

Chile's right fights war of propaganda

SANTIAGO DE CHILE (CUPI) — While no Chilean party, left or right, has officially released an election program for the March parliamentary balloting, events have placed the contest in the economic field.

Since the October lockout by owners across the country, businessmen have silently been piling up vast quantities of vital merchandise. In December, the country began to feel the effects of the economic sabotage, which the right-wing media had announced many months earlier, depicting them as the consequence of the "Marxist management".

Items such as cooking oil, canned goods, sugar, and powdered milk became scarce, with the dwellers in the large makeshift settlements surrounding Santiago the hardest hit sector. These communities have few stores.

The black market thrived, with prices at least four times higher than the official ceilings. Then the opposition dailies began to carry scarce pictures of people waiting in line to shop, along with furious protests from "housewives".

"El Mercurio", the principal rightist paper which is closely linked with American corporate interests (its New York — Dwelling publisher is on the board of Pepsi Cola) predicted in a January 9 editorial: "If the scarcity and the black market continue, a large scale election failure of the Marxist Parties is inevitable."

During the second week in January, Chile's economy minister Fernando Flores announced measures to hit hard at the rightist campaign.

The measures Flores announced contributed to a better distribution of food products in the sectors hardest hit by hoarding, through control of supplies by the grassroots organizations. The neighboring bodies must guarantee that the products sent to the merchants are sold openly and at ceiling prices.

Every day, inspectors investigate denunciations made by the neighborhood bodies of local stores, and tons of food are discovered and placed on sale at once.

However, "El Mercurio", temporarily leaving the food front, Jan. 18 carried a front page photo of a line of people buying sheets, in what appears to be a switch to the consumer soft goods line. It was also reported that the local residents of the well-to-do section of Las Condes in Santiago are organizing their own "supply boards".

Meanwhile, 25 per cent of the Chuquicamata copper workers reportedly walked off the job for a day over scarcities. The Christian Democrats control part of the union there. Chile's right, while it still holds important resources and fully controls commerce, is now preparing a new stage in its propaganda war.



Due to recent provincial cutbacks in funds to universities, all Humanities classes are to be held in the west wing of the Founder's College woodlot. The vacated rooms in the Ross Building will be leased to Holiday Inns, as double suites.

Levesque peddles the Quiet Revolution while Quebec labour takes to the streets

By JIM SUNSTRUM

Rene Levesque is carrying his message into English Canada once again. After the bitter 1970 provincial election campaign the Parti Quebecois leader gave up speaking outside Quebec. But last Thursday night he was back hammering away on old familiar themes for a crowd of 700 in Vanier College dining hall in the second of the three lecture series, Canadian Perspectives.

It was ironic that the college hosting Levesque took its name from the late governor-general Georges Vanier. Levesque is a radically different type of French Canadian and has a good deal of contempt for the political ideas of Vanier and his generation.

English Canadians are probably more curious about Levesque than any other political leader in the country. They take a strange delight in hearing him discuss the end of Confederation, surprised at their own boldness in turning up in so large numbers to listen to a political idea most of them strongly reject, and inevitably impressed by Levesque's sincerity, forcefulness as a speaker, and bitter-sweet sense of humor.

Levesque does not come to Toronto to make personal gestures of good will. Rather, his visits here are part of a complete Parti Quebecois strategy to prepare in every possible way for the independence of Quebec. Policies are constantly being drawn up or revised as the PQ strives for excellence in all areas of government. Senior party members work hard to develop technical competence and take pride in the important PQ contribution to debate in the Quebec national assembly. Close ties with foreign governments and international organisations are developed. And one element in this general policy of preparation is an effort to explain to English Canada the reasons Quebec is moving toward independence and to reassure the population that Quebec's leaving Canada will not mean disaster — economic or otherwise.

OLD ARGUMENTS

Levesque's two year absence was apparent through most of his speech. English Canada has changed much since the excitement of 1970, but the PQ leader either isn't aware of these changes or ignored them last Thursday. To-day English-Canadians generally know more about Quebec than ever before, partly because of better communications, and partly because Quebec has become more like English Canada. Many of Levesque's arguments were better suited to a 1968 audience. The Trudeau myth doesn't have to be exposed in Toronto any longer by Quebecois leaders. We destroyed it ourselves in the last federal election. English-Canadians want to hear about the Quebec of general strikes, not the Quebec of the Quiet Revolution. And no one appreciated Levesque's out-dated assessment of English-Canadian culture as bastardized American. Canada's cultural renaissance is not as intense as Quebec's, but Levesque would do well to note that it is going on.

In his Thursday night speech Levesque continued his efforts to demystify Canada for the Canadians. The world is changing all about us, he argued. Political institutions constantly evolve and modify to meet new situations, such as a sudden rise in national consciousness. Canadian federalism is not young, but old, and now obsolete. Welcome change, he urged.

