

INSIGHT

By Hubert Gendron

QUEBEC — (Gazette) — Another Quebec-Ottawa controversy has come into the limelight in the past two days, and once again it centres on Quebec's role in international affairs.

The embryonic debate has been sparked by a short bill now before the Quebec Legislature renaming the existing department of federal-provincial affairs and permutating a number of existing provincial powers from department to department.

The bill will give the department of federal-provincial affairs the name of department of intergovernmental affairs.

In addition it collects the various international powers shared by four other departments and transfers these powers to the newly named department.

Among these powers are control of the Quebec houses in Paris, London, New York and Milan. Responsibility for these delegations is not shared by the department of federal-provincial affairs, the department of cultural affairs and the department of industry and commerce.

But the sentence that has caused the mild storm is the one giving the minister the power to "make, with any other government or body outside Quebec, an agreement that he deems

consistent with the interests and rights of Quebec."

This is a vague statement, subject to many different interpretations.

In Ottawa, it seems to have been taken as an indication that Quebec intends to drastically increase its activity in foreign affairs.

Here, officials say the sentence means next to nothing.

One high official said simply that it is a "form phrase" found in many bills and that really means nothing.

Premier Daniel Johnson, who also holds the federal-provincial affairs portfolio, shares the same opinion.

Rumblings Over Quebec's International Role

Asked by reporters if the word "rights" meant constitutional rights, Mr. Johnson replied "of course."

The premier went even further by saying that, far from invading Ottawa's field, the bill would prove to be an asset to both the federal and provincial governments.

His argument is that Ottawa often finds itself faced with international agreements that it cannot sign because they deal with matters strictly within the province's jurisdiction, (example: education and health agreements).

Instead of having to deal with different departments each time a new jurisdiction problem crops up, all matters of Quebec-Ottawa interna-

tonal relations will be the sole responsibility of the department of intergovernmental affairs.

Of course, the new bill leaves the door open for agreements between Quebec and France, for instance, on matters such as education and cultural affairs.

Such agreements already exist. In 1965, the Liberal Government signed such agreements with France. Quebec's move at the time had set off a heated debate on responsibility for foreign affairs between Ottawa and Quebec.

Premier Johnson will follow this precedent if and when he feels it will benefit Quebec.

But there is nothing in the bill that would seem to allow Quebec to go beyond the powers it already does exercise.

The second reading debate on the bill comes up next week and the Quebec Government's intentions may be spelled out more clearly at that time.

But on the surface, although some articles in the bill are deliberately vague, there seems to be little reason to assume that Quebec is heading for a constitutional showdown on foreign relations with Ottawa.

It's A Question Of Style For Charlie

Joseph Charles Van Horne will give his maiden speech in the New Brunswick Legislature this week. The only thing that can be predicted with certainty ahead of time about his debut, is that it will likely be provocative.

That is the way "Charlie" is. That is the way he was in the House of Commons during the six years he was a member. That is the way he was last week during a press conference in a suite on the 26th floor of Chateau Champlain.

Where do you stand on the national leadership contest of the Progressive Conservative Party, a reporter asked?

"My position as leader of the New Brunswick Conservative party dictates I be neutral at the present time," came the reserved reply. "Possibly things may change."

It was a cautious start, not what reporters expected. But the reporters

Did he think Mr. Diefenbaker would run for the leadership?

"He shouldn't," Mr. Van Horne shot back.

And Mr. Michael Starr?

"He shouldn't either..."

Later in the press conference, he pledged that any government he headed in New Brunswick would make bilingualism complete at all levels of government.

His knowledge of French, the fact that he represents a county with an Acadian majority, are strong points on his side in the upcoming fight with Liberal Premier Louis Robichaud. Mr. Robichaud is the first Acadian premier of New Brunswick.

And it was about this well-publicized battle (Mr. Van Horne's own prediction is a May or June election.) which took up most of the rest of the discussion.

The 46-year-old lawyer tore into Mr.



J. C. Van Horne

formula which can drive out the seven-year-old Government of Mr. Robichaud.

But not everyone is behind Mr. Van Horne and even among some who support him, there are reservations. One of those was expressed by Thomas Bell, the federal member for Saint John, who nominated Van Horne at the leadership convention.

When asked recently why he nominated Charlie, Mr. Bell was reported to have said: "Well, the mood of New Brunswick tends at the moment to be irresponsible and Charlie is a guy who can fit the mood. He tends to be irresponsible."

When asked about this, Mr. Van Horne said the article was "planted by a Liberal manoeuvre... that article attributed to Tom Bell is not worth 10 votes."

In fact, he had the support of most of the provincial M.L.A.'s and Federal M.P.'s in his recent byelection cam-

Tory Profile: By James Ferrabee

tried it from another angle as reporters often do.

Was there any significance in the fact Mr. George Hees campaigned for you in the provincial byelection in Restigouche last February 6?

"Mr. Hees has campaigned in every election I've run in. George and I have been friends ever since 1955 (when Mr. Van Horne was first elected to the House of Commons.) He is the most outstanding campaigner this country has ever seen."

There was a pause, but not a long one. Mr. Van Horne went on.

"George Hees is certainly, in my opinion, the man best suited to unite the Progressive Conservatives in this country."

A reporter suggested this didn't sound like a neutral stand. Everybody laughed. How, then, did Mr. Van

Robichaud's legislative program which has effectively centralized the administration of justice, education, and health and welfare in New Brunswick.

"The program destroys the democratic basis of society in the province," the fast-talking PC leader said. "It sets up a one-man system of dictatorship and patronage, and that is set-up in the office of the Premier."

And what would he do about the program if he became Premier? Mr. Van Horne pulled out a tear-sheet, outlining his position on a variety of topics, and pointed to a passage: "Improve what is good and correct what isn't."

The "Van Horne for Victory" publicity sheet was used in his successful campaign for the leadership last November, and again in Res-



Cottage workers producing handicrafts just can't compete on the world market

Capitalism Faltering In Puerto Rico

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico — Operation Bootstrap — the crash development program by which Puerto Rico was to have gone from rags to riches via capitalism — is running out of steam.

Marginal cottage industries, such as the making of exquisite hand-embroidered handkerchiefs, have become noncompetitive.

Thus many businessmen, who think in trends, are

of this land having no vote in national elections) and has sided with continental American unions which make no secret of their distaste for the movement of industry to Puerto Rico.

Operation Bootstrap thus is headed for trouble, and the consequences could be far-reaching.

It is not simply that Puerto Rico, a potential