

Mixed Emotions Among Quebec Students

by Jim Bridges (*The Varsity*, CUP)

Anglophone students in Quebec are letting out a reluctant sigh of relief, while francophone separatists claim to have suffered only a minor setback to their cause in the wake of Quebec's referendum results.

"There is a sense of relief," said Liz Harvey, president of the student council at Bishop's University. "I think we're all happy, but the result isn't something to be overwhelmingly happy about."

"It was definitely a close call," said No supporter and 22-year-old Montreal student Claude-Andre Duquette. "It's proof to the rest of Canada that Quebec is not bluffing. I think as a result both Quebec and Canada will mature a lot."

But according to Frederic Lapointe, vice-president of the Federation Etudiante Universitaire du Quebec, which represents over 100,000 primarily francophone students in the province, the referendum results were not a triumph for federalists.

Lapointe says that while Yes supporters are disappointed with the results, they do not see it as the death of the separatist cause.

"People are angry and frustrated, but there is not the sadness of 1980," he said. "People would have liked to have their own country. And we know that sooner or later, there will be a vote on this again."

"The Quebec debate is not over. There will be a period of tranquillity, but this issue will go on," Lapointe said. "This is the position of youth, who supported it by a clear majority. Time is running out for the No option."

But for Lise-Marie Ferguson, a law student at the University of Montreal, the possibility of separation is no longer.

"There isn't going to be a next time," said Ferguson. "This is it. Forget the next time."

Instead, Quebec -- as well as the rest of the country -- should expect the referendum to bring about change in the Canadian federation, said Concordia students' council president Jonathan Carruthers.

"The obvious results are such that the Canadian government has to get back to the table to look at their relationship with Quebec and the other provinces," he said. "[But] the thought that these people have the right to have another referendum because it suits their needs is very irresponsible."

Lapointe says the loss will put Quebecers, as well as his organization -- which supported separatism based on referenda held on its member campuses last year -- in a difficult position to lobby the federal government.

"Now that we've lost, we're in an uncomfortable position to ask for anything from Ottawa," he said. "Maybe we'll be on our knees and ask. That's not likely. Maybe we'll say nothing. That's more likely."

Carruthers says over the coming months he expects many Quebecers will decide to leave the province as a result of the recent push for sovereignty.

"I think there are going to be people moving on, in more than just a mental sense," he said. "But we will have nowhere near the exodus if Yes had won."

But according to Harvey, post-referendum life for the majority of Quebec students will not be drastically different than before Monday's vote.

"Even if there was a Yes vote, it would have been business as usual at Bishop's in the short-term," said Harvey. "But for now, we just wait."

However, Lapointe says Quebec youth will not wait and abandon, sovereignty, even though many people throughout the province are tired of the issue.

"With so close a result, many students will not be quite happy to work on this issue again, but they will do it because they are committed. It will be more work out of duty, not of enthusiasm," he said. "My feeling is students won't change their sovereignty mandate."

Lapointe says it is this demographic fact that will lead to separation in the next decade, as more young separatists become eligible voters and the older, more federalist generation dies off.

"For every 10 people dying [in Quebec], seven federalists are dying, and people turn 18 every day," Lapointe said. "It is a sad fact for Canada, but I don't think sovereignty is lethal to Canada."



CUP GRAPHIC Ian Smith-Windsor, The Campus

Calling All Students

by Christopher Michaud

You read the headline, people. Time to get our butts in gear and get some work done. Okay, so we are all feeling the crunch of exams, final papers and where to get the extra Christmas dollar. This, however, could mean our very future.

Tired of scraping for money? Not sure if you're going to be able to afford that paperclip for your father's Christmas present? Just why are you strapped for cash anyways? Shocker of shocks! Could it be tuition fees? Lack of student loan funds? Holy empty mothballed pockets, Batman! Yes, Robin. I see it. Students Canada-wide at the soup kitchen.

Here's the scoop. I need your ideas, brainstorm, anything and everything. It's time we took up arms against the tyranny of higher education costs and lack of funds to cover them. We need the support of the whole student body on this if we are to be heard. A few ideas so far:

-- A rally downtown with speakers and a band to entertain us.

-- A united effort by the student body on Registration Day. What, you may ask? Everybody, and I mean everybody, request a Permission to Pay Late form.

-- A sit-in at the Pit, with speakers and so on.

-- A pub, always a cool idea.

-- A strike has been suggested, but when? We are too close to exams right now.

-- One good idea a friend suggested was a letter signed by all the students on campuses across Canada, sort of like a giant postcard, and then have it sent to the Honourable Mr. Axworthy, that fine

pillar of society who said more money would be available to students, one way or another.

Did any of you know that the faculty of a certain university on a long-lost island in Canada received a 4 percent increase in pay last year? Did any of you notice it was at about the same time the students of that university were also slapped with a tuition increase? Shortly thereafter, those poor students were also attacked by a new terror, the Parking Fee monster. What's more, there is also the threat of another tuition increase, possibly in time for next semester, and then the more by the start of next year. And guess what? The university is planning to hire a vice-president! Who do you think will pay for the cost of this new position? When it rains, it pours.

I'm really sorry, but I have to ask. What is our Student Union doing to help us? I guess the next question is can they do anything to help us?

I believe the choice is clear. Either we do something about putting an end to the rising costs of our education, or we shut up, and dish out a few more dollars, dollars most of us don't have.

I would like to know how many people are fortunate enough to come to this University, go to class, concentrate on their courses like they should, and succeed? Sounds like a simple question, right? What I mean is, how many of us can afford to come here to get a better education for a better chance in life, do well in our courses when we have to work at paying jobs more than we work on our homework, and leave here with a good chance at success? How many people can count on their parents for money? How many of us have to suffer the cruel word "DENIED" when it comes to student loans? Or just get the bare minimum from loans, and hope to get by on peanuts and Kraft Dinner for the rest of the year?

Student loans -- the government's idea of helping students pay for a post-secondary education, to make us bigger taxpayers when we graduate. I think there should be, in the dictionary, a picture of Axworthy with a turkey under his arm, or a shovel full a dung in his hand, as the definition for "student loan". I mean, come on, student loans are the biggest load of crock I've ever heard of! Even the promises of, "easier access to student loan funds for all students", and, "more availability of resources to students", have got to be catch phrases from the Devil. We spend

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