CANADIAN FATHERS LIKE ROBBER-BARONS

Levesque instinctively knows that the best way to demystify Canada is through re-examining its history. He began by pointing out that Canadians are too concerned with individual personalities in their own history. The Trudeaus, Bourassas, and Levesques are "superficial froth." More important are the "icebergs" beneath the surface of history. These are nations, and the directions they move in are far more important than individual leaders.

Urging his audience to look beneath the surface, Levesque quickly surveyed Canadian history. Confederation attempted to bring together the remnants of the British colonies in North America, and represented an opportunity for the Canadian version of the American robber-barons, the Fathers of Confederation, to make money on nation-building projects. Quebec was brought in as a land-bridge between Ontario and the Maritimes. Its citizens had something to gain as poor people and nothing to lose as colonials. Levesque never hesitates to level criticism at his own people and admitted that the long period of Quebec's laying dormant, "priest-ridden", and exploited, was caused largely by passivity in the population.

However things began to change with the Second World War. The deep churning within Quebec society became apparent by the late 50's and brought about the Quiet Revolution. Quebec gained a new confidence and began efforts to catch-up with the modern world. Most important, in areas where Quebec was on its own, not constrained by federalism, it proved to be the most vital and productive part of Canada.

QUEBEC HAS RICHEST CULTURE

Levesque examined closely for his York audience three of these areas. First, Quebec developed the richest and most compelling culture in North America. Poets are prophets, he said, and was convinced that the sense of liberation in contemporary Quebec music would soon find political expression. Second, Quebec is far ahead of the rest of North America in its "social conception of society." But because of the frustration of the federal system, this social conception cannot be brought into being.

Levesque singled out the popular Liberal Social Affairs Minister, Claude Castonguay, as a symbol of this frustration. "He's the only minister in the present hack government that we have in Quebec that I fully respect, and he's going nuts!" The final area of new competence was economic. Here he stressed the development of the multi-billion dollar fund Quebec controls through its pension supplement scheme.

The logical completion of this Quiet Revolution is independence, Levesque said, and this tendency is normal in today's world. He repeated the now familiar scenario of Quebec's departure: independence through electoral victory (violence is "undergraduate romanticism"); the short-lived trauma, but civilized reaction of English-Canada; and the establishment of a mutually advantageous economic partnership between Canada and Quebec. This trip into English Canada, like all his others, was to try to achieve a minimum level of understanding for his party's views outside of the province of Quebec — an understanding he thinks will be essential in a period of rapid change.



Rene Levesque spoke at York last Thursday

LEVESQUE IS NO SOCIALIST

Many of the questions put to Levesque concerned, as they inevitably do wherever he speaks, the economics of independence. Levesque is not a member of the growing socialist forces in Quebec. He is a product of the state-capitalist experiments of the Lesage government. He supports his party's platform of cautious nationalisation of key sectors of the economy and is a moderate economic nationalist highly critical of Trudeau's first "takeover" bill and willing to legislate Quebecois directors onto the boards of all foreign-owned companies in an independent Quebec.

Levesque thinks mainstream NDP thinking is the most advanced in Canada and uses it as his model in many cases. However, he scorns the political role of the NDP in Canada, charging it with keeping the "hack, childish" Trudeau government in power and using its balance of power position to demand concessions on old-age pensions that while benefiting other provinces, cannot fit into Quebec's plan for an integrated social insurance system.

PQ DEBATES TACTICS

However, the important debate in the PQ these days is not over how socialist the party should be or what type of socialism it should adopt. Most of those who feel the PQ is a petit-bourgeois party are out. The debate centres on what type of political victory the PQ should try for. Should the party become a carefully organised political machine appealing to all groups in Quebec society — right in the tradition of all 'national' parties in the history of Quebec — and be primarily concerned with winning an election? Or should the party remain wide-open, extremely democratic, in close touch with its members, and closely involved with specific interest groups in the province, such as labour unions and language rights committees?

Levesque stands squarely in the 'electoralist' ranks. Recently, however, the party has come under criticism from some of its brightest young men who want the party to move in a 'participationist' direction. Last Thursday Levesque was confident that his party was united on fundamental issues, and that the recent criticisms which have received such wide publicity would not cause heated debate at the party's bi-annual convention at the end of February.

Perhaps Levesque's trips into English Canada will have some sort of cumulative impact. He told a press conference after his York speech that the PQ now has about one hundred members outside of Quebec.

On Saturday, February 17, the PQ's chief economic advisor, Jacques Parizeau, will be speaking in Osgoode Hall at a conference of business administrators, continuing the efforts to prepare English Canada for what the Parti Quebecois regards as inevitable.