

York's satellite college...

Bilingualism in the Don Valley:

By DAVE FULLER

Glendon College's faculty council meeting played to a standing-room-only crowd last Thursday as the much-debated issue of bilingualism and biculturalism came to the fore once again.

Recent weeks have seen a vociferous renewal of this most fiery concern of French residents at York's Lawrence and Bayview

campus. A student committee on bi and bi (the bilingualism and biculturalism action committee) has been formed by French and English members of the Glendon community, and a set of demands has been presented to Glendon principal, David McQueen.

Currently 20 of 236 courses offered at Glendon are offered in French. (This does not include

departmental language courses.) "Not enough!" claim Quebec students.

The disillusionment felt by English students is magnified for the Québécois who, unlike the English, are forced to take many of their major courses in their second language.

McQueen is currently involved in research to improve the

situation for francophone and anglophone students. An active faculty council committee on bi and bi has also been working on a series of recommendations for upgrading bilingualism at the college.

Bilingualism has always been an issue at Glendon. The idyllic valley retreat has a long standing controversy simmering beneath its calm surface. Ever since the first days of Escott Reid, students and professors have pondered the future of the two "bi's", bilingualism and biculturalism. And recent years have proved no exception.

The usually vocal proponents of bilingualism and biculturalism have renewed their criticism of the state of bi and bi at York's satellite campus and have formed a committee to present their case to the principal, David McQueen, and to the faculty council where much of the policy for the future of the college is formed.

FULL OF CRISES

Glendon's past has been full of crises. The numerous appeals to the provincial government for special aid, critical comments from Quebec regarding the value of "the experiment" and even rumours of relocation to Downsview have caused many to wonder if bilingualism can flourish in the Don Valley.

Articles in such prominent French publications as Perspectives (the weekend magazine of La Presse) have argued that the Glendon concept does nothing for Canadian unity and that those with a view to achieve this, would be better off looking to Quebec.

Another journalist has expressed the opinion that Quebec is too concerned with its own affairs to look beyond its borders and that all a Québécois can learn about biculturalism in Toronto is federalism. These are discouraging words for a college desperately trying to justify its existence to both Ottawa and Queen's Park.

UNILINGUAL STREAM

In 1972, however, the unilingual stream was adopted as a means of increasing enrolment and thereby ensuring a reasonably secure financial base on which to build. Today, Glendon can stand on the same shaky ground as every other university community in Ontario.

This, however, only serves to shift the emphasis of the debate to the question of how bilingualism and biculturalism are to be achieved — a question which a great many students are only too eager to answer.

FRANCOPHONE POPULATION

With the removal of certain economic problems, the francophone population has shown an increase in both its number and its participation in college affairs, culminating in the formation of the bilingualism and biculturalism action committee.

The BBAC was formed as a separate body from the faculty council's committee on bilingualism because of a growing dissatisfaction with the rate at which equality between the languages was being achieved and dissatisfaction with certain college brochures which were felt to be misleading prospective students.

Québécois residents at Glendon are quick to point out to bilingual hopefuls that the number of courses taught in French falls far short of equality. The result is that many are forced to take courses in their second language while

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A student ponders Glendon's future.

Dave Fuller photo

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