

# THE REFERENDUM IS HERE

by Christopher Michaud

Today is October 31, 1995. The Quebec Referendum is here. We can no longer hide from it -- it has invaded us for the last few months, the last few years, and the last few decades.

Quebec, Canada and the rest of the free world has come to a temporary standstill. All eyes are on the people of Quebec, and we await the results with baited breath. Am I being too dramatic? Humour me for a minute.

In the 1970s, the Front de Liberation du Quebec was at war with the rest of Canada. The military rode through the city of Montreal in tanks, mailboxes were blowing up, politicians were kidnapped, and people were dying.

In the 1980s, another referendum was held. Protests and demonstrations followed, a few mailbox bombings, hundreds arrested. No army this time, but it came close.

This is the 1990s. Anything changed? Protests are everywhere. Demonstrations are a happening thing. No mailboxes are blowing up yet, thank goodness, but what about once the results are out? Will the victorious Yes side be peaceful in its celebrations? Will the losing No side just sit on the sidelines with their heads and tails between their legs? Or will the defeated Yes side take another decade of defeat like good sportsmen and say, "Hey, there's always next year." Will the triumphant No side pop a few champagne corks quietly behind closed doors?

The Canadian dollar is suffering on the world markets. If No wins, will the Yes respect the dollar? If Yes wins, will there be a Canadian dollar?

These questions are more relevant than you think. I may be thinking rashly, but what are the politicians doing? Are they even thinking at all? This is not an electoral campaign, but hollow promises are sounding from both parties. A sovereign Quebec will create more jobs, says Yes. A sovereign Quebec will lose one million jobs, with major companies packing up and heading elsewhere, says No. Who's right in all this? Who's wrong?

In the last two weeks, the politicians have been doing nothing more than putting their feet in their mouths. Where they normally are, right? Bouchard's comments about a "white nation" and his Gatineau partner's poorly attempted explanation of his comments were savagely attacked by the media and the No side. Clyde Wells decides he's going to say a few words, says a mouthful, and he is gobbled up by the Yes side.

This distinct society stuff is getting on my nerves. Public relations with Quebec are just awful, and public opinion is almost volatile. As a former resident of Quebec, I can't go anywhere without being asked what my positions on the whole issue are. At work, at home, with my friends -- it just doesn't end. My position? My passport says I am a Canadian citizen. My birth certificate is from the Province of Quebec. My favourite teams are the Canadians, the Expos and the Impact (soccer for those who didn't know), I miss the Nordiques, they were actually good. I like walking in downtown Montreal, and visiting Quebec City. My languages always will be French and English. My home is Montreal, my place of residence is Charlottetown. My

country is Canada and my birthplace is Quebec. I celebrate Saint-Jean-Baptiste as emphatically and as happily as I do Canada Day. Any questions?

Quebec is a distinct society because it holds many distinct cultures. You walk down any street in Montreal and you are bound to see African-Americans, Chinese, Japanese, Arabics, Russians, Hindus -- you name them, we've got them. You can't walk in downtown Toronto and see the same mixture and variety of people as well and as easily as you can in Montreal, and the Province as a whole. If Quebec separates, what will become of that distinctiveness?

Another point: the Acadian communities are a distinct culture. They are different from that of Quebec, but don't have to fight to keep their culture. They have their culture. It's not in danger of disappearing, and neither is the culture of Quebec. The Acadian community is respected, which is more than I can say for my home province.

One last thing. Politicians from outside of Canada should keep their noses in their own business instead of messing with ours. No disrespect intended to M. Jacques Chirac of France, but your nuclear testing should come before the recognition of Quebec as a state, if Yes wins.

Well, last night was the night. I doubt many of us were away from our TVs or radios for too long. I doubt many of us slept too soundly either, or will be sleeping too well for the next little while. This is our country at stake, and we should be afraid. Very afraid. This morning, we will know where we stand.

Or will we?

ALL YOU CAN HANDLE!

EARN \$8000 AS A SUMMER MANAGER  
FOR COLLEGE PRO IN 1996

Gain real-life skills and valuable experience running your own business. The deadlines for this round of interviews is November 10, 1995.

Applications available at your student employment centre or fax resume to: (902) 443-4448

College Pro



"MY DEGREE

IS A SOURCE OF PRIDE.

MY DIPLOMA FROM ITI

IS A SOURCE OF INCOME."

Will Booth holds a B.A. from Acadia University and a diploma from ITI. Will now works for Information Systems Management Corp., an IBM company.



You've got a university degree. But you know you could be doing so much more with it than you are right now. You'd like a challenging, well-paying job with a future. If this sounds familiar... you owe it to yourself

to look into ITI.

Information Technology Institute -- or ITI -- offers a unique 11-month program that takes university grads from a broad range of backgrounds and gives them the information technology training that today's companies are looking for.

It's a proven program. Find out more about it today.

**iti** Information  
Technology  
Institute

YOUR SPRINGBOARD  
TO SUCCESS IN THE NEW ECONOMY.

CALL FOR A BROCHURE,  
OR TO REGISTER FOR OUR FREE INFORMATION  
SEMINAR: 1-800-939-4484

## Pro-Canada Rally

by Jennifer Caseley and Aldera Chisholm

On Friday afternoon at 4:00, UPEI students and the general public gathered to show support for Canadian unity. This rally, like others held across Canada, was organized in an attempt to show Quebec that the rest of Canada does care about the fate of the country.

An enthusiastic crowd assembled in front of Province House waving flags and chanting phrases like "Canada, Canada" and "One Nation." People from all walks of life were present, from prominent Charlottetown business owners to babies in strollers.

The rally was organized by two UPEI students, Chris Burns and Ross Williams. The planning for the event began last Tuesday evening. In three days the pair

managed to attract such speakers as Charlottetown Mayor Ian "Tex" MacDonald, PEI's Minister of Higher Education Jeannie Lea, and Political Science professor Don Milne. Included in the line-up of speakers were musicians Theresa Doyle and Lennie Gallant, who sang to help keep up the crowd's enthusiasm.

After an hour and a half the crowd was invited back to more events scheduled for the weekend including a flag raising ceremony on Saturday afternoon. The crowd dispersed to the singing of "O Canada" by UPEI students.

In the next issue there will be a detailed report of the rally that was held in Montreal and an interview with the organizers of the Charlottetown rally.

