

THIS WEEK AND NEXT

by Ray Argyle



Crisis In Centennial Year

It is too early yet to judge how far Premier Daniel Johnson will take Quebec along the road to separatism. But behind the scenes, there are ominous portents that centennial year could be decisive in determining Quebec's future.

After recent discussions with a number of knowledgeable Quebec residents, I am more pessimistic than ever that a final and complete split can be avoided.

Despite reassurances by Premier Johnson in the first days of his administration, those close to the Quebec political scene warn that the new administration is merely biding its time before striking out on a radically nationalistic policy.

"The revolution will go on — nothing will slow down," I was told. The implication here was that Premier Johnson, elected with only 42 per cent. of the vote, will take an increasingly nationalistic stance in a bid for additional support.

It must be remembered that while Jean Lesage was an outspoken advocate of a new role for Quebec in Confederation, he also came from a national political organization, with long experience and association at Ottawa. Johnson, in contrast, represents a purely provincial party with no ties to the federal scene.

It can therefore be hoped that the Pearson administration will take a more decisive stand in dealing with Quebec. There can be no question of launching any kind of offensive against Quebec's legitimate aspirations. But is separatism legitimate?

While it can be hoped that it would be premature to judge separation as a Johnsonian goal, the time has come for Canada to make up its mind on whether it will permit Quebec to secede should French Canada opt in that direction.

So far, no such decision has been rendered.

The chief effects which separation would have on Canada are obvious. Quebec would control

the gateway to Central Canada. World shipping would have to pass through Quebec territory — the Gulf of St. Lawrence — to gain entrance to the Seaway. This would affect both Canada and the United States. Unless a customs union could be established, Canada would encounter tremendous difficulties in fulfilling such agreements as shipments of wheat to the Soviet Union, which now mostly pass through the port of Montreal.

A significant development which has so far escaped public notice is the trickle of "refugees" already starting to flee Quebec.

I was told by a Montreal businessman that he and "at least" thirty of his friends had transferred their investments and bank accounts from Quebec to Ontario.

Before the apparently mounting tide of separatism becomes any stronger in Quebec, some federal spokesman should point out the benefits which that province enjoys in Confederation.

While Quebec leaders constantly harp on the flow of tax money from Quebec to Ottawa, nothing is ever said about the federal support which goes back to French Canada. This covers every field from family allowances to all manner of federal services such as tax grants, defense installations, and federal economic assistance.

One example will suffice. The Eastern Quebec Planning Bureau, financed jointly by Quebec and Ottawa, has recommended a five-year program to boost the living standards of the Gaspé and Lower St. Lawrence regions. This commendable plan would cost federal and provincial governments tens of millions of dollars. Would Quebec taxpayers — if told the facts — really prefer to go it alone? It's time someone started selling Confederation to French Canada.

The basic question to be faced in this issue is the right of a people to self-determination. The separatists place their main

argument on this philosophy. But what of the right of a federal union to maintain itself intact? The United States met this problem a century ago and it took a civil war to resolve it. Ot-

tawa should rule now on whether a province is to have the right to secede, because if Quebec were to do so, other provinces would not be long in following.

TRANSPORTATION CONTRACT AWARDED

Terrace Bay High School Board has awarded a contract to Mr. G. Pearen of Terrace Bay, Ontario, for the transportation of local students, who will be attending the Schreiber High School, during the school year 1966-67.

DEPARTURE TIMES — Leave Terrace Bay at 8.30 a.m.
Leave Schreiber approximately
10 minutes after school closing.

Students will be picked up at Recreation Centre in the morning and taken directly to Schreiber High School. For return trip students will be picked up at Schreiber High School and dropped off at the Recreation Centre. No other stops shall be made to pick up or let students off. Transportation shall leave promptly at stated times. Late students shall be left behind.

Students shall not be permitted to drive vehicle under any circumstances.

H. J. Boudreau,
Secretary-Treasurer,
Terrace Bay High School Board.

Recreation Director Buck Matiowsky leaves this week to attend the National Hockey Leadership Institute at McDonald College, St. Anne de Belliveau, Quebec. Buck is one of two candidates from Northwestern Ontario selected to attend this clinic.

The primary purpose of the Clinic is to develop new coaching techniques and to (continued page 10)

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