

Bernard Landry at CASA: "Ottawa cause of Quebec's anguish"

By COLIN LANGUEDOC
of the Chronicle

Speaking at a recent symposium at the Fairview auditorium sponsored by the Committee of Anglophones for Sovereignty-Association (CASA), Bernard Landry accused Ottawa of being the cause of Quebec's "anguish and frustration", adding: "As long as Quebec remains inferior to Ottawa, the situation will remain the same. Political equality between Quebec and Canada must be recognized."

Landry, Quebec's Minister of State for Economic Development, expressed his views on federal-provincial relations, the White Paper on sovereignty-association, and Quebec's future following a brief introduction by CASA Chairman Henry Milner.

Landry informed the gathering of approximately 30 West Islanders that "Canada is not a confederation, but a federation, with all economic powers concentrated in Ottawa. From time to time, by historical accident, Quebec has had a voice in the federal government — the Trudeau era, for example. That ended yesterday."

Referring to the government's White Paper on sovereignty-association, Landry stated that his purpose in appearing was "to keep the people informed, even if you're not entirely in agreement with us."

During the question period that followed Landry's opening remarks, a member of the audience asked the minister of the consequences of a "no" vote in the upcoming referendum on sovereignty-association.

"Well, our bargaining power will collapse", he replied. "But in addition to that, the rest of Canada will never forgive Quebecers for voting 'no'". Supporting his remarks, he referred to a recent Gallup poll which, he said, showed that 50 per cent of Canadians are in favour of negotiation with a sovereign Quebec, and 42 per cent opposed. Landry contended that these figures indicate a "clear majority" of Canadians are in favor of sovereignty-association.

Another member of the audience, who identified himself as a student member of the Senate of Concordia

University, noted that Landry had referred to anglophone universities in Quebec as a "great plus", but pointed out to the minister that government

grants have significantly decreased in the English sector.

The student claimed that government grants to the Concordia library this year

have amounted to less than one-half of what was given to the engineering library alone of the University of Québec at Montreal. He enquired if the prospects of anglophone universities in this regard would improve under a sovereign Quebec.

Landry replied by contending that "not too long ago, it was a very backward situation in Montreal", having three anglophone universities — Sir George, Loyola, and McGill — and only one French university — the University of Montreal.

"The Université du Québec was founded to balance the picture," he said, and reminded the student that "generous" grants have been awarded to anglophone CEGEPs under the present administration.

Another member of the audience asked Landry if Quebec Indian nations will be permitted to separate from an independent Quebec.

The minister contended

that "Indians are not a nation Quebec is." Landry further suggested that under the questioner's terms, the Acadians could claim most of the Maritimes as theirs, and secede in similar fashion.

"The French were the discoverers of New France," said Landry. "There is an historic statism that argues for independence."

Landry's refusal to recognize the existence of historically defined Indian nations sparked a flurry of protests from the audience. One questioner demanded to know if the PQ intended to claim states bordering the Mississippi and Ohio Rivers, on the grounds that, like Quebec, they were discovered first by French explorers.

Landry stated in reply that Quebec will settle grievances in accordance with "international laws of jurisprudence" at the International Court in The Hague. When the issue was raised of French tests being mandatory for doctors and

nurses, Landry emphasized the importance of bilingualism in the field of health care.

"When in Rome, do as the Romans do," he said, "So learn how to speak French."

Landry was then asked if similarly mandatory English tests are administered to French-speaking medical personnel.

"I don't know, but I think so," he replied, suggesting that most francophone professionals are already bilingual because of the dominance of the English language in medical texts and journals. (The Office de la Langue Française told the Chronicle this week that the Government of Quebec does not administer English proficiency tests under any circumstances.)

Landry concluded the session by thanking CASA for its support of sovereignty-association, and expressed optimism for a strong "yes" vote from Quebec's anglophone population in the spring referendum. (Editor's note: Also see interview on page 5).



Bernard Landry

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West Island Mayors Slam plan for MUCTC Charges

By BOB HAYES
of the Chronicle

That the West Island isn't as rich as he thinks. Every municipal council is

tell us we have a service," added Councillor Albert Lacroix

to pay for the first six months of the year," Mr. Cournoyer told the