

Revolution and Reaction

Quebec City, August 31 - September 4

of certain federal proposals.

Should this opting out power be allowed to Quebec alone? Disagreement was immediate and unresolved.

ASSOCIATE STATE

Then came the concept of an associate state—two separate states, English-Canadian and French-Canadian to act individually in local affairs; a higher federal power to hyphenate the two in common national affairs; both states to hold a veto power.

But this is unacceptable to the French-Canadian separatist who considers it inadequate, and to the English-Canadian and the majority of the Quebecois who consider the principle of the double majority to be unworkable.

Pet theories sneaked into the discussions periodically—ethnic minorities were talked about from every possible angle, the idea of a Republic of Canada was exalted and abused, The Flag was mentioned once or twice, quite timidly.

Much of the discussion was provoked by the speakers' morning presentations. Questions to the speakers were intense and varied; the answers were sometimes humorous, always interesting. (The translators always ignored the jokes and the ad-libs, a nasty little habit.)

SPEAKERS' IDEAS

Obviously, seminar presentations produced many points of view, which ranged from extreme separatist sentiments to British dogmatic reaction. To present them all in short form is impossible, so we intend to deal with the lectures of only two speakers.

Professor D. V. Smiley of the UBC department of political science gave a paper entitled "Whither Confederation?"

He said there are two kinds of demands being made by French-Canadians: one which, if satisfied, would enhance Quebec's provincial powers to give it a new status within a new kind of constitutional structure; and a second, which would give formal recognition to cultural dualism in federal government.

Prof. Smiley said progress can be made on three fronts.

"First, the position of French-Canadian minorities outside Quebec must be enhanced to make it more feasible for them to resist assimilation into the Anglo-Saxon majorities.

"Second, we must work to the end that French-Canadians play a larger part in the institutions of our government.

And third, he said "The most crucial area for reform is the field of federal-provincial relations . . . the contracting-out device provides possibilities through which Quebec's desire for autonomy can be reconciled with the wish of some or all of the other provinces to work more closely with Ottawa."

AVOID VETO

Prof. Smiley presented a list of the kinds of changes he warns Canadians to avoid.

"It would be unacceptable to have a set of federal institutions so bifurcated in their legislative, executive and judicial aspects that every decision was subject to a veto from French-Canada," he told the delegates.

He warned against the possibility of Ottawa being deprived of revenue to the point where it could not pursue policies of inter-provincial equalization.

And he said labor and free capital must be allowed to move freely within Canadian boundaries.

He termed the doctrine of a multi-cultural Canada a "mischievous irrelevance" and said Western Canadians find it difficult to appreciate the idea of a nation-within-a-nation.

"There is a tendency here to regard French-Canadians as simply another dispersed ethnic group similar to the Ukrainians," he said.

"A minority so heavily concentrated in one area with so strong and growing a deep sense of nationhood is a force not to be underestimated."

He predicted separation is "very much of a possibility within the next decade" and blamed it not on separatists, but on English-speaking Canadians who misunderstand the nature and intentions of the Quebecois.

Another speaker worthy of mention was Pierre LaPorte,



COMMUNION OF SPIRITS

... in Old Quebec

Quebec municipal affairs minister, who commented on English-Canadian reactions to the Quiet Revolution of Quebec.

APATHY PRESENT

He said English-Canadians are apathetic to the crisis, which they do not consider a critical one.

He analogized the situation to one where the English-Canadian, having arrived at the station, find that the French-Canadian train has already left.

And he said the press has an obligation yet unfulfilled to aid communication and understanding between the two peoples.

The press is only too willing to publish splash headlines as the FLQ has enabled it to do, but is hesitant to present the real story of the Quiet Revolution in Quebec, he said.

He said newspapers are willing to publicize the Quebecois as opposed to Canada and its union when most do not wish to harm the union at all.

Mr. LaPorte discussed confederation and the possibility of a new constitution.

The constitution as it now stands is unacceptable to Mr. LaPorte.

He said what is necessary is a new confederation in the etymological sense of the word.

Mr. LaPorte went on to say it is absurd to believe the diverse provinces can all put faith in one narrow law so flexible that it relies solely on the whims of the Senate and Parliament.

"The role of a governing body is to apply the constitution not to fill in for its deficiencies, its remissions."

NEW CONSTITUTION

He told the delegates the French-Canadian is asking the English for a new constitution, a new confederation, one which is not rigid and dogmatic, but one which defines areas of control and one which guarantees French-Canadian rights.

"The English are content to sit back and treat the problem as a passing one," he said.

The interchange of ideas at the seminar made one thing clear. Living in Quebec in the next five or ten years is going to be an exciting experience, and living with Quebec will be difficult and demanding. Our attitudes during the next few years will be vital to Canada's future.

Illustrated by Bill Salter

Layout by Bill Winship



COMMUNICATION PROBLEM

... for how long?

Spirited Atmosphere

RAPORTEURS BILINGUAL

There were two co-directors, one from Quebec and the other from Ontario; eight rapporteurs, four of whom spoke French; English speeches followed by a French commentary, and French speeches followed by English.

Translators were hard at work each session. But we couldn't figure out whether it was more confusing following the sometimes—awkward translation or the partly-understood original.

We revelled in the royal treatment we were given. At city hall cocktail party, the same night when three of Quebec City's best restaurants welcomed us with open arms and filets mignon at the

reception and banquet at the stately old Chateau, where we wondered elegantly through the ball room sneering at the tourists.

HIGH SPIRITS

We took full advantage of the refreshingly liberal attitude held toward spirits by the Quebec people. The friendly neighborhood lounges closed at 2 a.m. and business was plentiful before the doors shut.

By the end of the week some of us knew each other quite well.

We had made some friends and gained the inevitable enemies.

We thought we knew Quebec slightly better, but now that we're back, we're not so sure.

And most of us liked what we were getting to know.