated immediately into the English language milieu. The increased flow of postwar immigration, combined with a drastically lower French birthrate, is predicted to make the French a minority in Montréal within 10 years.

The unilingualists further maintain that the French are an overwhelming majority in Québec and should not finance an English public school system. This rationale has great emotional force because the Québec economy is run in the English language. The unilingualists feel English schools abet this situation and threaten to relegate the French language to the kitchens and the churches.

Ultimately they fear for the survival of the French language and culture, and for the survival of the French Canadian nation itself.

The issue has fantastic emotional power and has erupted into sprees of violence on more than one occasion. English and French students clashed during Opération McGill - last March's rally of unilingualists at English-speaking McGill University.

The nationalists chose McGill as a symbol of English domination of Québec society. They vehemently object to Québec government subsidies of the English universities - McGill, Sir George Williams, Bishop's, Loyola - while the French universities - Université de Montréal, Sherbrooke, Laval, Université de Québec - are sorely in need of funds to improve their long-neglected facilities.

Unilingualists turned out in force again in September 1969 in another French-Italian confrontation at St. Léonard. Fights broke out between the French and Italians and stores in the community were ransacked.

The police, who were caught by surprise, panicked and read the Riot Act. In an attempt to dampen the unilingualist fervor, the government charged unilingualist leaders with sedition.

Raymond Lemieux, who will be leading Friday's march, is only free on bail as a result of charges stemming from the riot.

The atmosphere of unrest in Montréal was only intensified by the notorious riot on the night of October 7, when Canadian army troops were called in to restore order to the city.

However, organization, not violence, has been the most important characteristic emerging in the fall of this year. Since September, Raymond Lemieux has been directing a highly successful drive to organize the students in universities, high schools and junior colleges.

Last year the mobilization of Québec students was centered around internal school politics. But this year the students are reacting to the "national" question.

According to Roméo Bouchard, an influential student editor, "the spontaneous confrontation that emerges from these students is moving enough to change Québec society."

Indeed, the remarkable control demonstrated by 10,000 impassioned students on the Tuesday night confrontation at the Union Nationale's Renaissance Club appears to confirm their fervent dedication to the unilingualist cause.

The attempt by the government to grant "freedom of choice in education" under Bill 63 has dramatically catalysed the unilingualist movement. It appears to have created a common front between workers and students.

Overnight, the radical dream of students and workers united in a struggle against a common enemy has come closer to realization in Québec than anywhere else in North America.

The Front de Québec Français, formed over the last weekend, brought together the leaders of unions, parent-teacher organizations, nationalist societies and student groups.

The union groups alone represent at least 500,000 workers under such giants as the Confederation of National Trade Unions, the Consielle Syndicale Nationale, and the Corporation des Enseignants de Québec. Support from the students is also extremely strong.

The Front de Québec Français may well be able to produce the half-million demonstrators Raymond Lemieux has predicted for Friday's confrontation.

GRADUATE YEARBOOK PHOTOGRAPHS

must be

booked immediately to insure they will meet photographer's deadline. Call today. Don't keep putting it off.

HINES PHOTOGRAPHIC
1485 Brenton St.,
429-9432

CAREERS IN METEOROLOGY

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT
METEOROLOGICAL BRANCH

BACHELOR LEVEL GRADUATES
(MAJORS AND HONOURS)
PHYSICS AND MATHEMATICS
PHYSICS

ENGINEERING PHYSICS
GENERAL SCIENCE GRADUATES
WITH
PHYSICS AND MATHEMATICS

INTERVIEWS ON CAMPUS
DATE NOVEMBER 12, 1969

DETAILS AND ADDITIONAL
INFORMATION AVAILABLE
AT YOUR PLACEMENT OFFICE



Public
Service
of
Canada

NEWS FROM HOME

Overseas students, faculty, staff and anyone interested in world events will find that the lobby of the Macdonald Library is well worth a daily visit. Among the newspapers arriving there by sea mail, and hence incurring a six week delay, are *Die Zeit* (Hamburg), *Trinidad Guardian* (Trinidad), *Ghanaian Times* (Accra, daily), *Nationalist* (Dar-es-Salaam, daily), *Rand Daily Mail* (Johannesburg, daily), and the *Sunday Gleaner* (Kingston, weekly). Less exotic but equally popular are the *Wall Street Journal* and the *Financial Post*.

For up-to-date news, certain papers are air mailed: the major Canadian dailies, the *Times of London*, the *New York Times*, *Le Monde* (weekly), the *Manchester Guardian* (weekly), the *German Tribune*, and the *Overseas Hindustan Times*.

Only the most recent issues of these papers are kept in the newspaper stand in the lobby. Older issues are discarded. But back numbers of many weekly newsmagazines may be found in the Periodicals Reading Room (to the right of the newspaper stand). For example, copies of the *Kenya Weekly News* (Nairobi), *West Africa* (Lagos), *Press Digest* (South Africa) and *Reporter* (Nairobi) are shelved there. Moreover, backfiles of some papers, the *Globe and Mail* (from 1844), the *Financial Post* (from Jan. 1959), the *London Times* (from 1785) and the *New York Times*, (from 1851) are kept on microfilm. Ask the librarian at the Information Desk on the second floor about the newspapers on microfilm and how to use the indexes to them.