

Two anglos think about a Yes vote

Referendum: The rallying call for Québec sovereigntists; yet, a painful reminder of a dark past for federalist forces in and outside Québec. October 30, 1995: Quebecers will choose independence (the path to the promised land) or the status quo (their continued participation in a defunct federal system).

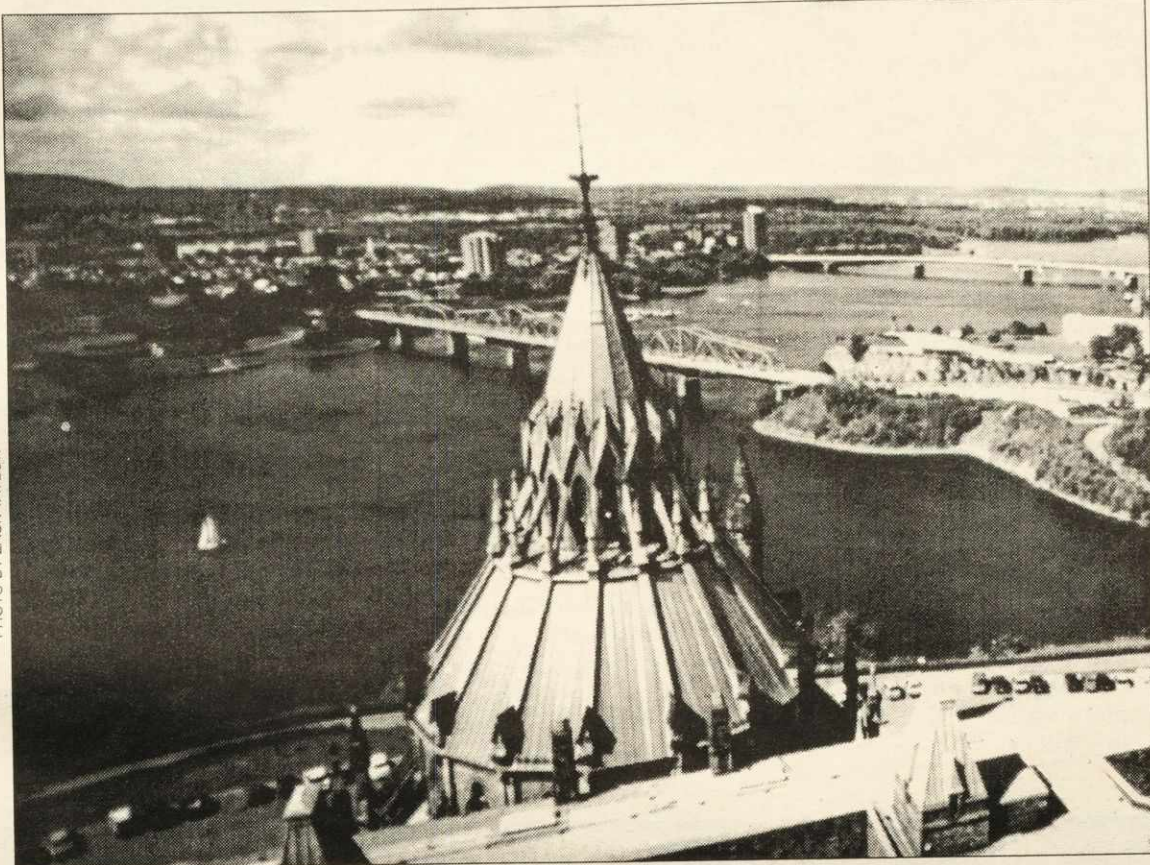
Canadians (English-Canadians) are fearful of Québec separation because it will break up the country; a country so divided by regions, one must wonder if a YES vote to sovereignty will only bring the official recognition of separation to a nation who broke up many years ago. Canadians fear a YES vote will be a rejection of English-Canada, perhaps Québec's ultimate revenge after its rejection with the patriation of the Constitution in 1982, and subsequently the failure of the Meech Lake Accord.

The referendum approaches, and English-Canada attempts to instill a sense of fear in Quebecers, constantly regurgitating the economic benefits of Confederation for Québec. Overlooked is the fact that Quebecers are not just concerned with economics, but the survival of their language, culture, and collective identity.

Many Canadians don't

want Québec to separate for the benefit of the abstract entity called "Canada," but are unwilling, or scared to prove that point. That would require an unconditional recognition of Québec as a distinct society and an overhaul of the division of powers; the acceptance that Québec is not a province *comme les autres*. Canadians are afraid — afraid of a Canada without Québec (and Canada depends on Québec for so much of its collective Canadian identity) and afraid of a Québec constitutionally recognized as a distinct society. In effect, Canadians are afraid of change.

Canadians have seen how suc-



A view of Hull, Québec from the Parliament buildings, across the Ottawa River.

cessive attempts at rebuilding the nation have failed (the Fulton-Favreau Formula in the 1960s, the Victoria Charter in the early

1970s, and most recently, the Charlottetown Accord). *Canada-Anglais*, a rather simple

yet divisive expression, can never recognize Québec as a distinct society because that would, in essence, repudiate firmly held principles of provincial equality and endorse asymmetrical federalism.

Region against region, province against province, French-Canada against English-Canada — that is Canada's history. The proof lies in the House of Commons where the Reform Party (which did not run candidates in Québec during the last federal election) and the Bloc québécois (which ran candidates in Québec only) are the two major opposition parties, the latter the official opposition.

For the past 128 years there has been a misunderstanding between Québec and the rest of Canada, and little effort to seek true understanding. Canadians, and Quebecers, need to re-examine their respective and collective pasts, to look at the present and think about the future, not only for today's generation but also for tomorrow's.

Canadians must be prepared to walk without Québec should sovereignty triumph, and to address the concerns of Québec should federalism, in the Canadian sense of the word, 'prevail'. The Canadian federal system is not etched in stone — change is necessary and inevitable.

Canada, as we know it, has

had its day — it has reached the point of no return. All possibilities of mutual accommodation have been exhausted and the road to Québec independence is well paved. There is only one option left for Québec. That option is not a special status within the Canadian federation and it is not to allow for the continuation of the status quo. Independence is the only choice.

Whatever the outcome of Referendum '95, Canadians must stand together as one, with one voice, taking in hand the words of K. W. Robinson: "[a] federation does not create unity out of diversity; rather, it enables the two to coexist."

MARCUS LOPES

When I receive my mail-in ballot in the mail from the Québec government next week, I will be faced with a difficult decision.

No, or Yes?

For a (former) anglo-Montréalais, the question is definitely framed in that order. I'm going to go with the latter option, and here are my reasons why.

I am voting Yes not because the beating of my heart echoes the beating of a tribal drum. Despite the publicity in the English press, only a small radical minority thinks along these lines.

I am not voting Yes because I feel humiliated or that deep sociological grievances must be redressed. Most of them have.

I am not voting Yes to destroy a country, but to strengthen one.

That country is not Québec, but Canada.

Call me a cynic, a strategic voter, call me whatever you want. But I believe that a Yes is the only way to break the logjam that has confounded day-to-day and constitutional politics in this country since its inception a century and a quarter ago.

Illogical, you say? Maybe — it's a big risk. But I remember the No in 1980. I remember Trudeau standing before the crowd two weeks before the vote, throwing aside his prepared script, and saying that a No would bring positive change acceptable to all Quebecers. They trusted him, and in 1982 the Constitution Act became law without the consent of Québec. Any similar promise from Chrétien, Johnson, or Robillard today will be an empty one.

I am not a *souverainiste convaincu*. I am no Péquiste by any means. I just want to live in a country that is governed based on the consent of its citizens.

ZACK TAYLOR

OPINION

The good and bad of Yes & No

It's election time again. Can you believe it? It just seems like only a few months ago we went through two elections in the course of a few days. Am I dreaming? Or, is this some really weird acid flashback?

No, I'm right; I just checked my day timer, and yes, we did just finish two elections here at Dalhousie, just before we finished our term. Wow! And thanks to that fiasco, we're having another.

For those of you who are new to Dal, let me give you the gist of what happened. Last year, we had elections, but they were done improperly, so, the Dalhousie Student Union (DSU) Judicial Board threw out the results. Then we had a second set of elections, which were done almost correctly, but by that time, student apathy had set in and no-one turned out to vote, so quorum wasn't met.

So, here we go again.

Last time, there were a few positions that weren't filled, so you'll be voting to fill those. You'll also be voting on a few referendum questions. The first of those to appear on the ballot will be about the Capital Campaign. They are asking us to vote for a donation to be tacked on to our Student Union Fees that will go any where we decide to put it.

I like this idea. The money will be going to areas that desperately need improvement: computers, libraries, laboratories, and campus security. The DSU will be pushing for the installation of the Blue Light Security System, and this is a very good thing.

Another thing that you will be asked to vote on

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is our membership in the Students Union of Nova Scotia (SUNS). I personally feel that this organization has passed its prime. One thing that bothers me is that Dalhousie is the largest contributor by far (since we're the largest school), but we only get one vote.

This puts us on the same level with a school like Ste. Anne., and they only have about 4 students. And besides, we really have very

little in common with those other schools anyway, so how can one organization effectively lobby for both us and those back-water no-name schools? I think we can do our own provincial lobbying.

Next, we come to the final referendum question. This one deals with the issue of funding for this very paper, The Dalhousie Gazette. For those of you who weren't here last spring, the students of this university have already voted overwhelmingly "Yes" in both of the previous campaigns, but the first was overruled because of a technicality, and the second couldn't count because we didn't reach quorum.

Now, I can't tell you how you should vote on this issue, that would be wrong of me (Yeah, whatever.), but I can tell you to get out and vote (like you did last time), and lets just clear this up once and for all. Then we can get back to business, and without having to worry about whether or not we're pissing off the DSU treasurer.

Yay for autonomy, nay for slavery!

JOSEF TRATNIK

Frats and charity

elsewhere that has been disrupted. And while it doesn't happen often, we cannot say never.

What you don't hear. Well, this is again a long story that has to be shortened. You didn't hear about Phi Kappa Pi having a charity event like they did last Friday. You didn't hear about the Alpha Gamma Delta and Sigma Chi Food drive for the Metro Food Bank last Sunday afternoon. Chances are that you will not hear about the Omega Pi and Phi Kappa Pi event at Halloween for the children's hospital. But if you ask anyone about it, then I am sure that they will be more than glad to inform you about future charity events. It seems like it takes a tragedy for the fraternities to get noticed at all.

While I have a minute, I think I will also tell you about the Sigma Chi Trampathon. It is a 30-hour bouncefest, on a trampoline, in the Halifax Shopping Centre. It is to raise money for our Charity, The Children's Wish Foundation. We will probably be asking you for money, so please be generous, because every penny counts. It is well sponsored, and covered by local television. Speaking of which, did anyone see the special news segment that ATV did on us last year? It was great. Hopefully it got some people off of their negative line of thinking.

This year has been great with on-campus rush. Every fraternity and sorority seems to have their biggest numbers out in a long time. If you have any questions, direct them to anyone wearing Greek letters on campus.

DAVID FINLAYSON

The Dalhousie Gazette welcomes letters to the editor and commentary. Letters are limited to 300 and commentary to 800 words in length. The deadline is noon on Mondays. To be printed, all submissions must be typed and double spaced on paper, e-mailed, or on a Mac or IBM-compatible 3 1/2 inch disk.